**TENDER FILE / TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**(Competitive bidding procedure / Framework Contract)**

**Purchase of national consultancy services in the areas of violence against women, domestic violence and gender equality in the Republic of Moldova**

**FC/2025/GED/VAW/MD/BH9276/01**

The Council of Europe is currently implementing until 31 December 2028 the Project “Supporting the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the Republic of Moldova – phase II”. In that context, it is looking for Provider(s) for the provision of intellectual services for expertise on violence against women, domestic violence, and gender equality to be requested by the Council on an as needed basis.

1. TENDER RULES

This tender procedure is a competitive bidding procedure. **In accordance with Rule 1395 of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on the procurement procedures of the Council of Europe[[1]](#footnote-1), the Organisation shall invite to tender at least three potential providers for any purchase between €2,000 (or €6,000 for intellectual services) and € 171,000 tax exclusive.**

This specific tender procedure aims at concluding a **framework contract** for the provision of deliverables described in the Act of Engagement (See attached). A tender is considered valid for 180 calendar days as from the closing date for submission. The selection of tenderers will be made in the light of the criteria indicated below. All tenderers will be informed in writing of the outcome of the procedure.

The tenderer must be either a natural person, a legal person or consortia of legal and/or natural persons.

Tenders shall be submitted **by email only** (with attachments) **to the email address indicated in the table below, with the following reference in subject: Tender - VAW consultants - Moldova.** Tenders addressed to another email address **will be rejected.**

The general information and contact details for this procedure are indicated on this page. You are invited to use the CoE Contact details indicated below for any question you may have. **All questions shall be submitted at least 5 (five) working days before the deadline for submission of the tenders and shall be exclusively addressed to the email address indicated below with the following reference in subject: Questions - VAW consultants – Moldova.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Type of contract ►** | Framework contract  |
| **Duration ►** | Until 31 December 2028 |
| **Deadline for submission of tenders/offers ►** | **26 February 2025** 23h59 CET |
| **Email for submission of tenders/offers ►** | ICMoldova.tenders@coe.int |
| **Email for questions ►** | IC-Moldova.tender.questions@coe.int  |
| **Expected starting date of execution ►** | 17 March 2025 |

1. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

**Background of the Project**

The Council of Europe is currently implementing the project “Supporting the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the Republic of Moldova – phase II”. The project is running from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2028. It aims to support the Moldovan authorities in their implementation of the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, known as the Istanbul Convention. The project will also seek to strengthen the capacity of key stakeholders involved in preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, protecting the victims, and prosecuting the perpetrators of violence, and advancing towards an effective co-ordination among the relevant stakeholders in line with the Istanbul Convention.

To achieve that, the project co-operates with the Moldovan authorities through three main fields of action: awareness-raising activities of violence against women and the main existing standards; capacity-building of relevant professionals; and strengthening multi-agency co-operation.

In this context, the Council of Europe is looking for a maximum of 75 Provider(s) (provided enough tenders meet the criteria indicated below) across five lots in order to support the implementation of the project with a particular expertise on the areas outlined below.

This Contract is currently estimated to cover up to 150 activities, to be held by 31 December 2028. This estimate is for information only and shall not constitute any sort of contractual commitment on the part of the Council of Europe. The Contract may potentially represent a higher or lower number of activities, depending on the evolving needs of the Organisation.

For information purposes only, the total budget of the project amounts to 2.5 000 000 Euros and the total amount of the object of present tender **shall not exceed 171,000 Euros tax exclusive** for the whole duration of the Framework Contract. This information does not constitute any sort of contractual commitment or obligation on the part of the Council of Europe.

**Lots**

The present tendering procedure aims to select Provider(s) to support the implementation of the project and is divided into the following lots:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Lots | Maximum number of Providers to be selected |
| **Lot 1**: Developing guidelines and methodologies for professionals handling cases of violence against women and domestic violence, as well as delivering training sessions and/ or workshops (including training of trainers and cascade trainings) applying an intersectional approach. | 15 |
| **Lot 2**: Facilitating multi-stakeholder roundtables, high-level events on topics related to violence against women, domestic violence, gender equality and the Istanbul Convention in the Republic of Moldova. | 15 |
| **Lot 3**: Developing visibility material, developing and promoting awareness-raising campaigns on violence against women and domestic violence and/or the standards set in the Istanbul Convention. | 15 |
| **Lot 4:** Conducting research and studies and providing legal expertise and recommendations aimed at improving national legislation on preventing and combating violence against women, applying an intersectional approach. | 15 |
| **Lot 5**: Editing and legal proofreading the existing materials, brochures, reports, and other relevant documents in Romanian prior to publication, ensuring conformity with the Istanbul Convention. | 15 |

Lot 1 concerns creating detailed guidelines and methodologies for professionals who handle cases of violence against women and domestic violence. It also includes delivering training sessions and/or workshops, including training of trainers and cascade training, with an emphasis on using an intersectional approach. This means considering how different factors (such as race, ethnicity, disability, etc.) intersect with gender in the context of violence and domestic abuse. The goal is to equip professionals with the knowledge and tools needed to effectively support victims and improve responses to such cases.

Lot 2 concerns organising and facilitating discussions, such as roundtables and high-level events, that bring together various stakeholders (government representatives, NGOs, experts, etc.) to address issues such as violence against women, domestic violence, gender equality, and the Istanbul Convention. The objective is to foster dialogue and cooperation among key actors to advance policies and actions that combat violence against women and promote gender equality in the Republic of Moldova.

Lot 3 concerns the creation of visibility materials (such as posters, leaflets, brochures, etc.) and the development and promotion of awareness-raising campaigns. These campaigns should focus on educating the public about violence against women and domestic violence, and/or promoting the standards and obligations set out in the Istanbul Convention. The goal is to increase public understanding, encourage social change, and raise awareness of the issues and the rights established in the Convention.

Lot 4 concerns conducting research and studies, as well as providing legal expertise and recommendations to improve national legislation on preventing and combating violence against women. An intersectional approach should be applied to understand how different factors intersect with gender-based violence. This work aims to inform legal reforms and policy improvements, ensuring that laws are more effective in addressing violence against women and are aligned with the Istanbul Convention.

Lot 5 concerns editing and legal proofreading various materials such as brochures, reports, and other relevant documents in Romanian, ensuring they are free from errors and of high quality before publication. The materials must also adhere to the principles and standards of the Istanbul Convention. This task ensures that the documents accurately reflect the required legal and ethical standards, providing clear and consistent messaging to the target audience.

The Council will select the abovementioned number of Provider(s) per lot, provided enough tenders meet the criteria indicated below. Tenderers are invited to indicate which lot(s) they are tendering for (see Section A of the Act of Engagement).

**Scope of the Framework Contract**

Throughout the duration of the Framework Contract, pre-selected Providers may be asked to:

**Lot 1**

* Develop comprehensive guidelines, methodologies, manuals, training modules, and materials for workshops or training of trainers (ToT) for professionals addressing cases of violence against women and domestic violence.
* Draft reports on the implementation of trainings/workshops, including feedback and recommendations for future improvements.

**Lot 2**

* Propose detailed agendas and concepts for roundtables and high-level events on topics such as violence against women, domestic violence, gender equality, and the implementation of the Istanbul Convention.
* Moderate and facilitate discussions to ensure productive outcomes.
* Draft summary reports with key findings, recommendations, and follow-up actions.
* Prepare participant feedback surveys and analyse results to assess the effectiveness of the events.

**Lot 3**

* Develop and design visibility materials, including leaflets, posters, infographics, and brochures.
* Create multimedia content such as videos, animations, or social media posts for awareness-raising events.

**Lot 4**

* Produce analytical reports on existing gaps in national legislation concerning violence against women and domestic violence.
* Provide recommendations for legislative reforms aligned with the standards of the Istanbul Convention.
* Carry out comparative studies on international best practices in combating violence against women.
* Conduct gender-sensitive research studies addressing intersectionality and its implications for policy-making.
* Draft legal briefs or policy papers highlighting key areas for improvement in national frameworks.
* Propose expert reviews and contributions to draft laws or amendments aimed at preventing violence against women.

**Lot 5**

* Editing and legal proofreading of reports, brochures, and other relevant publications in Romanian, ensuring clarity, coherence, and alignment with the Istanbul Convention.
* Ensure language quality, legal terminology, accuracy, and cultural appropriateness for translated documents.
* Provide detailed feedback and suggestions to improve existing materials.
* Finalise materials for publication, adhering to format and style guidelines.
* Conduct consistency checks for legal terminology and key concepts related to violence against women and the Istanbul Convention.

The above list is not considered exhaustive. The Council reserves the right to request deliverables not explicitly mentioned in the above list of expected services, but related to the field of expertise object of the present Framework Contract for the lot concerned.

In terms of **quality requirements**, the pre-selected Service Providers must ensure*, inter alia*, that:

* The services are provided to the highest professional/academic standard;
* Any specific instructions given by the Council – whenever this is the case – are followed.

If contracted by the Council of Europe, the deliverables shall be provided personally by the persons identified in the offer of the Provider whose CVs have been presented to the Council of Europe (See section E. below), in accordance with the terms as provided in the present Tender File and Act of Engagement.

In addition to the orders requested on an as needed basis, the Provider shall keep regular communication with the Council to ensure continuing exchange of information relevant to the project implementation. This involves, among others, to inform the Council as soon as it becomes aware, during the execution of the Contract, of any initiatives and/or adopted laws and regulations, policies, strategies or action plans or any other development related to the object of the Contract (see more on general obligations of the Provider in Article 3.1.2 of the Legal Conditions in the Act of Engagement).

Unless otherwise agreed with the Council, written documents produced by the Provider shall be in English (see more on requirements for written documents in Articles 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 of the Legal Conditions in the Act of Engagement).

1. FEES

Tenderers are invited to indicate their fees, by completing and sending the table of fees, as attached in Section A to the Act of Engagement. These fees are final and not subject to review.

The Council will indicate on each Order Form (see Section D below) the global fee corresponding to each deliverable, calculated on the basis of the unit fees, as agreed by this Contract.

1. HOW WILL THIS FRAMEWORK CONTRACT WORK? (Ordering PROCEDURE)

Once the selection procedure is completed, you will be informed accordingly. Deliverables will then be delivered on the basis of Order Forms submitted by the Council to the selected Provider (s), by post or electronically, on **an as needed basis** (there is therefore no obligation to order on the part of the Council).

**Pooling**

For each Order, the Council will choose from the pool of pre-selected tenderers for the relevant lot the Provider who demonstrably offers best value for money for its requirement when assessed – for the Order concerned – against the criteria of:

* quality (including as appropriate: capability, expertise, past performance, availability of resources and proposed methods of undertaking the work);
* availability (including, without limitation, capacity to meet required deadlines and, where relevant, geographical location); and
* price.

Each time an Order Form is sent, the selected Provider undertakes to take all the necessary measures to send it **signed** to the Council within 2 (two) working days after its reception. If a Provider is unable to take an Order or if no reply is given on his behalf within that deadline, the Council may call on another Provider using the same criteria, and so on until a suitable Provider is contracted.

**Providers subject to VAT**

The Provider, **if subject to VAT**, shall also send, together with each signed Form, a quote[[2]](#footnote-2) (Pro Forma invoice) in line with the indications specified on each Order Form, and including:

- the Service Provider’s name and address;

- its VAT number;

- the full list of services;

- the fee per type of deliverables (in the currency indicated on the Act of Engagement, tax exclusive);

- the total amount per type of deliverables (in the currency indicated on the Act of Engagement, tax exclusive);

- the total amount (in the currency indicated on the Act of Engagement), tax exclusive, the applicable VAT rate, the amount of VAT and the amount VAT inclusive .

**Signature of orders**

An Order Form is considered to be legally binding when the Order, signed by the Provider, is approved by the Council, by displaying a Council’s Purchase Order number on the Order, as well as by signing and stamping the Order concerned. Copy of each approved Order Form shall be sent to the Provider, to the extent possible on the day of its signature.

1. ASSESSMENT

*Exclusion criteria and absence of conflict of interests*

(by signing the Act of Engagement, you declare on your honour not being in any of the below situations)[[3]](#footnote-3)

Tenderers shall be excluded from participating in the tender procedure if they:

* have been sentenced by final judgment on one or more of the following charges: participation in a criminal organisation, corruption, fraud, money laundering, terrorist financing, terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, child labour or trafficking in human beings;
* are in a situation of bankruptcy, liquidation, termination of activity, insolvency or arrangement with creditors or any like situation arising from a procedure of the same kind, or are subject to a procedure of the same kind;
* have received a judgment with res judicata force, finding an offence that affects their professional integrity or serious professional misconduct;
* do not comply with their obligations as regards payment of social security contributions, taxes and dues, according to the statutory provisions of their country of incorporation, establishment or residence;
* are an entity created to circumvent tax, social or other legal obligations (empty shell company), have ever created or are in the process of creation of such an entity;
* have been involved in mismanagement of the Council of Europe funds or public funds;
* are or appear to be in a situation of conflict of interest;
* are retired Council of Europe staff members or are staff members having benefitted from an early departure scheme;
* are currently employed by the Council of Europe or were employed by the Council of Europe on the date of the launch of the procurement procedure;
* have not fulfilled, in the previous three years, their contractual obligations in the performance of a contract concluded with the Council of Europe leading to a total or partial refusal of payment and/or termination of the contract by the Council of Europe;
* are subject to restrictive measures applied by the United Nations Security Council or the European Union. In the case of legal persons, the restrictive measures imposed on the tenderer’s owner(s) or executives will also exclude the tenderer from participating in this tender procedure.

*Eligibility criteria*

* Minimum 4 years of professional experience in the areas of the project as defined in the lots;
* A university degree in:
* Lot 1, 2, 4: Law, Public Policy, Social Sciences, Social Work, Gender Studies, Political science, Psychology, Human Rights; Statistics or in another relevant field
* Lot 3 and 5: Design, Law, Media and Communication, Journalism, Languages or in another relevant field;
* Excellent command of oral and written Romanian (mother tongue level); fluency in English (at least B2 level CEFR).

*Award criteria*

* Quality of the offer (90 points), including:
* Thematic expertise under each specific lot (related to gender equality and/or violence against women and domestic violence) gained from experience in drafting knowledge products such as books, articles, research and policy papers, baseline and comparative studies, desk reviews, legal advice/opinions, recommendations, handbooks, etc. or editing them following human rights/gender equality terminology and standards, and/or thematic expertise gained from experience in developing or applying methodologies, protocols, guidelines, toolkits, courses, teaching/learning/awareness-raising materials or from carrying out trainings, etc.; (50 points)
* Experience of delivering similar services to those presented in the lots within the frame of assignments with international organizations. (40 points)
* Financial offer (10 points).

The Council reserves the right to hold interviews with tenderers.

Multiple tendering is not authorised.

1. NEGOTIATIONS

The Council reserves the right to hold negotiations with the bidders in accordance with Article 20 of Rule 1395.

1. DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED
* **A completed and signed copy of the Act of Engagement[[4]](#footnote-4)** (See attached);
* **For natural persons only**: a detailed CV, preferably in Europass format, demonstrating clearly that the tenderer fulfils the eligibility criteria. **For legal persons only**: a detailed CV, preferably in Europass Format, of each natural person allocated to the execution of the contract demonstrating clearly that they fulfil the eligibility criteria. **For consortia only**: a detailed CV, preferably in Europass Format, of all consortium members clearly demonstrating that they satisfy the eligibility criteria;
* **Registration documents**, for legal persons only (they will be accepted in Romanian);
* A list of all owners and executive officers, for legal persons only;
* A cover letter in English (1 page maximum) highlighting the most relevant expertise regarding the lot(s) tendered for;
* At least 1 sample of previous professional work relevant to the scope of the project (articles, handbooks, research analysis, policy opinions, presentations, training materials, etc.) **in English, or Romanian** attributable to the tenderer, or to each natural person allocated to the execution of the contract (for legal persons only), or to each consortium member (for consortia only)
* 2 (two) referees' contact details (contacts including phone number and e-mail address).

**All documents shall be submitted in English, unless otherwise indicated above, failure to do so will result in the exclusion of the tender.**

**If any of the documents listed above are missing, the Council of Europe reserves the right to reject the tender.**

**The Council reserves the right to reject a tender if the scanned documents are of such a quality that the documents cannot be read once printed.**

**\* \* \***

1. The activities of the Council of Europe are governed by its [Statute](https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680306052) and its internal Regulations. Procurement is governed by the Financial Regulations of the Organisation and by [Rule 1395 of 20 June 2019 on the procurement procedures of the Council of Europe](https://search.coe.int/intranet/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=090000168094853e). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. It must strictly respect the fees indicated in the Financial Offer attached to the original Provider’s tender as recorded by the Council of Europe. In case of non-compliance with the fees as indicated in the original Provider’s tender, the Council of Europe reserves the right to terminate the Contract with the Provider, in all or in part. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Council of Europe reserves the right to ask tenderers, at a later stage, to supply the following supporting documents:

An extract from the record of convictions or failing that an equivalent document issued by the competent judicial or administrative authority of the country of incorporation, indicating that the first three and sixth above listed exclusion criteria are met;

A certificate issued by the competent authority of the country of incorporation indicating that the fourth criterion is met. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The Act of Engagement must be completed, signed and scanned in its entirety (i.e. including all the pages). The scanned Act of Engagement may be sent page by page (attached to a single email) or as a compiled document, although a compiled document would be preferred. For all scanned documents, .pdf files are preferred. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)