TENDER FILE / TERMS OF REFERENCE
(Competitive bidding procedure / Framework Contract)

Purchase of Thematic Consultancy Services on Veteran's politics
Contract N° 9316/2026/227

The Centre of Expertise for Multilevel Governance (CEMG) at the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe is implementing the project "Strengthening multilevel governance and local democracy to support Ukraine's recovery" from 1 April 2025 to 31 December 2026 (hereinafter, the Project). The CEMG is also planning its next project for 2027–2030 in the same thematic area, under the next Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine. To ensure the desired impact, the CEMG's intervention counts on its in-house expertise along with local and international consultancy.

The CEMG is launching this competitive bidding procedure for the provision of thematic consultancy services on veterans' policies for the period from 20 November 2026 to 31 December 2026, with the possibility of an extension until 31 December 2028.

A. TENDER RULES

This tender procedure is a competitive bidding procedure. **In accordance with Rule 1/2019 on procurement[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 €184,000 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 consortium of natural and/or legal person.

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 – Consultancy_Vereteran's politics. 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, in English, at least three 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 - Consultancy_Vereteran's politics.

Type of contract ►	Framework Contract
Duration ►	Until complete execution of the obligations of the parties (See Article 2 of the Legal conditions)
Deadline for submission of tenders/offers ►	**24 November 2026** 16h00 (Kyiv time)
Email for submission of tenders/offers ►	**congress.ukraine@coe.int**
Email for questions ►	congress.ukraine@coe.int
Expected starting date of execution ►	30 November 2026

B. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

Background of the Project

[1] The activities of the Council of Europe are governed by its Statute and its internal Regulations. Procurement is governed by the Financial Regulations of the Organisation and by Rule 1/2019 on procurement.

The Council of Europe is looking for a maximum of six Provider(s) (provided enough tenders meet the criteria indicated below) in order to support the implementation of the project with a particular expertise on veteran's politics.

The selected service provider(s) are expected to provide thematic consultancy services in the field of veterans' policies, including:

- Expert advice and thematic consultations to support the development and implementation of local veterans' policies and initiatives.
- Tailored recommendations addressing the specific needs and priorities of the potential Ivano-Frankivsk Agglomeration and other agglomeration areas.
- Expert input and practical guidance to strengthen local capacities to address veterans' needs through informed and evidence-based approaches.

Therefore, there is a continued need to identify qualified service providers who can deliver consultancy services on veterans' policies on an as-needed basis, in response to the needs of the respective agglomerations, and contribute to strengthening local capacities through informed, evidence-based policy approaches.For information purposes only, the total budget of the project amounts to 2 577 000 Euros and the total amount of the object of present tender **shall not exceed 30 000 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: Consultancy services for the development of veteran policies	3
Lot 2: Capacity-building activities in the field of veteran affairs	3

Scope of the Framework Contract

Throughout the term of the Framework Contract, pre-selected Providers may be requested to undertake the following activities under Lot 1:

1. Assessment of Needs and Existing Policies: Conducting assessments of the needs of veterans, military personnel and their family members, reviewing existing veteran support policies, services, institutional capacities and available resources.
2. Stakeholder Engagement and Consultations: Organising interviews, focus groups, consultations and participatory workshops with local authorities, veteran organisations, civil society organisations, service providers, businesses and other relevant stakeholders.
3. Policy Development and Strategic Planning: Supporting the development of local and inter-municipal veteran policies, strategic frameworks, policy recommendations, action plans and implementation roadmaps.
4. Inter-municipal Cooperation: Identifying opportunities and developing mechanisms for cooperation between municipalities to improve access to veteran services, optimise resources and establish joint support initiatives and infrastructure.
5. Project Development and Resource Mobilisation: Preparing project concepts, project fiches, feasibility justifications, logical frameworks, expected results, performance indicators, preliminary budgets and funding strategies. Identifying potential national and international donors and funding opportunities.
6. Monitoring and Evaluation: Developing performance indicators, monitoring frameworks and recommendations to assess the effectiveness, sustainability and impact of veteran policy interventions.
7. Facilitation and Coordination: Facilitating multi-stakeholder working groups, strategic discussions and policy consultations, and supporting coordination among relevant institutions and partners.

Throughout the term of the Framework Contract, pre-selected Providers may be requested to undertake the following activities under Lot 2:

1. Training and Educational Activities: Developing and delivering training programmes, workshops, seminars and learning sessions on veteran policy development, veteran reintegration, social support, employment, entrepreneurship and access to services.
2. Institutional Capacity Development: Strengthening the capacity of local authorities and relevant institutions to plan, coordinate, implement and monitor veteran support programmes and services.
3. Knowledge Sharing and Exchange: Facilitating peer-to-peer learning, exchange visits, networking events and sharing of good practices among municipalities, veteran organisations and service providers.
4. Multi-Stakeholder Cooperation: Building the capacity of stakeholders to establish effective partnerships and coordination mechanisms between local authorities, veteran organisations, civil society, businesses and public institutions.
5. Practical Tools and Methodologies: Developing guidelines, methodological materials, practical toolkits and recommendations to support the implementation of veteran policies at local and inter-municipal levels.
6. Project Development Skills: Strengthening stakeholders' capacities in project design, fundraising, grant application development, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation of veteran-related initiatives.
7. Facilitation and Mentoring: Providing expert facilitation, mentoring and advisory support to local teams and organisations developing or implementing veteran-related programmes.

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).

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).

C. 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.

D. 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 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.

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.

Delivery
Each deliverable has to be accompanied by the filled-out AI tool questionnaire.

E. ASSESSMENT

Exclusion criteria and absence of conflict of interests
(by submitting a tender, you declare on your honour not being in any of the below situations)[2]

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 an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest; a conflict of interests arises where any person has a personal interest which is such as to influence, or appear to influence, the impartial and objective exercise of their responsibilities under this procedure. A personal interest includes any advantage to themselves, their relatives or personal relationships (including based on political or national affinity), business or financial interests or any other interest shared with another party. If tenderers have any personal interests that are relevant to this tender procedure, **they must fully disclose these in a separate document submitted with the tender**;
- are retired Council of Europe staff members or are staff members having benefitted from an early departure scheme;

[2] 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;
- For legal persons, an extract from the companies register or other official document proving ownership and control of the Tenderer;
- For natural persons (including owners and executive officers of legal persons), a scanned copy of a valid photographic proof of identity (e.g. passport).

- 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

The eligibility criteria determine the conditions for participating in a procurement procedure and define the essential requirements that each bidder must comply with. Bidders shall demonstrate that they fulfil the following criteria:

Eligibility criteria	Document/s to be submitted
Education: Master's Degree (or equivalent) in political science, public administration, management, experience in military affairs is welcome	CV
Work experience: At least three (3) years of experience in the field of veteran's politics	CV
Specific thematic expertise: confirmed expertise in veteran's politics, strategic development as evidenced by the information included in the supporting documents	CV Samples of previous work

The above eligibility criteria will be assessed **on the basis of the documents listed in the table and, where relevant, on the basis of other supporting documents** listed in Section G.

For legal persons only: legal persons are requested to include in their bids the profiles of **a maximum of three** natural persons proposed to be assigned to the contract. The status of each natural person included in the bid must be specified, and in particular whether they are employees or subcontractors. **Each natural person included in the bid will be assessed against the above eligibility criteria**. The Council reserves the right not to accept the inclusion in the contract of persons who do not meet the eligibility criteria or to reject a bid entirely if no profiles met the eligibility criteria.[3]

For consortia only: each consortium member **will be assessed against the eligibility criteria above**. Consortium members who are legal persons are requested to provide the profiles of a maximum of three natural persons proposed to be assigned to the contract. The status of each natural person included in the bid must be specified, and in particular whether they are employees or subcontractors.

Each natural person included in the bid submitted by a consortium – whether as an individual consortium member or as a natural person attached to a legal person – will be assessed against the above eligibility criteria. The Council reserves the right not to accept the inclusion in the contract of persons who do not meet the eligibility criteria or to reject a bid entirely if no profiles meet the eligibility criteria.[4] For a consortium to be validly constituted, at least two consortium members must satisfy the eligibility criteria.

Award criteria

The award criteria aim at assessing the quality of a bid in order to **identify the bid/s offering the best value for money**. Eligible bids will be assessed against the following award criteria:

Award criteria	Document/s to be submitted
Quality of the offer (75 points), including: ○ Extent and depth of the bidder's knowledge, expertise and practical experience on veteran's politics (40 points); ○ Specific skills, capacities and quality of the samples of previous work submitted (methodologies, training materials, recommendations for national, regional, local and other sub-national authorities) (35 points).	CV

[3] If awarded a contract, legal persons undertake to entrust the execution of order forms only to the persons approved by the Council for inclusion in the contract. If, during the period of validity of the contract, it becomes necessary to replace one or more of the persons included in the contract, the legal persons undertake to assign to the contract only persons who satisfy the eligibility criteria above and to inform the Council without delay.

[4] If awarded a contract, consortium members who are legal persons undertake to entrust the execution of order forms only to the persons approved by the Council for inclusion in the contract. If, during the period of validity of the contract, it becomes necessary to replace one or more of the persons included in the contract, consortium members who are legal persons undertake to assign to the contract only persons who satisfy the eligibility criteria above and to inform the Council without delay.

Financial offer (25 points)	Completed and signed Act of Engagement

The above award criteria will be assessed based on the bidder's capacity, as outlined in the supporting document, or on the basis of a consolidated assessment of the combined capacity of all eligible profiles or consortium members if the bid is submitted by a legal person or a consortium.

Additional rules applicable to the submission and assessment of the bids

The bidders' attention is drawn to the following additional rules governing the assessment of the bids:

- The Council reserves the right to hold interviews with prima facie eligible tenderers;
- Unless expressly provided otherwise in the tender documents, a bidder may not submit more than one bid for the same procurement procedure. Bidding for more than one lot – where a contract is divided into lots – is allowed;
- In the same procurement procedure, natural person may not submit a bid on his/her own behalf and, at the same time, be included in a bid submitted by a legal person or a consortium. In such cases, the Council of Europe reserves the right to exclude the bid submitted by the natural person from the procurement procedure;
- In the same procurement procedure, a legal person may not submit a bid and, at the same time, be a member of a consortium also bidding under the same procurement procedure. In such cases, the Council of Europe reserves the right to exclude the bid submitted by the legal person from the procurement procedure;
- The Council reserves the right to reject any bid if, in its sole judgment, the financial offer is abnormally low or high. The Council may request clarification from the bidder before making its determination.

The Council reserves the right to hold interviews with tenderers.

F. NEGOTIATIONS

The Council reserves the right to hold negotiations with the bidders in accordance with Article 20 of Rule 1/2019 on procurement.

G. DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED

➢ One completed and signed copy of the Act of Engagement;
➢ A list of all owners and executive officers, for legal persons only;
➢ For natural persons, a detailed CV in English, demonstrating clearly that the tenderer fulfils the eligibility criteria. For legal persons, the detailed CV(s) in English of each natural person included in the bid with information whether they are employees or subcontractors of the consultant(s), demonstrating clearly that each natural person included in the bid fulfils the eligibility criteria;
➢ At least three (3) samples of the previous work (in English or in Ukrainian) from each natural person allocated to the contract such as relevant written work, links to publications, etc;
➢ Registration documents, for legal persons and private entrepreneurs only (a copy in Ukrainian language with a summary translation in English).

All documents shall be submitted in English 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.

Documents may be submitted via file sharing services such as WeTransfer, Dropbox, OneDrive, etc.). In this case, the link must mandatorily remain active for at least 30 days after the deadline for the submission of the bids. Failure to ensure this may lead to the bid being excluded from the procurement procedure.

The Council reserves the right to reject a tender if the scanned documents <u>are of such a quality that the documents cannot be read.</u>

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