

TENDER FILE / TERMS OF REFERENCE

(Competitive bidding procedure / Framework Contract)

Purchase of hosting, maintenance, technical support, and development of three internet platforms/sites of the Youth Department

Contract



The Council of Europe Youth Department is part of the Directorate for Democracy within the Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity ("DGII") of the Council of Europe. The Department elaborates guidelines, programmes and legal instruments for the development of coherent and effective youth policies at local, national and European levels.

The Department organises and/or supports educational activities, such as study sessions, training courses, educational seminars, as well as other meetings and services, including but not limited to, the development of educational materials or publications with an educational profile, educational evaluation, writing tasks or the facilitation of reflection on educational vision. In this context the Youth Department uses online tools in recruiting participants for its activities through the open calls for participants, for implementing its hybrid learning activities and for publishing call-offs to select consultant/experts for delivery of these activities.

In that context, it is looking for Provider(s) for the provision of hosting, maintenance, technical support, and development of three internet platforms/sites of the Youth Department to be requested by the Council on an as needed basis.

A. 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 Europe¹, 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 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 – Internet Platforms Youth Department.** 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 – Internet Platforms Youth Department.**

Type of contract ▶	Framework contract
Duration ▶	Until 31 December 2027
Deadline for submission of tenders/offers ▶	12 November 2024 23h59 CET
Email for submission of tenders/offers ▶	youth_tenders@coe.int
Email for questions ▶	youth_tenders@coe.int
Expected starting date of execution ▶	01 January 2025

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 1395 of 20 June 2019 on the procurement procedures of the Council of Europe](#).

B. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

Background of the Project

The Youth Department is part of the Directorate for Democracy within the Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity ("DGII") of the Council of Europe. The Department elaborates guidelines, programmes and legal instruments for the development of coherent and effective youth policies at local, national and European levels.

The Department organises and/or supports educational activities, such as study sessions, training courses, educational seminars, as well as other meetings and services, including but not limited to, the development of educational materials or publications with an educational profile, educational evaluation, writing tasks or the facilitation of reflection on educational vision. In this context the Youth Department uses online tools in recruiting participants for its activities through the open calls for participants, for implementing its hybrid learning activities and for publishing call-offs to select consultant/experts for delivery of these activities.

These internet platforms are an addition to the existing general site of the Youth Department www.coe.int/youth, which is not the object of this tender. These internet platforms are: 1) <https://e-learning4youth.coe.int>, the Council of Europe Youth Department's eLearning platform (ELFY Moodle-based platform) 2) <https://youthapplications.coe.int>, used for disseminating open calls and collecting applications for participation in the Department's activities and 3) a new restricted platform (to be developed) for publishing call-offs for consultants holding valid framework agreements with the Council of Europe for provisions of services in the field of education, training and other services related to the implementation of the activities of the Youth for Democracy programme.

E-learning for Youth in the Council of Europe (ELFY) platform – <https://e-learning4youth.coe.int> is an e-learning platform in place since 2011 and hosting some 70 courses in 9 main categories. This platform is based on Moodle 4.0.5 and is the e-learning platform for all new courses and online learning activities. There are currently over 44 000 registered users. The platform provides its users (participants, facilitators, and trainers) with a wide range of online courses and educational resources to serve the programmes and activities of the Council of Europe Youth Department and its partners. It supports primarily facilitated hybrid learning activities which also include residential activities such as study sessions and training courses held at the European Youth Centres in Budapest and Strasbourg. Additionally, some e-learning self-facilitated courses and resources are also available.

The platform for applications for participation in the activities of the Youth programme – <https://youthapplications.coe.int> – functions as a database for online applications for participants in the activities of the programme of activities of the Youth Department. There are currently some 110 000 registered users. It currently hosts also, as a sub-site, the database of the Trainers Pool of the Youth Department with the potential for 150 individual Trainers profiles (<https://www.coe.int/trainers-pool>); this sub-site will likely be discontinued after 31 December 2024. Based on eZ Publish 5.90.0alpha1.

The Council of Europe Youth Department will soon have two rosters of consultants for the procurement of consultancy services in the framework of its programmes and projects. The first roster, Consultancy services in education, training and facilitation will have a maximum of 200 consultants. The second roster, Consultancy services other than education, training and facilitation will include experts under six categories (sub-rosters) and will have a maximum of 110 consultants. During the call-off stage, and based on the specific needs of each assignment, call-offs will be communicated with the consultants. This category, therefore, includes work on developing an internal restricted space for communication of call-offs with the members of the databases.

The Council of Europe is looking for a maximum of 3 (three) Provider(s) (provided enough tenders meet the criteria indicated below) in order to support the implementation of the project with a particular expertise on on hosting services, maintenance, technical support, and development of internet platforms/sites.

This Contract is currently estimated to cover up to 200 activities to be held by 31 December 2027. 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 80 000 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: Maintenance, hosting, and development of the ELFY Moodle-based platform	1
Lot 2: Maintenance, hosting, and development of the YOUTHAPPLICATIONS platform	1
Lot 3: Development, maintenance, and hosting of a platform for publishing call-offs for consultants on the Youth Department rosters for consultancy services for educational, training and other services provided for the Youth Department.	1

Lot 1 concerns hosting of the platform, maintenance in the form of yearly updates to the latest version of the Moodle platform, technical support in the form of bug fixing, addition, customisation, and upgrade of specific plug-ins from Moodle to respond to specific needs of the Youth Department.

Lot 2 concerns hosting of the EZ based internet platform <https://youthapplications.coe.int> and its sub-site(s), maintenance in the form of regular platform upgrade and security patches for the EZ based sites and platforms, technical support in the form of bug fixing, removing any data solely related to the former Trainers Pool database from Youthapplications platform whilst providing a backup record.

Lot 3 concerns development of an online restricted web-space to accommodate communication and publishing call-offs for consultants selected into the rosters of the Youth Department for the provisions of consultancy services in the field of education, training and facilitation and other services required for the work of the Youth Department; hosting and maintenance services, technical support in the form of bug fixing based on a traceable ticket-system active 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with a maximum 12-hour delay for response and trouble-fixing, reduced to 3 hours in case of breakdown or non-accessibility of the internet site and its sub-site.

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:

Under Lot 1:

- Hosting of the platform <https://e-learning4youth.coe.int>, which includes:
 - provision of a minimum of 16 GB of disk space;
 - provision of a minimum of 10 MB broadband access;
 - daily back-up.
- Maintenance of the platform, which includes:
 - Yearly update to the latest version of the Moodle platform for <https://e-learning4youth.coe.int>.
- Technical support which includes:
 - Bug fixing based on a traceable ticket-system active 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with a maximum 12 hours delay for response and trouble-fixing, reduced to 3 hours in case of breakdown or non-accessibility of the platform.
- Development

- Addition, customisation, and upgrade of specific plug-ins from Moodle to specific courses , such as "Hotpot activity module," "Booking" plugin, "BigBlueButtonBN", etc.

Under Lot 2:

- Hosting of the EZ based internet site <https://youthapplications.coe.int> and its sub-site(s), which includes:
 - provision of a minimum of 16 GB of disk space;
 - provision of a minimum of 10 MB broadband access;
 - daily back-up.
- Maintenance, which includes:
 - Regular website upgrade and security patches for the EZ based sites and platforms
- Technical support, which includes:
 - Bug fixing on the basis of a traceable ticket-system active 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with a maximum 12-hour delay for response and trouble-fixing, reduced to 3 hours in case of breakdown or non-accessibility of the internet site and its sub-site.
- Development which includes:
 - Removing any data solely related to the former Trainers Pool database from Youthapplications platform whilst providing a backup record.

Under Lot 3:

- Creating an online restricted web-space for up to 400 consultants (external users) and staff of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe with two forums for sharing the call-offs under each roster (roster 1 and roster 2) with the possibilities of restricting access to consultants contracted under each category – 2 categories under roster 1 and 6 categories under roster 2 with the following characteristics:

User Registration System: Secure registration process (email verification, CAPTCHA, or 2-factor authentication), User profile management (edit profile information, change passwords, update email, etc.), GDPR-compliant data handling and privacy policies for personal information.

User Profile Features: Customisable profiles (avatars, bios, user interests), Public and private profile views (users can set visibility preferences)

Forum Categories and Threads: Hierarchical structure of categories, sub-categories, and threads, Thread creation by registered users with title, content, and tags, Thread sorting and filtering options (recent, popular, most replied).

Post Features: Rich-text editor for creating posts (text formatting, image, and file attachment capabilities), Markdown or WYSIWYG support for easy content creation, Ability to quote, reply, and mention other users in posts, Threaded discussions and nested replies for better conversation flow.

User Interaction and Moderation Tools: Real-time notifications for replies, mentions, and messages, User tagging and mentions in posts, Bookmarking or following threads for updates.

Moderation System: Role-based access for admins, moderators, and regular users, Moderation tools (edit, delete, move posts/threads, ban users). Automated moderation features (spam detection, inappropriate content filtering).. Reporting mechanism for users to flag inappropriate posts.

Search and Filtering Features: Search Functionality: Full-text search across threads, posts, and user profiles. Filters for searching within specific categories, tags, or time frames.

- Hosting and Maintenance, which includes:
 - Maintenance of restricted online space (forum) ensuring that it is constantly updated and checked for bugs.
 - Hosting Environment: Cloud-based infrastructure (e.g. AWS, Google Cloud, or Azure).
 - Backup and recovery mechanisms for data integrity.
 - Maintenance and Support: Regular updates and patch management.
- Technical Support, which includes:

- Bug fixing based on a traceable ticket-system active 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with a maximum 12-hour delay for response and trouble-fixing, reduced to 3 hours in case of breakdown or non-accessibility of the internet site and its sub-site.

All tools, plug-ins and functions developed for the Internet platforms and sites shall be made available for translation and adaptation by the Council of Europe into other languages. Any developments in the platform must respect the existing architecture and secure the stability of all current features. All software must be open source; customisation or purchase costs of specific plug-ins are of the entire and sole responsibility of the service provider and must, therefore, be included in the costs proposed.

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.

The datacentres hosting each or all of the three platforms must be based in the European Union, including Cloud-based infrastructures (e.g. AWS, Google Cloud, or Azure) – please see also the [Cloud checklist \(appendix 1\)](#).

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.

The Council will indicate on each Order Form (see Section D below) the number of units ordered, calculated on the basis of the unit fees, as agreed by this Contract.

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).

Providers subject to VAT

The Provider, **if subject to VAT**, shall also send, together with each signed Form, a quote² (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

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.

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.

E. 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

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.

Eligibility criteria

- At least 5 years of experience with providing hosting, maintenance, development and support to online platforms and sites based on open-source applications and experience with Moodle and/or EZ publishing;
- Ability to conduct the work in English at B2 level or higher (CEFR),
- Capacity to meet the deadlines indicated in the Terms of reference.

Award criteria

- Quality of the offer (40 points), including:
 - Conformity with the requirements of the technical specifications (20 points);
 - Experience of staff designated for the execution of the contract (20 points).
- Financial offer (60 points).

Multiple tendering is not authorised.

F. NEGOTIATIONS

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

G. DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED

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.

- **A completed and signed copy of the Act of Engagement⁴** (See attached);
- A detailed CV, preferably in Europass Format, demonstrating clearly that the tenderer fulfils the eligibility criteria; For legal persons, the CVs of the persons proposed to be assigned to the contract, should be included.
- Registration documents, for legal persons only;
- For tenderers subject to VAT only: a quote, describing their financial offer, in line with the requirements of section C of the Tender File (see above);
- Technical offer;
- A completed [Cloud Checklist \(appendix 1\)](#) if any of the services or applications will be cloud-based.
- Up to 3 samples of the previous work, in the form of links to any web content.

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.

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.

* * *

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.