

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

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Purchase of consultancy services on Developing knowledge and tools on anti-gender rhetoric and creating effective positive narratives and communication tools on promoting gender equality and preventing/combating violence against women.

Contract N°

The Council of Europe is currently implementing and until 28.02.2026 a Project on "*Developing knowledge and tools on anti-gender rhetoric and creating effective positive narratives and communication tools on promoting gender equality and preventing/combating violence against women*". In that context, it is looking for Provider(s) for the provision of *consultancy services to realise a general mapping of existing knowledge and relevant work within and outside the Council of Europe on anti-gender narratives; a preliminary assessment of effective positive narratives and other activities to promote gender equality and prevent/combat violence against women; support the work of the Gender Equality Commission (GEC) notably in a workshop in Strasbourg (France) on 20.11.2024; support the activities of a GEC Working Group on this topic in 2025; and to help develop effective positive messages and communication tools to be used by the Council of Europe and member states to deflect anti-gender rhetoric*, to be requested by the Council on an as needed basis.

This Contract will primarily benefit the Gender Equality Division. However, if needed, this Contract might be used also by other Units or Divisions within the Directorate of Equal Rights and Dignity.

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 €6,000 and € 55,000 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 – "Developing positive narratives on gender equality"** 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 10 (ten) 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 – Framework contract "Positive narratives on gender equality"**.

Type of contract ▶	Framework contract
Duration ▶	Until 28 February 2026
Deadline for submission of tenders/offers ▶	12 September 2024 23h59 CET
Email for submission of tenders/offers ▶	positive.narratives@coe.int
Email for questions ▶	gender.equality@coe.int
Expected starting date of execution ▶	30 September 2024

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 Council of Europe is currently implementing a Project on “Developing knowledge and tools on anti-gender rhetoric and creating effective positive narratives and communication tools on promoting gender equality and preventing/combating violence against women”.

In that context, it is looking for providers for the provision of consultancy services to develop research in the area of anti-gender / anti-rights movements and to support the development of effective positive narratives and other tools, with an aim to promote gender equality and prevent/combat violence against women. The focus of this work will be the impacts of anti-gender / anti-rights rhetoric on gender equality, gender-based violence including the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights and stakeholders promoting these topics, including feminist movements.

The Council of Europe is looking for a maximum of six Providers (provided enough tenders meet the criteria indicated below) in order to support the implementation of the project with a particular expertise on in researching and developing tools to deflect anti-gender rhetoric in Europe with a focus on their impacts on gender equality, gender-based violence including the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights and feminist movements. This work will include youth as a particular target group.

This Contract is currently estimated to cover up to ten activities, to be held by 28.02.2026. 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 50,000 Euros and the total amount of the object of present tender **shall not exceed 55,000 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.

Scope of the Framework Contract

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

- ✓ Draft a general mapping of existing knowledge and relevant work within and outside CoE on anti-gender rhetoric and a preliminary assessment of effective positive narratives and activities to promote gender equality. Deadline for delivery: 20.12.2024
- ✓ Present the preliminary findings of the above, at a workshop during a meeting of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Commission (GEC) on 20.11.2024 in Strasbourg, France.
- ✓ Support/prepare the work of a GEC working group on anti-gender rhetoric throughout 2025;
- ✓ Participate in the meetings if the GEC working group on anti-gender rhetoric. Meeting 1: one day, online, February-March 2025 (exact date tbc); Meeting 2, one day, online, June 2025 (exact date tbc).
- ✓ Participate and contribute to the second annual GEC plenary meeting of 2025 (November 2025, exact date tbc)
- ✓ Contribute to the development of effective positive narrative and communication tools to be used by the Council of Europe and member states to deflect anti-gender rhetoric.

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.

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.

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 global fee corresponding to each deliverable, 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).

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.

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 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.

² It must strictly respect the fees indicated in the Act of Engagement. In case of non-compliance with these fees, the Council of Europe reserves the right to terminate the Contract with the Provider, in all or in part.

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.

Eligibility criteria

- At least five years of experience in researching and countering anti-gender movements and narratives in Europe with a focus on their impacts on gender equality, gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights and feminist movements.
- Relevant experience of working on positive counter-narratives and communication tools to deflect anti-rights and anti-gender rhetoric.
- At least five years of experience of working on gender equality issues.
- Fluency in English or French (level C2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Language) is required.

In the case of consortia or legal entity these requirements should be met by all consultants who will be involved in the implementation of the contract.

Award criteria

Quality of the offer (80 points), including:

- Thematic expertise in the area (30 points).
- Experience in the relevant type of activity/deliverables especially in an international context or for international organisations (25 points).
- Drafting skills in English or French (25 points).

Financial offer (20 points).

The Council reserves the right to hold interviews with tenderers.

Multiple tendering is not authorised.

F. NEGOTIATIONS

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.

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

G. DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED

- **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;
- Registration documents, for legal persons only;
- A CV of the person(s) that will be involved in the implementation of this contract;
- A description of the structure, for legal persons and consortia only;
- A motivation letter including a short description of the relevant expertise and of the methodology proposed.

All documents shall be submitted in English or French, 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.

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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.