

TENDER FILE / TERMS OF REFERENCE

(Competitive bidding procedure / Framework Contract)



Purchase of communication and visibility services in the context of the Horizontal Facility III action on “Promoting equality and combating racism and intolerance in the Western Balkans”.

The Council of Europe is currently implementing the joint European Union and Council of Europe action on “Promoting equality and combating racism and intolerance in the Western Balkans”, part of the “Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye. In that context, it is looking for providers for the provision of communication and visibility services as part of the implementation of the action activities, 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 €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 legal person, a natural 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 – HF III: Western Balkans communication services**. 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 – HF III: Western Balkans communication services**.

Type of contract ▶	Framework contract
Duration ▶	Until 31 December 2026
Deadline for submission of tenders/offers ▶	10 June 2024 23h59 CET
Email for submission of tenders/offers ▶	tenders.antidiscrimination@coe.int
Email for questions ▶	tenders.antidiscrimination@coe.int
Expected starting date of execution ▶	01 July 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 an action on "Promoting equality and combating racism and intolerance in the Western Balkans" in the Western Balkans Beneficiaries, as part of the "Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye", a joint programme of the European Union and the Council of Europe aiming at supporting the Western Balkans and Türkiye to comply with European standards. The action is focused on supporting Beneficiaries in the region on countering racism, hate speech and hate crime; promoting and protecting rights of LGBTI persons; strengthening anti-discrimination institutions/mechanisms and coordination in line with standards of the Council of Europe, notably the recommendations of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI).

The Council of Europe is looking for a maximum of 15 (fifteen) providers (provided enough tenders meet the criteria indicated below) to support the implementation of the project with a particular expertise in communications, notably graphic, video and audio production, PR activities, handling of visibility events.

This Contract is currently estimated to cover up to 20 activities, to be held by 31 December 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 700,000 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.

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: Production of audio-video materials	5
Lot 2: Development of graphic solutions	5
Lot 3: Provision of services related to communications, visibility and awareness raising	5

Lot 1 concerns production of audio-video materials (i.e., creating, recording /editing of videos, adding subtitles/voice over video, other post-production of existing video materials).

Lot 2 concerns development of graphic solutions (i.e., social media visuals, graphics for billboard/citylights; adapting existing graphic material for promotional/publication purposes; devise infographics, adaptation of publications and related materials in local languages).

Lot 3 concerns provision of services related to communications, visibility and raise awareness (i.e. elaboration and implementation of creative concepts for events; management of social media accounts; PR activities such as preparing/distributing press release, keep contact with local media/TV programmes; arranging interviews and participation of EU/CoE and other testimonials involved in the awareness raising initiatives in social media/TV/other media activities).

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:

undertake recording /editing of videos, adding subtitles/voice over video, other post-production of existing video materials.

Under Lot 2:

produce social media visuals, graphics for billboard/citylights; adapting existing graphic material for promotional/publication purposes; devise infographics; adaptation of Council of Europe/European Union publications and related material to local languages.

Under Lot 3:

elaborate and implement creative concepts for events; management of social media accounts; PR activities such as preparing/distributing press release, keep contact with local media/TV programs; arrange interviews and participation of COE/EU and other testimonials involved in the awareness raising initiatives in TV/other media activities.

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 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. Tenders proposing fees above the exclusion level indicated in the Table of fees will be **entirely and automatically** excluded from the tender procedure.

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).

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 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.

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;
- are or if their owner(s) or executive officer(s), in the case of legal persons, are included in the lists of persons or entities subject to restrictive measures applied by the European Union (available at www.sanctionsmap.eu).

Eligibility criteria

- At least 3 (three) years of proved experience in the field of communications and PR activities;
- Excellent knowledge of English language, spoken and written;
- Knowledge of local languages of the Western Balkans will be an asset.

Award criteria

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.

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;
- 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).

- Quality of the offer **80 points**, including:
 - Quality of samples of communication products provided (videos/social media pages/graphic solutions).
- Financial offer: **20 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

- **A completed and signed copy of the Act of Engagement⁴** (See attached);
- Detailed company presentation/portfolio clearly demonstrating that the tenderer fulfils the eligibility criteria.
- A list of all owners and executive officers, for legal persons only;
- Links or documents enclosed to Tender e-mails providing samples of products such as (1) videos produced; (2) social media pages handled; (3) graphic solutions.

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.

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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.