

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

Purchase of the provision of services for implementation of local level activities on combating hate speech for the projects “Enhancing Equality and Non-Discrimination in Georgia” and “Combating Hate Speech in Georgia”.
Contract N° BH4960/9189/2024/2



The Council of Europe is currently implementing a Project **“Enhancing Equality and Non-Discrimination in Georgia”**, which aims at strengthening the promotion and protection of the rights of vulnerable groups and minorities in Georgia against discrimination, hate speech and hate crime, and a project on **“Combating hate speech in Georgia”** within the third Phase of the joint programme of the European Union and the Council of Europe “Partnership for Good Governance” to promote Council of Europe and international standards in the field of promoting equality and non-discrimination and combating hate speech.

In that context, it is looking for Provider(s) for the provision of services for implementation of local level activities (trainings, workshops, forums, initiatives, etc.) on combating hate speech, engaging public, members of public administration, prosecution office, the police, civil society and education experts, 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 five 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 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 – BH4960/9189 – Provision of local level activities on combating hate speech.** 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 – BH4960/9189 – Provision of local level activities on combating hate speech.**

Type of contract ▶	Framework contract
Duration ▶	Until 28 February 2026
Deadline for submission of tenders/offers ▶	24 February 2025 23h59 CET
Email for submission of tenders/offers ▶	antidiscrimination.georgia@coe.int
Email for questions ▶	antidiscrimination.georgia@coe.int
Expected starting date of execution ▶	10 March 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 Council of Europe is currently implementing the Projects "**Enhancing Equality and Non-Discrimination in Georgia**", and "**Combating hate speech in Georgia**" which aim at strengthening the promotion and protection of the rights of vulnerable groups and minorities in Georgia against discrimination, hate speech and hate crime.

The overall objective of the project "**Enhancing Equality and Non-Discrimination in Georgia**" is to improve protection from and provide effective redress for discrimination and hate crimes affecting people from diverse ethnic, religious groups, and the LGBTI community.

The specific objectives are:

1. Justice system representatives provide more effective responses and victim support to hate crimes, including those targeting ethnic and religious minorities and LGBTI persons, and use collected data to propose evidence-based policies.
2. Representatives of the private sector, civil society organisations and resource officers use awareness raising tools effectively to advocate for the rights of minority groups and available redress mechanisms.

The project will work with the following partners: the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Prosecutor's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the Special Investigation Service, Courts, civil society organisations, the Coalition for Equality, the private sector, media and the Office of Resource Officers of Educational Institutions.

The project "**Combating Hate Speech in Georgia**" supports the coordination among state authorities, legal and law enforcement professionals, civil society, etc., to adapt domestic frameworks in line with international standards and apply those standards to prevent and combat hate speech in Georgia.

The project's overall objective is to improve co-operation among stakeholders to prevent and combat hate speech in Georgia, including better protection of vulnerable groups and more accessible redress mechanisms in line with European standards and best practices.

The specific objectives are:

1. Georgian institutions respond to hate speech in a systemic and co-ordinated manner involving relevant non-state stakeholders based on shared awareness of the dangers posed by hate speech and the effect it has on those targeted by it;
2. Local authorities and non-state stakeholders build common understanding of hate speech, as well of the dangers it poses those targeted in vulnerable situations and are able to respond to it through prevention and protection measures.

The project will work with the following partners: the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Prosecutor's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the State Ministry for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, including the Office of Resource Officers of Educational Institutions, local authorities and municipalities, civil society organisations.

The Council of Europe is looking for a maximum of **10 (ten) provider(s)** (provided enough tenders meet the criteria indicated below) in order to support the implementation of the project with a particular expertise in the field of the combat of hate speech. Specifically, Provider(s) will be requested to support legal and policy developments in the field of hate speech, capacity building activities to address it, and the development of counter narratives on the hate speech at central and local level.

The Contract may potentially represent a higher or lower number of activities, depending on the evolving needs of the Organisation.

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 provide the deliverables listed in the Act of Engagement (See Section A – Terms of reference). This list is considered exhaustive.

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.

The Providers engaged under the Framework Contract are expected to support the implementation of local-level activities aimed at combating hate speech and fostering equality. This includes establishing and facilitating local action groups to promote inclusive dialogue, organising workshops and forums to engage stakeholders and raise awareness, developing tools and strategies to address hate speech and communicate through human rights narratives, and delivering educational activities such as trainings and follow-up actions at the local level.

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.

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

- The Provider must be a registered legal entity specialised in the field of human rights, non-discrimination, equality, hate speech and hate crimes.
- The provider must have a minimum of three years of proven experience in implementing projects and/or activities related to combating hate speech, or related fields such as human rights, non-

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.

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.

discrimination, human rights policy support and education, etc (the Provider shall ensure that personnel allocated to the execution of the contract meets the qualifications, professional experience and expertise outlined in the Tender File).

Award criteria

- Quality of the offer (50 points), including:
 - A demonstrated record of development of capacity building initiatives and legal/policy support on hate speech, including in the development of counternarratives to hatred.
 - A proven record of managing projects and/or activities at the local level, and in cooperation with local stakeholders, in Georgia.
- Financial offer (50 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);
- A cover letter summarizing the application and confirming the bidder's commitment to the project.
- Resumes or CVs of key personnel involved in the project, highlighting relevant experience and expertise (even online links).
- Brief Description (or online links) of previous projects related to combating hate speech or related fields.
- Proof of activities at the local level in Georgia and work with local stakeholders (even online links)

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.