

TENDER FILE / TERMS OF REFERENCE

(Competitive bidding procedure / Framework Contract)

Consultancy services in the field of Language Education Policy and Practice

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

The Council of Europe's Education Department has a long-standing history of working in the field of language education, considered as an essential component for strengthening social cohesion and promoting democratic culture. In this context, it is looking for Provider(s) for the provision of "Consultancy services in the field of language education (policy and practice) to contribute to its programme for 2026-2027 to be requested 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 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 services in the field of Language Education and Policy. 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 addresses indicated below with the following reference in subject: Questions - Tender - Consultancy services in the field of Language Education Policy and Practice

	Until 31 December 2027
Deadline for submission of tenders/offers ►	09 February 2026 23h59 CET
Email for submission of tenders/offers ►	DGII.EDU.Dept@coe.int
	DGII.EDU.Dept@coe.int
	02 March 2026

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

Over the past 70 years, the Council of Europe has developed a wide range of resources in the field of language education such as policy and curricula guides, teacher education and classroom resources as well as academic articles advocating for the valorisation and implementation of plurilingual and intercultural education. The vast range of tools includes dedicated [linguistic support for migrants](#) to help them integrate and participate fully in democratic societies and the Council's flagship instrument in this field is [the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages \(CEFR\)](#), and its more recent update, the CEFR Companion Volume.

In its programme for 2026-2027 which sits within the Education Strategy 2024-2030: Learners First, the division will continue to provide targeted support to member states in line with the following three Committee of Ministers' Recommendations: Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2008\)7](#) on the use of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the promotion of plurilingualism, Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2022\)1](#) on the Importance of Plurilingual and Intercultural Education for Democratic Culture and Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2025\)6](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on qualifications and linguistic competences of refugees in Europe.

The work will focus on the following non-exhaustive list of topics: improving the quality, fairness, and inclusiveness of language education through transparent CEFR implementation, further linguistic support to migrants and refugees by advocating for fair, transparent, portable, and accessible testing of their language skills, and establishing a European profile of the state of plurilingual and intercultural education in Council of Europe member states which in turn will inform future policy making. These three main strands of work will also touch upon the impact of generative AI and new technologies on language learning, teaching and assessment, and the role of language education in vocational education and training, among others.

This Contract is currently estimated to cover up to 60 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.

In this context, the Council of Europe is looking for a maximum of 20 Providers (provided enough tenders meet the criteria indicated below) in order to support the implementation of the project with a particular expertise on language education and language policy.

The Contract resulting from this competitive bidding will be available for use by all entities within the Council of Europe.

For information purposes only, the total budget of the project amounts to 250 000 Euros for two years and the total amount of the object of present tender should in principle not exceed 171 000 Euros tax exclusive. Euros 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

The framework contract will be valid until the end of 2027 and can be extended until the end of 2029 if needed. Throughout the duration of the Framework Contract, pre-selected Providers may be asked to provide the following deliverables and to comply with the following specifications and requirements:

- Draft, review and/or provide policy, opinions and recommendations on curricular and study programmes, legislation and practices related to language education;
- Provide thematic expertise related to the above mentioned areas;
- Design/develop tools and methodologies for policy making;
- Prepare learning and teaching resources, including in the online format;

- Design guidelines and proposals for new learning experiences/activities;
- Design and conduct research and desk studies, reviews, surveys, interviews, and comparative analysis;
- Translate academic research findings into practical advice and written briefs targeted at non-academic audiences;
- Draft analytical reports (e.g. evaluation, baseline, gap analysis);
- Collect, review and present good practices;
- Synthesise existing evidence into briefs and practical guidance;
- Design/develop visibility materials (e.g. leaflets, brochures, infographics, posters) and visuals (e.g. logos, illustrations);
- Contribute to the preparation (e.g. drafting concept notes and programmes) of project activities (working/expert group meetings, workshops, conferences, high-level meetings, podcasts and other audiovisual products, roundtables, training seminars, webinars) and participate (e.g. giving presentations, moderating sessions, reporting on the results) at these activities, which may be organised as physical or online meetings.

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 unit fees, by completing the table of fees, as attached in Section A of 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 the global fee corresponding to each deliverable, calculated on the basis of the daily fees, as agreed by this Contract.

D. HOW WILL THIS FRAMEWORK CONTRACT WORK? (Ordering Procedure)

Once this consultation and the subsequent selection are completed, you will be informed accordingly. Deliverables will then be carried out on the basis of Order Forms submitted by the Council to the selected Service Provider(s), by post or electronically, on an as needed basis (there is therefore no obligation to order on the part of the Council).

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.

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.

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 Service 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 Service 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 which is appended to this document.

E. ASSESSMENT

Exclusion criteria (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;

² It must strictly respect the fees indicated in Section A of the Act of Engagement as recorded by the Council of Europe. In case of non-compliance with the fees as indicated in the Act of Engagement, the Council of Europe reserves the right to terminate the Contract with the Service 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 requirements listed above under "exclusion criteria" are met;
- A certificate issued by the competent authority of the country of incorporation indicating that the fourth requirement 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 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;
- are subject to restrictive measures applied by the United Nations Security Council of 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
<u>Education</u> : Minimum Master's degree in language education, applied linguistics, or related field, or equivalent professional experience;	CV
<u>Work experience</u> : Minimum 5 years of international work experience in language education;	CV
<u>Specific thematic expertise</u> : confirmed expertise in the implementation of CEFR at policy level; confirmed international expertise in advising/guiding policy development in different country contexts about language education, or confirmed expertise in the assessment of language proficiency.	CV (including the list of previous projects, publications and samples of work)
<u>Language skills</u> : at least C1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages in English and at least B2 level in French	CV Certification of language, or proof of work in the language concerned

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 F.

For legal persons only: legal persons are requested to include in their bids the profiles of a maximum of one 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.⁴

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 one 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.⁵

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 (80 points), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Experience in providing technical expertise and advice in policy development and implementation in language education (40 points); ○ Experience in working with international organisations in language education either at policy or practice level (20 points); ○ Familiarity with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and other Council of Europe instruments in language policy and practice (20 points); 	CV (including the list of previous projects, publications and samples of work)
Financial offer (20 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:

- For Consultancy services ONLY: 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;

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

- 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

F. DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED

- One completed and signed copy of the Act of Engagement;⁶
- A list of all owners and executive officers, for legal persons only;
- All the documents listed above, under Section E, necessary for the assessment of the bid under the eligibility and award criteria
- If English and/or French is not the native language, proof of language proficiency (a graduate degree from a department where the language of instruction is fully English, or proof of language test taken; i.e. TOEFL, IELTS, or national language exams, or proof of published work in the language concerned);
- List of at least two references including contact details
- Motivation letter

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.

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 are of such a quality that the documents cannot be read.

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⁶ 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.