

Call for Tender for Qualitative Research Consultancy

The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party (ALDE Party) is a European political party that brings together parties with common liberal, democrat and reform ideas from more than 30 European countries. The Brussels-based ALDE Party Secretariat supports the activities of the Party; organises its meetings; manages its external communication; and facilitates European policy development and networking amongst liberal parties. To support our growing activities, we are now seeking a:

Service provider on qualitative research on liberal political identity in 5 EU countries

Need to define the liberal political identity

As part of its research programme, the ALDE Party seeks to commission qualitative research across five EU countries to define what liberalism represents today and to identify the unifying liberal identity that can resonate with liberal voters across Europe. This research initiative builds on the findings of the ALDE quantitative survey conducted in September 2024, which revealed a persistent identity crisis and trust gap among liberal voters across Europe. For many, the **political identity of liberal parties remains unclear**, and doubts persist regarding the capacity of liberals to address people's challenges effectively.

Qualitative research, particularly focus groups, is an essential tool to address the identity challenge and craft a **distinctive and inspirational political identity for European liberals**. It provides nuanced insights into voter perceptions, values, and emotional responses, offering a deeper understanding of how liberal ideas are perceived and how they can be framed to resonate more effectively. This approach aims to articulate a liberal political identity that transcends being a lowest common denominator of diverse liberal perspectives across Europe.

Instead, the goal is to create a unifying, aspirational identity that connects with voters and strengthens the broader liberal movement. By doing so, this research will contribute to reinforcing the ALDE Party's brand and fostering a distinctive European liberal identity that supports winning political strategies.

The expected timeline for conducting the focus groups is anticipated to start in March 2025. The final reports summarizing the findings and insights from these focus groups are expected to be delivered between April 2025 and the end of the second trimester of the same year. The specific timelines for each country will be confirmed in writing with the selected provider, based on availability and other relevant factors.

Maximum estimated value of the contract: 150.000€ excluding VAT.

Research objectives

The qualitative research should reach the following objectives:

OBJECTIVE 1: Address the trust gap

Craft narratives that resonate with liberal voters by engaging directly with them to understand their priorities, concerns, and expectations. These insights will enable liberal parties to present compelling messages to demonstrate their ability to deliver tangible results, enhancing their relevance and appeal.

OBJECTIVE 2: Resolve the identity crisis

Explore symbolic and emotional responses associated with liberal values and different aspects of liberalism. The research will guide the creation of a distinctive and aspirational liberal identity that ALDE and its member parties can adopt. This unified identity will rally liberal voters around shared goals and ideas, strengthening the liberal movement across Europe.

OBJECTIVE 3: Set the basis for ALDE's long-term Communication Strategy (2025-2029)

Utilize qualitative findings to develop an inclusive and effective communication strategy that aligns with liberal voters' values and aspirations. This strategy will foster stronger connections and build sustained support for the ALDE Party, ensuring alignment with evolving needs of member parties and reinforcing the party's positioning as a leading platform for European liberalism.

Research questions

1. What kind of identity can unite liberal parties from progressive to conservative?
2. What do liberal voters today expect from their politicians?
3. What kind of ALDE Party identity would support and unite the member parties the most?

These indicative questions will help shape the discussion guidelines. A well-crafted discussion guide is essential for structuring the session. It should include open-ended, clear, and unbiased questions that encourage participants to share their thoughts and feelings, fostering meaningful conversation.

Approach

The objective is to develop a political identity narrative that liberal voters and member parties value and are eager to adopt, thereby strengthening their connection to a shared European liberal vision. This initiative is not a rebranding exercise but rather an effort to uncover the core story, foundational communication line, and key messaging framework from which all ALDE Party communication activities will evolve. The aim is to make ALDE's vision and purpose clearer and more compelling not only to potential voters but also to party members.

Focus groups composition

Focus groups should serve as the primary qualitative research tool to gain in-depth insights into the perspectives of the liberal electorate. Through structured discussions, we aim to explore voters' views on:

- ✓ Key political and social issues
- ✓ The political dynamics within their countries
- ✓ The performance and perception of local liberal parties
- ✓ ALDE's European profile

The research should consist of, at least, four focus groups in each of the following strategically selected countries:

- **Germany:** A large member state
- **Belgium:** A country where liberals perform well
- **Spain:** A country where liberals face challenges
- **Poland:** A country without ALDE representation
- **Lithuania:** A representative of the Baltic region

The number of focus groups organised per country may vary depending on several factors. The previously mentioned estimate of four focus groups per country is indicative and flexible, allowing for adjustments as needed without committing the ALDE Party. Upon request, other EU countries may be considered to replace one or more selected countries due to various reasons, such as political circumstances.

Additionally, the number of countries involved could be expanded to include others, provided the budget allows.

Developing identity and narrative

Using insights gathered from the focus groups, a cohesive political identity, narrative, and main slogan will be developed. These will reflect ALDE's principles, resonate with the liberal electorate, and align with the party's aspirations for the future.

Validating outcomes through quantitative research

The proposed identity and narrative will be tested through a quantitative survey across all ALDE member states. This step will ensure that the final product resonates effectively with diverse audiences and provides measurable guidance for future communication strategies.

Description of services

To support this aim, the ALDE Party is hiring a contractor to assist the ALDE Party Secretariat with the following services:

- Provide technical expertise on qualitative research on the issue of liberal political identity
- Together with ALDE Party, selection of local research firms to run focus groups and coordination of the research with those firms.
- Conduct, at least, four focus groups with different liberal voter and target demographics in each of the five selected European countries, for a total up to 20 individual focus groups.
- Drafting of focus group guidelines
- Briefing of focus group moderators
- Drafting of screening questionnaires
- Analysis of focus group outcomes
- Creation of country-specific reports on the outcomes in each of the countries and a summary report on insights relating to all.
- In-person results presentation upon request

Exclusion criteria

Participation in this tender procedure is only open to tenderers (all entities involved, including subcontractors and consortium members) that are not in a situation of exclusion, which includes:

- bankruptcy and insolvency situations.
- non-payment of taxes or social security contributions.
- grave professional misconduct.
- fraud, corruption, participation in a criminal organisation etc.
- serious breach of contract.

Selection criteria

- More than 2 years of work experience in qualitative research and evaluation services
- Proven work experience in European politics.
- Firms located outside the European Union will be taken into consideration, but preference will be given to contractors based within the European Union. The contractor must have flexibility to travel to the ALDE Party headquarters, if required.
- Contractor must be able to issue invoices and receive payments in (EUR) currency.
- Excellent knowledge of English (written and spoken).

Award criteria

The contract will be awarded on the basis of the *best value for money* award criteria, taking into account both quantitative and qualitative criteria. Should the outcome of the evaluation lead to two or more tenders with the same result, the tenderer who has been awarded the highest marks for quality will be deemed to be the most economically advantageous tender. The maximum total quality score is 100 points. For each of the individual technical award criteria, tenderers must obtain a minimum of 50% of the maximum number of points.

Qualitative award criteria - 70%	Minimum points	Maximum points
Demonstrated expertise and technical capabilities in delivering the required services within the context of European politics and political parties. This criterion will be assessed based on the submission of a portfolio (pdf document of up to five A4 pages excluding the cover page) showcasing relevant examples of prior work. The portfolio should specifically highlight experience in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting focus groups effectively to gather qualitative insights. • Developing political identity and narratives tailored to the European political landscape. 	25	50
Quality and relevance of the proposed methodology for data collection. This criterion will assess the clarity, relevance, and	25	50

<p>practicality of the proposed methodology. The following aspects will be evaluated:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus Group Design: selection of participants to ensure diverse and representative groups and number, size, and composition of focus groups, aligned with the research objectives. 2. Data Collection Approach: techniques for moderating discussions and capturing insights effectively and tools or technologies used for recording, transcription, and analysis. 3. Ethical standards: adherence to GDPR and research ethics, including participant confidentiality and informed consent. 4. Analysis and reporting: methods for analyzing and summarizing findings into actionable insights 5. Feasibility: a clear timeline and risk management plan to ensure successful implementation. 		
Quantitative criteria – 30%	Minimum points	Maximum points
Overall economic offer as indicated in Appendix I (ALDE Party will reimburse travel expenses related to the delivery of the work upon submission of a valid invoice, ticket, or receipt. All reimbursed expenses must comply with the travel policy specified in Annex III, which will form part of the contract. Please note that travel time will not be reimbursed.)	50	100

How to apply?

To submit your application, please prepare a detailed proposal in English that addresses the following:

Technical offer

- Provide a clear description of your experience, methodology and approach to delivering qualitative research services.
- Address the objectives, requirements, and selection criteria outlined in this tender.
- It must be presented in a pdf document of up to 15 A4 pages excluding the cover page.

Portfolio:

- Include examples of past work, such as focus groups and the development of political identity and narratives.
- Demonstrate your experience working with political parties and within the context of European politics.
- It must be presented in a pdf document of up to five A4 pages excluding the cover page.

Pricing:

- Submit a detailed pricing structure in line with Appendix I.

- Clearly outline any additional fees or charges, if applicable.

Exclusion and selection criteria: submit Appendix II filled in and signed

Tenders must be submitted together with Appendix I and II filled in and signed, by **20 February** to Raphael Velez, Campaigns adviser at the ALDE party (rvelez@aldeparty.eu) with compliance@aldeparty.eu in copy. Questions should be addressed to both rvelez@aldeparty.eu and compliance@aldeparty.eu. The final decision will be communicated no later than **28 February 2025**.