



Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Advice and Compliance
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
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Date: 13 January 2012

INVITATION TO TENDER

Dear Prospective Contractor,

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland wishes to commission a project entitled: **Assessment of future requirements for the Commission's good relations advice in relation to public authority decision making on contested issues 2012.**

We would be grateful to receive your submission. If you wish to apply, in addition to this letter you should review in full the attached "**Terms of Reference**" and the associated "**Tender Response Guidelines**" which contain details on the required content and format of responses, as well as information on how proposals will be assessed.

Please note:

- It would be helpful to us if contractors could forward confirmation of interest in submitting a proposal to sgray@equalityni.org by 16:00 on **Monday 23 January 2012**.
- The deadline for receipt of completed submissions for this project is **12:00 noon on Tuesday 31 January 2012**. Applications received after that time will not be considered.
- It is anticipated that the contract will be awarded the first week in **February 2012**. The successful contractor should be available to commence work immediately thereafter. The project should be planned so that a Draft Final Report is available for discussion by the end of March 2012
- The indicative budget for the project reflects the range for the Commission's previous 2007 "Employer Satisfaction" survey. In line with current market circumstances the Commission expects to receive bids that are cost competitive.
- Should you have any queries regarding any aspect of this invitation to tender, please contact me on **028 90 500 615** (lking@equalityni.org), or **Jacqui McKee** on **028 90 500 631** (jmckee@equalityni.org).

If, for any reason, you are unable to tender for this project yourself, I would be most grateful if you would pass the documentation on to others whom you consider to have the required expertise. If you have received this information via a colleague or other source, you can in future receive information directly by joining our research register – further details via www.equalityni.org/research.

I hope you will give this matter your full consideration, and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely



Eileen Lavery
Head of Advice and Compliance

Terms of Reference

Project Name

Assessment of future requirements for the Commission's good relations advice in relation to public authority decision making on contested issues.

Project Context

Background

The Equality Commission regularly provides advice to employers, service providers and others on the promotion and protection of good relations including on issues around the display of flags and emblems.

The purpose of such advice is to assist those with equality responsibilities to comply with such responsibilities including under the fair employment and treatment legislation which makes discrimination on grounds of religion and politics unlawful and under the equality duties of section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Commission has guidance in place which forms the basis of its advice, this includes "Promoting Good Relations, A Guide for Public Authorities", arising from the duties in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and published in 2007. In 2009 we revised our guidance on Promoting A Good and Harmonious Working Environment following a detailed consultation exercise. The Revised Guide has been well received by employers and is considered to be of assistance in the workplace. We now wish extend or revise our guidance on promoting good relations outside the workplace and ensure it is of equivalent utility.

In addition to our guidance documents, our staff regularly receive requests for advice on equality and good relations and the display of flags and emblems and other related matters. The advice sought is generally on decision making in a political environment and on contested issues. The need for advice on good relations issues such as the display of flags and emblems comes principally from the local government sector, but is also sought by a range of public authorities and service providers, generally around specific events, memorials and civic occasions.

The Equality Commission recognises that, in the context of a range of centenary events and commemorations in the forthcoming decade, public authorities have decisions to make or policies to adopt relating to this. These decisions are also subject to the statutory duty that requires them to "pay regard to the desirability of promoting good relations"¹, the other requirements of Section 75 and the anti-discrimination legislation.

To inform the further development of its advice and guidance in the area of public authority decision making on politically contentious issues, the Commission wishes to commission a paper that sets out a full consideration of the issues facing public authorities when making decisions that have good relations implications and proposes to the Commission how it should extend its advice and guidance to address the issues identified.

¹ Section 75 (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 provides that Without prejudice to its obligations under subsection (1), a public authority shall in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The Commission wishes to receive proposals from organisations, teams or individuals with relevant knowledge and expertise of:

1. good relations issues and practice in Northern Ireland, with a particular focus on the anti-discrimination legislation and the statutory equality duties;
2. relevant data and research and academic sources and literature relating to good relations in Northern Ireland;
3. present equality and good relations practice in the sectors in which these issues are most relevant.

The Commission wishes the work to commence immediately. Accordingly the project should be planned so that a Draft Final Report is available for discussion by the end of March 2012.

PROJECT SCOPE / REQUIREMENTS

Aim (Overall the project will achieve:)

To inform the ECNI understanding of the good relations issues public authorities are having to address in their decision making, particularly in the context of the range of commemorations in the forthcoming decade, and propose the structure of and main components of future advice or guidance for the Commission.

Objectives (Completion of this project will result in:)

A report for the Equality Commission that is fully referenced and no longer than 10000 words, that briefly includes:

1. A contextual introduction, setting out key issues in the public policy framework that are currently in place or under consideration to address relevant good relations matters, including the part sectarianism plays in dividing Northern Ireland, and identifies the policy framework including the CSI strategy, the impact of the flags protocol and the community relations programmes in local government. There should also be an overview of other strategic interventions that address the issues of concern (i.e. community based action and other organizations' such as city Council action).
2. The issues that are faced by public authorities in their decision making, and this should draw upon examples of successful processes, as well as the issues that remain and therefore highlight potential gaps in advice.
3. Detailed consideration of the application of the Commission's role and remit to these issues, identifying the points of intervention for the Commission and on which it can provide advice. This needs to take into account the current guidance available and the processes that the Commission recommends for decision making, ie screening and Equality Impact Assessment.

In order to provide:

4. An outline of main components of advice and/or the substantive issues that the Equality Commission could adopt, including , if appropriate, a set of principles a public body or other organization could utilize to assess the nature and context of each particular situation in preparing a response

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

The following supplementary information is intended to assist potential contractors in the tendering process. In proposing a methodology, the contractor is asked to **consider the value or otherwise** to their proposal of the following.

Scope (including suggestions regarding Methodology)

Inclusions

In order to identify any gaps in the Commission's current advice we anticipate that the contractor will use his/her knowledge of these issues and the sectors most likely to be affected in order to identify a small number of stakeholders to provide further insights into their anticipated advice needs. The Commission anticipates that views should be sought from Belfast City Council particularly, as well as one or two others to reflect a range of the issues likely to arise.

The proposals need to be complementary to the Commission's current guidance and the processes it recommends in its Guide to the Statutory Duties (2010), particularly using screening and Equality Impact Assessments to aid decision making. The successful contractor should not focus on the interpretations of or the definitions of good relations as these are clearly set out in the Guide and its guidance on Promoting Good Relations (2007).

The paper needs to reflect adequately the particular circumstances of decision making in a political environment and the challenges this can present when considering issues that are also subject to the statutory duties of having due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity, regard to the desirability of promoting good relations and also the framework of the anti-discrimination legislation.

The Commission considers, from previous experience, that some of the relevant key issues for decision making in public authorities include:

- official commemorative events;
- erecting/siting or displaying official memorials/statues/memorabilia;
- unofficial memorials/statues/memorabilia, such as the removal of a memorial from public land or formalising its status;
- Action in relation to unofficial events;
- Grant award criteria.

Exclusions

The Commission is interested in the unique contribution it can make to promoting good relations and advising in the context of the Fair Employment and Treatment Order, therefore the project is not intended to provide a **detailed analysis** of the history or development of good relations or community relations in Northern Ireland, but it does need to provide sufficient contextual information to identify what the Commission needs to address.

The Commission does not need a list of or an assessment of the particular events forthcoming over the next decade.

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

What Deliverables are required? What must they contain?

The following documents must individually and collectively meet the required standards for acceptance² by the Commission.

Deliverable	Content
Project Initiation Document	The document will incorporate the detailed scope of the study, roles and responsibilities, assumptions, risks, deliverables, reporting and timing. The contractor shall provide the draft document in advance and meet with the project manager to agree same prior to the commencement of the project.
Draft Final Report and Final Report	Draft Final Report and Final Report should deliver on the aim and objectives as specified and additionally include: the aims and objectives and methodology. The Final Report - shall be with the Commission within 3 weeks of the Project Manager providing feedback on the Draft Final Report.
Summary Report	A separate summary version of the report
Presentation	A verbal presentation with associated visual aids (PowerPoint or similar) which fully summarises the research aims, processes, findings and recommendation – shall be given to an audience of the Commission's choosing at a date within 12 weeks of acceptance of the Final Report.

Proposed Budget

	Amount
The budget for this project should be in the broad range noted (including VAT and expenses)	£6,000 - £9,000

² Information on Quality / Acceptance standards are available separately from the Commission

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Response to Tender Guidelines

JANUARY 2011¹

This document sets out key details regarding the **tendering process** and the required **form and content of submissions**. Please read this document in full and in conjunction with the 'invitation to tender' cover letter and associated project 'Terms of Reference'.

1. TENDER PROCESS

A short tender document is required setting out the contractor's proposal to deliver the aim and objectives as set out in the project Terms of Reference and associated Invitation to Tender cover letter.

This section provides some information on the **tender process**. Section 2 (below) provides further information on the required **form and content** of the response to tender submission.

1.1. INVITATION TO TENDER.

Invitations to tender for specified research and evaluation projects will be placed on the 'Invitations to Tender' page available via www.equalityni.org/research

You can also register to receive information directly by joining our 'research register' – further details available via www.equalityni.org/research

1.2. SUBMISSION OF RESPONSE TO TENDER DOCUMENTATION

Tender documentation must be received by the specified deadline. No late proposals will be accepted.

¹ Revised July 2011

Proposals may be emailed in Microsoft Word format to sgray@equalityni.org or delivered to:

RESPONSE TO TENDER (Good Relations Advice 2012)

Steve Gray

**Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
Equality House
7-9 Shaftesbury Square
Belfast
BT2 7DP**

Note: Hard copy returns should be in a sealed envelope and marked 'Addressee only'.

- Tenders may be rejected if complete information is not given at the time of tendering.
- The Commission does not undertake to accept the lowest or any tenders or to pay expenses incurred in the preparation or submission of tenders.
- Once commissioned, all documents / results of the study will become the property of the Equality Commission.

1.3. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Tenders will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Understanding of requirements and literature;
- Methodology (to include feasibility, robustness and efficiency of approach);
- Timetable;
- Expertise (in related policy & research areas) and Experience (in undertaking similar projects);
- Sample of relevant written work;
- Cost

1.4. OUTCOMES

The Commission reserves the right to invite selected contractors to attend interview after the submission of tenders.

All contractors will be contacted by letter once the contract has been awarded

1.5. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

Under the Freedom of Information Act, the Commission as a public authority may be obliged to disclose information given by you in this exercise if requested.

2. FORMAT AND CONTENT OF SUBMISSIONS

For uniformity and ease of evaluation purposes, tenderers should submit proposals in the following format (where appropriate to the supplied terms of reference):

2.1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

include an **Executive Summary**, reflecting the structure of the response. This should also include a summary of the costs associated with the project.

2.2. UNDERSTANDING OF REQUIREMENTS

Demonstrate concisely your **understanding of project requirements** and of **associated policy and research literature** (where appropriate).

2.3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It is expected that the successful contractor will already be familiar with any relevant research/policy literature and relevant datasets.

Contractors should provide a detailed overview of the methodology which they feel is best suited to fulfilling the objectives of the project.

Contractors must indicate:

- which materials, reports and data sources they intend to use;

- how these will be used and their respective strengths / weaknesses with regard to delivering the aim and objectives of the proposal.

2.4. OUTPUTS² AND TIMETABLE

It is essential that all outputs are rigorous, evidence based and accessible to policymakers and, where appropriate, a lay audience.

Contractors are invited to propose a timetable appropriate to the project (indicating key milestones/dates for delivery of each of the deliverables listed in the Terms of Reference document). The timetable should demonstrate a capability to complete the exercise within the stated deadlines.

2.5. EXPERTISE & EXPERIENCE

The names and CVs of contractor(s); their expertise and experience of related research; the number of days they will spend on the project; and their specific roles and responsibilities within it.

In particular, who will be project manager and who will be responsible, where appropriate, for data collection, data analysis, report writing and presentation.

2.6. SAMPLE OF WRITTEN WORK

Contractors are invited to submit one example of their written report work that clearly and concisely conveys an analysis of data/information in line with the objectives of the project it relates to.

² Draft and Final Reports should reflect the following generic format: executive summary, background, aims & objectives, methodology, findings, discussion, conclusions and recommendations. Reports shall be produced in Arial font, size 12 using normal or bold type to ensure adequate contrast between the type and background. Text should not be printed over a visual image.

The Commission will likely provide feedback on deliverables (aligned to the project terms of reference or subsequent project initiation document) in three broad areas, namely: clarity and structure of document; robustness and validity of argument; and; contribution of the output to higher level / strategic debate.

The example provided should demonstrate clarity and conciseness of writing, drawing out key points from data/information analysis. It should also demonstrate overall ability to present findings in a manner that is appropriate to the audience.

2.7. **COSTING**

Contractors are invited to outline appropriate costs for the completion of the project. The contractor should present a total cost of the project and related work (including VAT) in pounds sterling; plus a breakdown of costs for each part of the project, showing (where applicable):

- daily rates and totals for staff, broken down by:
 - project design
 - project management
 - data collection
 - analysis
 - reporting
- travel and subsistence
- any other costs of administration
- any incentive payments
- institutional overheads

Contractors should include any other information which adds value to their proposal.

3. **ADDITIONAL OPTIONS:**

While contractors are required to submit a cost-effective bid to deliver the core elements of the work, they may also wish to give consideration to proposing **optional components** which would enhance the scope or reliability of the work. In instances where additional options are suggested, contractors should set out in detail the rationale for their optional element and provide *additional and separate* costing for these optional elements.