

IAGCI invites tenders to evaluate Home Office country information products

[Section 48\(2\)\(j\) of the UK Borders Act 2007](#) provides that the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI) shall:

consider and make recommendations about ... the content of information about conditions in countries outside the United Kingdom which the Secretary of State compiles and makes available, for purposes connected with immigration and asylum, to immigration officers and other officials.

To assist the Independent Chief Inspector in fulfilling this statutory role, a body of experts sitting as the [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information \(IAGCI\)](#) regularly reviews the country of origin information (COI) products that are issued by the Home Office. These reviews assess whether the content of COI is accurate, balanced, objective, and up-to-date, and they serve as the basis for an ICIBI inspection report.

Country of origin information

The Home Office refers to COI products in procedures that assess claims of individuals for refugee status or other forms of international and humanitarian protection. COI is also used in policy formulation. COI is contained in:

- Country Policy and Information Notes (CPINs)
- Country of Origin Information Request (COIR) responses

CPINs are generated on an ongoing basis, generally focusing on countries from which asylum claims are most commonly received. These reports may provide general background information on a country, address aspects of conditions in a country that are relevant to common types of asylum claims, and/or describe the current humanitarian or security situation in a country. CPINs are compiled from material produced by a range of recognised external information sources (such as news reports, academic literature, independent research reports, and fact-finding reports from UK government or from other governments). CPINs also contain Home Office policy on the recommended position to be taken with respect to various types of claims, based on the available and accepted country information.

COIR responses are prepared to address specific queries from caseworkers or other Home Office officials. These relate to information that is not covered in the CPINs.

Tender details

The IAGCI commissions country experts or experienced researchers to evaluate and report upon the information contained in Home Office COI products. The IAGCI requires an expert to review the following COI products (4 separate tenders, 1 for each country):

Tender 1: Myanmar (Burma)

Tender 2: Albania

Tender 3: the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Tender 4: Iraq

Description of work

Reviewers are asked to evaluate the extent to which the material under review provides an accurate, balanced, and up-to-date summary of the key available sources regarding conditions in the country covered and to identify any areas where the COI can be improved. Specifically, the review should entail:

- assessing the extent to which information from source documents has been appropriately and accurately reflected in the CPIN reports
- identifying additional sources detailing relevant aspects of current conditions in the country
- noting and correcting any specific errors or omissions of fact
- making recommendations for general improvements regarding, for example, the structure of the report, its coverage, or its overall approach
- ensuring no reference is made to an individual source which could expose them to risk

Reviewers should follow these specific guidelines:

- the review should focus exclusively on the COI contained within the document, and not pass judgment on the policy guidance provided
- COI products should be reviewed in the context of their purpose as set out above. It should consider the situation in the country up to the stated 'cut off' date for inclusion of information
- when suggesting amendments, rather than 'tracking changes' on the original CPIN, a list of suggested changes should be provided as part of a stand-alone review paper, and each report should be reviewed separately. A reporting template will be provided to reviewers
- any suggestions for additional information (or corrections to information in the document) must be referenced to a source document (preferably open source) for the Home Office to be able to use it. The Home Office may use foreign language source documents, but only if the information is considered essential and is not available in an English-language source

Previous reviews of COI products can be consulted on the [ICIBI website](#).

The selected reviewer will be requested to attend an IAGCI meeting at which the review will be discussed. (It is likely that this will be a virtual meeting, and in any case, alternative arrangements may be made if attendance at an in-person meeting is not possible.) Representatives from the Home Office will also attend the meeting to provide responses to comments and recommendations made in the review.

Reviews commissioned by the IAGCI will be published and may be used as source documents for future CPINs or other Home Office COI products.

How to apply

Researchers interested in conducting one of these reviews should submit:

- a one-page letter outlining relevant experience and expertise, including knowledge of human rights and/or asylum issues pertaining to the country covered by the COI under review
- their c.v.

Payment for this work will be set at £2,000. Expressions of interest should be submitted to IAGCI@icibi.gov.uk by close of Monday, 31 October.

Unfortunately, we are only able to accept expressions of interest from individuals and not from institutions or consultancy groups.

Successful bidders will be notified by Friday 4 November. Final reviews for all tenders will be due by the close of Tuesday, 3 January 2023, and will be discussed at an IAGCI meeting planned for early in the new year.