

IAGCI re-opens a call for tenders to evaluate the coverage of statelessness in 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 produced by the Home Office. The Home Office refers to COI in procedures that assess claims of individuals for refugee status or other forms of international and humanitarian protection. The IAGCI's 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.

In addition to reviewing the Home Office's [Country Policy and Information Notes \(CPINs\)](#) and Country of Origin Information Request (COIR) responses relating to individual countries, the IAGCI examines the way that 'cross-cutting' themes are dealt with across all of the COI issued by the department. In the past, thematic reports commissioned by the IAGCI examined coverage of such topics as issues related to women, [issues related to children](#), and [sexual orientation and gender identity or expression](#).

At a forthcoming meeting, the IAGCI will consider the coverage of statelessness in the COI produced by the Home Office. In addition to reviewing the treatment of statelessness in CPINs on countries where it is a significant issue, the IAGCI will also consider general recommendations relating to the presentation of country information on statelessness. To inform this discussion, the IAGCI seeks to commission a review paper to be prepared by an expert with in-depth knowledge of statelessness, including how it arises and which groups are most likely to be affected. As with other reviews, the aim will be to ensure that CPINs contain the most up to date, relevant, and useful information to inform accurate decision-making.

The person(s) commissioned to undertake this project will be an experienced researcher with expertise on protection issues pertaining to statelessness and knowledge of asylum and human rights issues. They will not be expected to

be an expert on all countries concerned, but some expertise in at least some of the countries where statelessness is a particularly significant issue will be an advantage.

This call for tenders is being re-opened as the reviewer selected following a call earlier in 2022 has since become unavailable.

Description of work

The review should provide an assessment of the coverage of statelessness in existing COI products, commenting on its:

1. **Completeness:** the extent to which relevant available information on statelessness has been reflected in the CPIN. Additional publicly available sources should be identified where appropriate.
2. **Accuracy and balance:** whether relevant information from source material has been accurately and appropriately reflected in the CPIN, noting any specific errors or omissions.

The review should provide a comparative summary, noting the strengths and weaknesses of the different reports.

In addition, the review should identify information on statelessness that is not covered in any of the reports but is nonetheless relevant to supporting decisions made by the Home Office. This may involve recommendations for new reports on populations likely to experience statelessness about whom no report currently exists, recommendations for information that could usefully be incorporated into CPINs which do not currently have a section on statelessness, and/or recommendations on other ways of ensuring the necessary information is available to decision makers.

While there is room for individual discretion in the way the researcher approaches the task and prepares a review, it would be helpful for the IAGCI if some specific guidelines were followed:

1. The format and scope of the review should be agreed with the chair of the IAGCI.
2. The COI under review should be assessed in terms of the situation in the country up to the stated 'cut off' date for inclusion of information in the report.
3. Any suggestions for additional information (or corrections to information in the document) must be referenced to a source document for the Home Office to be able to use it. If no published source is available to support the suggested information, the reviewer may supply a letter providing the information for use as a source document.

The reviewer will be requested to attend the IAGCI meeting at which their review will be considered. 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 may be used as source documents for future

CPINs and other COI products.

How to apply

Researchers interested in completing this review should submit:

- a letter demonstrating their expertise with respect to issues related to statelessness, human rights and asylum
- their c.v.

Payment for this work will be set at £5,000. Expressions of interest should be submitted to IAGCI@icibi.gov.uk by close of Monday, 31 October. We are only able to accept expressions of interest from individuals and not from institutions or consultancy groups.

The successful bidder will be notified by Friday, 4 November. The completed review will be due by the close of Monday, 6 February 2023, and will be discussed at an IAGCI meeting planned for early next year.