

News story: The IAGCI invites tenders for a thematic evaluation of the UK Home Office Country Information Products

Background

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information \(IAGCI\)](#) is part of the Office of the Chief Inspector of the UK Home Office. Its main purpose is to review the content of all Country of Origin Information (COI) produced by the Home Office to help ensure that this is as accurate, balanced, impartial and up to date as possible. COI is information used in procedures that assess claims of individuals to refugee status or other forms of international and humanitarian protection. It is also used in policy formulation. The full Terms of Reference for the IAGCI and minutes of earlier meetings are available on its [website](#).

The IAGCI focuses on particular Country Policy and Information Notes (CPINs) produced by the Home Office. CPINs are produced regularly on the top 20 asylum intake countries. They focus on particular themes that are identified as being common grounds for asylum claims made in the United Kingdom. CPINs are compiled from material produced by a range of recognised external information sources. They also contain guidance on interpreting Home Office policy. However, the IAGCI's mandate is to consider only country of origin information and not to comment on policy positions that may be contained in CPINs.

As well as focusing upon individual CPINs, the IAGCI is concerned to examine the way that particular 'cross-cutting' themes are dealt with across all of the countries that the Home Office issues reports on. In the past such 'cross-cutting' reports have been commissioned on gender issues; sexual orientation and gender identity; children and return issues.

In 2014, a thematic review was done of the [Home Office's treatment of sexual orientation and gender identity issues](#). At its next meeting to be held in May 2019, the IAGCI will again consider the way that these themes are covered in each of the countries about which there is a recent report.

The person(s) commissioned to undertake this project will be an experienced researcher with expertise on protection issues pertaining to sexual orientation and gender issues and some 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 will be an advantage.

The review should aim to provide a brief assessment of the coverage of sexual orientation and gender identity in each CPIN regarding:

1. completeness – the extent to which relevant available information on sexual orientation and gender identity issues 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 brief comparative summary, noting the strengths and weaknesses of the different reports.

The 2014 review of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity provided recommendations for best practice for country information notes. The reviewer should consider the extent to which these recommendations are still valid and whether the recommendations made in the previous review have been adopted. If necessary, the reviewer should recommend any changes in best practice that should be made.

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

1. The CPIN should be reviewed in terms of the situation in the country up to the stated 'cut off' date for inclusion of information in the report
2. A template for the report format will be provided to the reviewer. All suggested changes should be provided as part of the review paper
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. The UK Home Office will also be represented at the meeting to provide responses to comments and recommendations made in the review.

Reviews commissioned by IAGCI may be used as source documents for future CPINs and other country of origin information products.

Researchers interested in completing this review should submit:

- a letter demonstrating their expertise with respect to issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity, 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 Tuesday 26 March 2019.

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

Successful bids will be notified by 29 March 2019. The final review will be

due by the close of 29 April 2019 and will be discussed at the IAGCI meeting in May 2019.