

# News story: The IAGCI invites tenders to evaluate 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 Borders and Immigration. Its purpose is to review the content of all Country of Origin Information (COI) produced by the UK Home Office. Country of Origin Information is used in procedures that assess claims of individuals for refugee status or other forms of international and humanitarian protection. It is also used in policy formulation.

The IAGCI reviews products to provide assurance to the Independent Chief Inspector that the content is as accurate, balanced, impartial and as up to date as possible. COI is contained in:

CPINs are generated on an ongoing basis for the top 20 asylum intake countries, and commonly address a specific type of common asylum claims or provide general information for several claim types. They are compiled from material produced by a range of recognised external information sources (news sources, academic literature, independent research reports, fact finding reports from UK government or from other governments, etc.). These documents 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.

Information Request (IR) responses are made directly by case workers or others to the Home Office. These relate to information that is not covered in the CPINs. The IAGCI includes in its reviews a consideration of the COI included in a sample of (not more than ten) IR responses. Each IR response is typically a maximum of 2 pages in length.

## **Tender Details**

The IAGCI commissions country experts or experienced researchers to evaluate and report upon the country of origin information contained in UK Home Office information products. At its next meeting, the IAGCI requires a country expert to review the use of country information used in the following CPINs (2 separate tenders, 1 for each country):

**Tender 1:** [Ethiopia](#)

**Tender 2:** [Jamaica](#)

For each tender, the expert is also asked to consider a selection of approximately 10 Information Request Responses, which will be provided by the

Chair of IAGCI, and are an average of 2 pages long.

### **Description of work**

Country Policy and Information Notes aim to provide an accurate, balanced and up to date summary of the key available source documents regarding the human rights situation, with respect to the issues selected for coverage, in the country covered. The purpose and scope of the reports are clearly set out in an introductory section of the document. Reviewers should evaluate the reports in this context and seek to identify any areas where they 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 the current human rights situation in the country with respect to main grounds for asylum claims (which are noted in each CPIN Report)
- 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 country of origin information contained within the document, and not pass judgment on the policy guidance provided
- the CPIN should be reviewed in the context of its 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 (for reference please refer to most recent reviews on the IAGCI webpage for examples of the template) \*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 (preferably Open Source). The Home Office may use foreign language source documents, but only if the information is considered essential and is not available in English language source

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

The selected reviewers will be requested to attend an IAGCI meeting at the Office of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration in London, when their review will be considered. This meeting is due to take place in May 2019. Alternative arrangements may be made if attendance is not possible.

Representatives from the UK 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 CPIN reports or other Home Office information products.

### **How to Apply**

Researchers interested in conducting any of the reviews should submit:

- a one page letter demonstrating their expertise in human rights and/or asylum issues pertaining to the particular country or countries
- their c.v.

Payment for this work will be set at £2,000. Expressions of interest should be submitted to [IAGCI@icibi.gov.uk](mailto:IAGCI@icibi.gov.uk) by close of Tuesday 26 March 2019.

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

Successful bids will be notified by 29 March 2019. Final reviews will be due by the close of Monday 29 April 2019 and will be discussed at the IAGCI meeting in May 2019.