Study on Gender, Radicalisation and Violent Extremism

Request for Tenders

8 February 2016

Please note this consultancy is open only to citizens of Commonwealth member countries or organizations registered in a Commonwealth country.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is seeking proposals for a consultancy to produce a research study to articulate a gendered approach to countering RVE in Commonwealth countries.

The proposal should show how you would carry out this consultancy to meet the specific objectives set out in the TOR. The proposal should also provide details of the personnel to be assigned to the assignment, including their professional qualifications and specific experience. It should include a short statement of your team’s relevant expertise and experience in producing similar case studies.

In submitting the proposal, you should be aware that the Commonwealth Secretariat (Secretariat) has a policy on gender equality and consultancy firms are urged to include male and female consultants in their teams.

The Secretariat has estimated the resources required to deliver the outputs as approximately 40 consultant days over the period April 2016 to June 2016. Included in your proposal should be:

1. An interpretation of the Terms of Reference of the research study production;
2. A discussion of your approach to the task, the methodology and a schedule of work;
3. A budget for the work, including fees and costs; and
4. Qualifications, experience and competencies of the consultancy/individual with full CVs of each team member and assignment details.

We are requesting several organisations to submit proposals and the Secretariat is not obliged to accept the lowest value, or indeed any tender.

We should receive an electronic copy of your proposal by Friday 25 March 2016.

The Consultant is expected to ‘adhere to the Gender Equality values of the Commonwealth as enshrined in the Charter and Secretariat’s Gender Equality Policy.’

Further information on the Secretariat’s development assistance can be obtained from www.thecommonwealth.org.
Study on Gender and Radicalisation and Violent Extremism

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

This project aims to build and complement the work of the Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding that was mandated by the 2005 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), to explore initiatives to promote mutual understanding and respect among all faiths and communities in the Commonwealth.’ The Commission subsequently published the Civil Paths to Peace report in 2007. Heads of Government underscored ‘the continuing need for comprehensive efforts at all national and international levels to counter terrorism, including efforts to build respect and understanding among peoples’ in 2009. The Heads also acknowledged ‘the vital role that education can play in conflict prevention and resolution. In 2011, Heads ‘committed to improve international security by: ‘...embracing moderation as an important value to overcome all forms of extremism, as called for in the ‘Global Movement of the Moderates.’

More recently, the Heads of Government of the Commonwealth Meeting in November 2015 recognised the important role that the Commonwealth could play and how it could add value to the global issues related to radicalisation and violent extremism (RVE), given the Commonwealth’s diversity and membership from countries and regions affected by these issues. RVE as a global challenge for the Commonwealth and the rest of the world requires solutions that seek to take a preventative rather than a reactive approach.

RVE as a complex problem set requires an approach that is multidimensional, contextually relevant and agile enough to respond to fast changing dynamics and environments. Addressing RVE most effectively requires better critical thinking, increased awareness of the root causes and strategies that will enhance opportunities for society as a whole where women, men, boys and girls are involved as central players. Understanding the gender relations and the power dynamics behind RVE is a prerequisite for understanding individuals’ access to and distribution of resources, the ability to make decisions and the way women and men, boys and girls are affected by political processes and social development.

Gender and RVE has just started to receive attention in the available literature and the media. Understanding the relationship of gender and inequality to violence generally and how this plays out in RVE is fundamental to finding any sustainable solutions through policy or programme interventions to address the root causes of RVE and the peace and security of all (personal, national, regional, international).

2. CONTEXT FOR STUDY

The Commonwealth has a membership of fifty-three (53) countries spanning from Africa, to Asia, the Americas, Europe and the Pacific, and has a diverse 2.2 billion population. Commonwealth member countries are amongst the world’s largest, smallest, richest and poorest countries.

With a diverse membership, the Commonwealth is well-positioned to act as a platform to help address and mitigate the root causes of contemporary violence, radicalisation and violent extremism.
As literature and experience reveal, the process of radicalisation can take many different pathways, and radicalisation towards violent extremism is unique to each person. However, there are some common elements in the experiences of people who have become radicalised, regardless of their beliefs or motivations. These include significant behavioural changes in a person’s life including ideology, social relations and criminal activity.

Concern about RVE and their links with systematic group violence are high on the global agenda. Associated with increased global communications technology, this is fuelled in part by mounting reports of people, especially young people, in countries such as Australia, Canada, Kenya, Malaysia, South Africa and the United Kingdom being attracted to the violent extremism espoused by groups such as ISIS in the Middle East, Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al-Shabaab in Kenya.¹

It is essential that gender not be seen as a ‘soft’ topic of secondary importance to addressing RVE but be at the core of creating sustainable peace and security. In many instances, it is particular gender ideals of power that perpetuate a culture of violence in which client-patron relations, corruption and discrimination against and suppression of women and minorities can flourish. Attention also needs to be paid to transforming the cultures and systems that reinforce gender power inequalities.

Under the new internationally agreed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), SDG 5 focuses on ‘gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls’, a key cross-cutting goal which underpins the achievement of all 17 goals. Within SDG 5, target 5.5, aims to ‘ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life’. However, this cannot be achieved without education which is a pre-requisite for girls’ full participation in their communities and in decision-making and leadership roles. The role of women and girls as valuable players in peace and nation building have been critical and therefore should be explored in any efforts to address RVE.

The Commonwealth Secretariat’s work programme is guided by its Strategic Plan 2013/14 to 2016/17. The plan maintains a balance of outcomes and allocation of resources between its two key pillars of “democracy” and “development”. The Strategic Plan 2013/14 to 2016/17 aims to achieve the three goals of (i) strong democracy, rule of law, promotion and protection of human rights and respect for diversity; (ii) inclusive growth and sustainable development; and (iii) a well-connected and networked Commonwealth.

This project aims to deliver targeted support to member countries to address specific development challenges as outlined in this terms of reference. For the purpose of this assignment, radicalisation is understood as a “process of relative change in which a group or an individual undergoes ideological and/or behavioural transformations that lead to the rejection of democratic principles (including the peaceful alternation of power and the legitimacy of ideological and political pluralism) and possibly to the utilisation of violence, or to an increase in the levels of violence, to achieve political goals.”¹ ‘Violent Extremism’ involves the explicit willingness to use violence to further political goals.

In this regard, the Commonwealth Secretariat is seeking to engage a consultant to undertake a study of gender and radicalisation and violent extremism (RVE) in the Commonwealth.

3. PURPOSE OF ASSIGNMENT

The purpose of this research is to articulate a gendered approach to countering RVE. The study will also serve to identify lessons learnt, best practices and strategies to countering RVE.

Specifically the study will:

(i) Provide an overview of RVE globally and in Commonwealth countries (main factors, locations, strategies, the role(s) of men and women, boys and girls in preventing, promoting and participating; different stakeholders/groups; media in RVE)

(ii) Provide information on available literature on gender and RVE;

(iii) Articulate the relationships between RVE and all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG);

(iv) Articulate the gender implications of RVE and the impact of a gendered approach for prevention of RVE

(v) Identify and provide the various interventions and strategies by international organisations to address RVE; and with selected examples of what works and what is not working; and

(vi) Articulate strategies (including gendered approaches) to counter RVE.

The study will be a desk-based utilising secondary research data and information. The consultant will be expected to reach out (via telephone, skype, viber and others) to communicate with relevant stakeholders/players with experiences (research/policy/programmes/projects) in the subject area for qualitative evidences.

4. PROJECT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

It is anticipated that the assignment will take 40 person working days spread between April 2016 and June 2016. The assignment will be coordinated by the Gender Section of the Secretary General’s Office of the Secretariat. The selected consultant(s) is/are expected to submit the following deliverables to the Secretariat:

   i. Draft report;
   ii. Revised report that has integrated comments from the Secretariat; and
   iii. Final report.

All of the above deliverables are to be completed before or by 10 June, 2015 and a specific timeline will be agreed between the Secretariat and the consultant at the time of contracting.

5. COMPETENCIES OF THE CONSULTANT

The Consultant(s):

- should have substantive knowledge and research or work experience in countering violent extremism and radicalisation; and demonstrate sufficient competence in understanding the issues and the various strands for a credible response to RVE including a gendered approach;
- should have sound understanding and experience in online data analytics and the ability to analyse and reflect such intelligence in the assignment;
• should demonstrate a clear understanding of the Commonwealth approach of Civil Paths to Peace;

• should have proven working experience in relevant consultancy positions, and practical and substantive experience in policy and programme analysis at global level;

• should have strong understanding of the issues of RVE and related dynamics at all levels;

• should have knowledge of gender and development and sound understanding of international relations and development;

• should have excellent research, analysis and report writing skills in English. The person(s) must have the ability to (i) analyze and interpret information (both quantitative and qualitative); and (ii) prepare high quality concise reports.

6. STYLE AND LENGTH OF REPORT

The research report needs to be of high quality, include references for all specific facts and statistical data, and of relevance to external stakeholders. The main audience will be Commonwealth Heads of Governments, Ministers, Government Officials, National Women Machineries, civil society organisations, academia, the media (international/local), and development partners. The format and length of the report is expected to be no longer than 40 pages (inclusive of an Executive Summary and Annexes). Details will be agreed upon during the time of contracting.

7. PROPOSED BUDGET

The proposed budget for the project is £20,000 (all inclusive).

8. LOCATION

All work is to be undertaken at the consultant(s)’ normal place of residence and there is no provision for any travel. There will be provision for communication (phone calls/interviews).

1 Omar Ashour, ‘Votes and Violence: Islamists and The Processes of Transformation’ (The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence 2009), p. 4. It is noted that in other contexts, including youth exploration and learning, the term ‘radicalisation’ may have a broader, positive meaning that is not necessarily associated with violence.