Terms of Reference

Post Title: Consultant - To develop a research and policy paper on promoting inclusive elections in the Commonwealth Caribbean/Americas (Gender Dimension)

Project Title: Strengthening Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions

Project Location: Home based

Project Duration: 40 working days over a five-month timeframe

Closing Date: 17:00 GMT, 11 March 2016

Background

The Political Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat (the Division) is seeking to place a greater focus on the implementation of Commonwealth election observation reports to enhance the impact and value of its election work to member states.

Commonwealth Election Observer reports consistently examine the participation of women in elections and where appropriate, make recommendations for improvement.

An opportunity has arisen for the Division to support the implementation of these gender recommendations through the design and implementation of a programme on gender and elections. This would contribute to one of the Division’s desired outcomes which is to assist member states conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections.

The production of a policy paper on women and elections is one of the activities envisaged under this work area. The policy paper will examine the gender recommendations and issues identified in Commonwealth election observation reports and other relevant documents across the thirteen Commonwealth Caribbean/Americas member states; interrogate the recurring themes, gaps and best practice; and distil these findings into a policy paper with recommendations for action that could impact in particular on Election Management Bodies (EMBs); political parties; the legislature; and women leaders and aspirants.

The overarching objective of the Policy Paper is to provide the state of play concerning current gender and election administration and participation in the Commonwealth Caribbean from a gender perspective; and to develop a basis to work closely with Caribbean Election Management Bodies, the Commonwealth Electoral Network (CEN), and other strategic stakeholders and development partners to make further progress on gender and election matters.

A consultant with expertise on gender, politics and democracy will be hired to work with the Political Division (and the Gender Section as the collaborating team) to produce this research and policy paper.
Scope and Purpose of Assignment

The Consultant will report directly to designated staff in the Political Division. Through the designated staff in the Political Division, there will be close collaboration and consultation with the Gender Section under the Office of the Secretary-General.

The Consultant will research a representative number of Commonwealth election observation reports (to be agreed with the project team) and other relevant resources.

He/she will scope out existing mechanisms, tools and best practice for increasing the participation of women in elections and the electoral process in the region. These will then be analysed and fed into a policy paper aimed at enhancing the institutional capacity of EMBs, political parties, the legislature and other relevant stakeholders to deliver more gender sensitive and inclusive elections in the region.

Consultant’s Tasks

It is expected that the Consultant will produce this work over a period of 5 months.

Tasks include:

- Review, research and gather relevant information regarding gender and governance from Commonwealth Election Observer reports across the Commonwealth Caribbean/Amerindian region and other relevant documents to analyse the identified gender and related recommendations and issues identified in Commonwealth election observation reports across the Caribbean/Amerindian region;

- Amplifying the recurring themes, gaps and best practice; and distilling these into a policy paper, including recommendations for Election Management Bodies (EMBs); political parties; the legislature; women leaders and aspirants, and civil society.

- Produce and submit an outline for discussion with the Commonwealth Secretariat Project Team that covers the respective policy paper as per below within two weeks of the signing of contract.

- Produce and submit a working draft of the policy paper two-three months after the signing of contract for discussion with the Secretariat. This working draft will be discussed with Senior Officials at the Commonwealth Electoral Network (CEN) 2016 Biennial Conference which will be held in Trinidad and Tobago in June 2016.

- Have regular communication with Secretariat staff to monitor progress over the life of the project.

Outcome

- Deliver and discuss the results of the research in a focus group with high-level
representatives from political parties of the region and other stakeholders, in a Caribbean country to be identified.

- Subsequent to the holding of this focus group and discussions with the CEN, a final policy paper will be produced outlining options for strengthening the participation of women in elections, and the electoral cycle in the Caribbean region.

The main deliverable of the assignment will be a research and policy recommendations paper with possible chapter framework as outlined below:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Objective of the study
- Methodology of the Study
- Findings Chapters (including challenges)
- Conclusions & Recommendations

Possible contents of the Research and Policy Paper

*Global context/ big picture*

- What are the global, continental and regional gender targets for political inclusion and what is the state of accession/implementation by Commonwealth Caribbean member states?
- Making the case for inclusive elections: what would the fulfillment of the Commonwealth, CARICOM and regional gender targets (in the area of political leadership) by all Caribbean/Americas member States mean for development across the region (impact/scenario analysis)?
- Current trends when it comes to participation of women in elections across Commonwealth Caribbean/Americas.

*Examination of Commonwealth electoral reports to interrogate the participation of women in various aspects of elections and the electoral process*

- Is the electoral framework sensitive/responsive to women’s political participation?
- Participation in political parties and primaries
- Nominations
- Elective positions
- Campaigns and specific challenges women face in campaigning
- Impact of type of electoral system on advancing women’s political participation
- Post-election: participation of women as public office-holders
Policy options and conclusions

- What policy options are available to improve women’s participation in elections and what are the pros and cons of each.
- Recommendations for action that could impact in particular on Election Management Bodies (EMBs); political parties; the legislature; and women leaders and aspirants.
- Feasibility to implement policy recommendations, not only in terms of economic or strategic implications, but also in terms of political will.

Functional Competencies of Consultant

- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and politics including in the context of advancing inclusive democracy.
- Knowledge of international normative frameworks on gender, politics and inclusive democracy.
- Recent research and policy drafting and development experiences with government, regional bodies and/or international organisations will be considered an asset.
- Demonstrated experience working with projects/programmes on gender, politics, democracy, advocacy and capacity building.
- Strong analytical and communication skills, including demonstrated ability to synthesize complex information and produce high quality practical advisory reports and knowledge products.
- Ability to work independently and produce high quality outputs in a timely manner, while understanding and anticipating evolving needs.

Client Orientation

- Contributing to positive outcomes for the client.
- Anticipates client needs.
- Works towards creating an enabling environment for a smooth relationship between the Secretariat and its stakeholders.

Core Competencies

- Demonstrated understanding of the Commonwealth’s fundamental values and principles as outlined in the Commonwealth Charter.
- Highest standards of integrity, discretion and loyalty.
- Promotes enabling environment for open communication.
- Solid political acumen
Required Skills and Experience

The successful candidate should ideally possess:

- Postgraduate degree in social sciences/humanities such as development studies, gender, public administration, political science or other related field or other relevant disciplines.
- Minimum 10 years’ experience in research and policy development at national, regional and wider levels.
- In-depth knowledge of development issues and management in developing country contexts, and in the Caribbean Region.
- Substantive experience in developing high-level research and working with international project teams.
- High-level communication and facilitation skills, especially for engaging with stakeholders for research.
- Knowledge and experience of work in Commonwealth societies.

Budget and Payment

Total payment will amount to £12,000 at a rate of £300 per day.

It is expected that the consultant will produce this work over a period of 40 days in total, spread over a five-month period. This includes the days spent to present the report to the focus group and 5 days to revise the report in collaboration with the Secretariat after the focus group is held.

How to apply

The applicant must submit:

- A curriculum vitae and a motivation letter explaining why he/she is suitable to carry out the expected tasks.
- A brief outline of how he/she might approach project implementation.
- Submit a sample of a research and policy document he/she has produced.