



## **INVITATION TO TENDER**

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### **Exploring Womens access to representative democracy at a Local level in Ireland**

#### **Introduction**

Established in 1973, the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWC) is the leading national women's membership organisation in Ireland. NWC seeks full equality between men and women and we draw our mandate from a membership of over 180 groups and organisations across a diversity of backgrounds, sectors and locations. We also have a growing, committed individual membership.

#### **Aim of this research**

1. To understand the enabling and constraining factors shaping women's access to representative democracy at local level including the mapping of regional disparities
2. To increase knowledge and understanding about women's representation and participation in local governance including the roles and influence they hold
3. Make concrete recommendations to inform strategy and policy responses on how to advance women's leadership and representation in local government

#### **Policy Context**

In the 2014 local elections, 21% of those elected to local government were female, significantly below the EU28 average of 32 % for women's representation in local politics. Most recently, in the 2019 local elections, 23.8% of women have been elected to local government. Research has also shown that once women are selected as candidates, Irish voters tend not to discriminate on gender grounds. Concrete actions and measures are necessary now to accelerate the pace of change and address the deficient in local democracy.

These gender imbalances have implications for shaping of the process for candidate selection for the Dáil. In the 2007 and 2011 Dáil elections, 76% of male candidates elected had local government experience while for women the figure was 81%.

There have been significant changes introduced under the Local Government reform Act 2014 which are also impacting on women's representation at local government level including:

- the number of local authorities has been reduced from 114 to 31;
- the number of elected members has reduced from 1,627 to 949;
- 80 town councils have been dissolved;
- 8 regional authorities and 2 regional assemblies have been replaced by 3 regional assemblies

The Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) 2016 survey illustrated the significant pressures placed on local councillors and highlighted in part the difficulties facing female county councillors in particular. It found that for rural-based women with care duties, additional burdens included the lack of proximity to council and constituent meetings. However, there are significant gaps in knowledge and data about the experience of women working as locally elected officials.

There is strong evidence to support gender parity to ensure sound decision and policy making at all levels of government. Research suggests that local government in particular, with its proximity to women's lives, is uniquely situated to strengthen women's leadership and participation and improve the representation of their interests.

### **Project budget**

The total budget for the research project, inclusive of VAT and all expenses is €8,000. This fee will include the preparation of a final report.

### **Research methodology and outputs**

The elements of the research will be desk research, analysis of existing data and qualitative research with key stakeholders as required. The methodology is expected to include qualitative and quantitative approaches, information-gathering and analysis. It should include approaches and methods that actively listen to, learn from,

and involve women. The primary audience for the report is decision-makers, public/civil servants and politicians working in local government policy and delivery. The research project will combine three distinct but complementary research elements:

### **Element 1 – mapping of relevant existing literature**

Draw on relevant literature and research studies,

1. What are the pathways and routes for accessing elected office at the local level for women from a diversity of backgrounds?
2. What obstacles and supports exist for women in accessing elected office at the local level?
3. What roles and functions do women occupy in nominated and elected positions at the local level?
4. The relative power of and capacity of women to participate and influence decision making at local level and how women are positioned with local government to exercise influence

### **Element 2 – Qualitative data**

Design questions for survey, pilot and roll out using appropriate channels for dissemination including the following;

- Women and men currently holding public office at local level
- Women who were selected as candidates but not subsequently elected OR
- Women that put themselves forward to stand, but were not subsequently selected to be a candidate

Organise and design focus groups both urban and rural based and semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders from policy agencies/ local authorities and include perspectives from Migrant, Traveller, Roma and women with disabilities and their representative organisations.

### **Element 3 – identifying recommendations and actions**

Identify and outline current women's representation and participation policies, initiatives and models of good practice in Ireland and internationally. Outline concrete proposals to advance women's representation and position in local government.

### **Final Output**

The final output will be a report drawing on evidence gathered.

The report is expected to include:

- Findings and analysis relating to each specified research element
- Conclusions and recommendations in relation to support a diversity of women's access and participation to elected office at local level including

women from a migrant background, women with disabilities, young women and women from the Travelling and Roma community and women from working class backgrounds.

- A short executive summary

The draft final report (subject to minor revisions only) is to be delivered by mid-October to the satisfaction of NWCI. The editing and proofing work for research report is the responsibility of the researcher and the document must be submitted print-ready. This report should be written in clear and accessible language, suitable for wide use as an information and advocacy resource by NWCI.

### **Project Management**

NWCI is responsible for project management. A research advisory group will be convened to advise NWCI on the research and two meetings will take place with the researcher and the advisory group.

### **Additional research activities**

Additional research activities may include: presentation of research findings at a seminar; launching the research; and a roundtable with key stakeholders. Cost of publication, launch or roundtable will be covered by NWCI.

### **Tender requirements**

The contract will be awarded from the qualifying tenders on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender applying the following award criteria, not necessarily in this order:

1. Understanding of the project and demonstrated ability to carry out the research
  - A statement demonstrating understanding of the research aim and goals
  - An outline of skills, qualifications and experience in the area
  - A work plan identifying the approaches and methodologies to be used in carrying out the project
2. Cost effectiveness
  - All costs must be inclusive of VAT and expenses
  - Demonstrate value for money
  - Breakdown of costs showing the number of days required to complete the task, the number of days each person, if there is more than one person involved, will be employed on the task, the cost per day.
  - The fee quoted should include travel and subsistence costs
3. Relevant experience of the designated personnel
  - A demonstrated understanding and track record in the research area

- A list of recent clients who may be contracted for references in relation to this tender.

#### 4. Timeframe for completion

- A demonstrated understanding and awareness of the requirements of the project and confirmation of the ability to meet the timeframe of the project

Only those tenders, who meet the qualifying criteria, will be eligible for inclusion in the award process. Tenderers are advised that they may be required to make a formal presentation of their proposal.

#### **Time-frame**

- Tender to be submitted by 5pm on 21<sup>st</sup> June.
- Notice of award of tender by 28<sup>th</sup> June.
- Research report to be completed by end September 2019

#### **Conditions of Tender**

- a) NWCI reserves the right not to award a contract in the event that no proposal is deemed to be suitable.
- b) NWCI requires that researchers will treat all information provided pursuant to this invitation to tender in strict confidence.
- c) Information supplied by tenderers will be treated as contractually binding. However, NWCI reserves the right to seek clarification of any such information.
- d) All material gathered and all outputs arising out of the proposed contract will remain the sole property of the NWCI. **Tenderers must agree to this condition in their proposals.** All information and knowledge acquired in the course of the research will be treated as confidential and should not be divulged to any unauthorised person or used for any purpose whatsoever without the prior approval of the NWCI.
- e) NWCI will ensure that the final report gives due credit to the consultant(s) for research, textual and editorial work undertaken in its preparation. Any subsequent use of the material shall also give due credit.
- f) It will be a condition for the award of a contract that the successful contractor(s) (and agent, where appropriate) will be promptly required to produce a Tax Clearance Certificate from the Irish Revenue Commissioners. In addition, contractor(s) must retain records of tax reference numbers for any sub-contractor(s), whose payments exceed €5,000, including VAT. All payments under the contract will be conditional on the contractors being in possession of valid certificates at all times.
- g) Tenders that are delivered late will not be considered.

- h) Any conflicts of interest involving a contractor (or contractors in the event of a group or consortium bid) must be fully disclosed to NWCI, particularly where there is a conflict of interest in relation to any recommendations or proposals put forward by the tenderer.
- i) NWCI will not be liable for any costs incurred in the preparation of the tender.
- j) Payment for all services covered by this Invitation to tender will be on foot of appropriate invoices. Invoicing arrangements will be agreed with the successful supplier(s), subject to the terms of the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act (27 of 1997).
- k) Payment of all services covered by this invitation to tender will be on the basis of the agreed contract price, completion of agreed stages of the work plan and upon the submission of the appropriate invoices.
- l) Payment schedule:
  - 40% - at the beginning of the project
  - 40% - on completion of first draft of report
  - 20% - once final report produced to the satisfaction of NWCI
- m) NWCI will own the completed research and will retain copyright. NWCI will retain the right to publish as deemed appropriate. The researcher(s) will be acknowledged in the inside cover of the publication.

### **Submitting an application**

Proposals should be submitted for the attention of Catherine Lane, Women in Local Government and Development Officer National Women's Council of Ireland, [catherinel@nwci.ie](mailto:catherinel@nwci.ie) to arrive no later than 5pm on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June.

Catherine can be contacted at the NWCI offices at 01 6790100.

*All information provided to NWCI in response to this request will be treated in strict confidence.*

This work is kindly supported by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.