

Request for Quotations: Services to Facilitate and Support the Development of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission's Strategy Statement 2025–2027

1. Introduction

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission is Ireland's National Human Rights Institution,¹ and National Equality Body.²

The Commission is an independent public body, with a mandate established under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. The Commission accounts directly to the Oireachtas, with its fifteen members, one of whom is the Chief Commissioner, appointed by the President.

The overall statutory functions of the Commission are:

- to protect and promote human rights and equality,
- to encourage the development of a culture of respect for human rights, equality, and intercultural understanding in the State,
- to promote understanding and awareness of the importance of human rights and equality in the State,
- to encourage good practice in intercultural relations, to promote tolerance and acceptance of diversity in the State and respect for the freedom and dignity of each person, and
- to work towards the elimination of human rights abuses, discrimination and prohibited conduct.

The Commission now invites responses from suitably qualified providers for the provision of services to support the development of its *Strategy Statement 2025-2027* as described below.

Public sector equality and human rights duty

In meeting its statutory obligations in respect of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, the Commission requires that tenderers confirm their commitment to the need to eliminate discrimination, protect human rights and promote equality of opportunity in the delivery of the services outlined.³ Further information is provided in the scoring criteria below.

¹ National Human Rights Institutions ('NHRIs') are independent State bodies with a constitutional and/or legislative mandate to protect and promote human rights. The Commission holds "A" status accreditation from the United Nations, which is only awarded to institutions that are fully compliant with [Paris Principles](#). The Paris Principles are the international standards for effective, credible NHRIs, requiring independence in law, membership, operations, policy and control of resources.

² [Equality bodies](#) are public organisations assisting victims of discrimination, monitoring and reporting on discrimination issues, and contributing to an awareness of rights and a societal valuing of equality. They are legally required to do so in accordance with EU equal treatment legislation.

³ Public bodies, including the Commission, must ensure that they are in line with their statutory obligation under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014 to eliminate discrimination, protect human rights and promote equality of opportunity ('the Public Sector Duty'). Public procurement, as a function of public bodies, is subject to the Public Sector Duty. The Commission must therefore ensure that equality and human rights obligations equivalent to the Public Sector Duty are reflected in its agreements with contractual partners. For further information, see IHREC, [Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty](#).

2. Background

A. IHREC functions and mandate

Further to its statutory functions as set out above, the Commission is mandated to carry out the following activities.⁴

- Provide information to the public in relation to human rights and equality.
- Provide legal assistance to persons in the vindication of their rights.
- Apply to the superior Courts for liberty to appear as amicus curiae ('friend of the court') in proceedings that involve or are concerned with equality or human rights protections.
- Carry out equality reviews and prepare equality action plans - or to invite others to do so - within a particular industry or sector.
- Conduct an inquiry where it considers there has been a serious violation of human rights or equality of treatment.
- Keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law and practice in the State relating to the protection of human rights and equality.
- Examine any legislative proposal and report its views on any implications for human rights or equality.
- Prepare and publish reports including reports on any research undertaken, sponsored or commissioned.
- Assist public bodies to perform their functions in a manner that eliminates discrimination, promotes equality of opportunity and protects the human rights of members of staff and the public to whom the public body provides a service.
- Undertake, sponsor, commission or provide financial or other assistance for research and educational activities.
- Consult with national, European or international bodies or agencies having a knowledge or expertise in the field of human rights or equality.
- Participate in the Joint Committee with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, in accordance with the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

In addition, the Commission has been designated the following roles:

- Ireland's National Rapporteur on Human Trafficking for the purposes of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive.⁵
- Independent Monitoring Mechanism for Ireland's implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.⁶
- Coordinating body for the National Preventative Mechanism set to be established under legislation to give effect to the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention Against Torture.⁷
- Work with the equality and human rights commissions in Northern Ireland to oversee the UK Government's commitment on equality and human rights under Article 2 of the Windsor

⁴ As set out in s.10, [Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014](#).

⁵ [DIRECTIVE 2011/36/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA](#).

⁶ [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#).

⁷ [Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#).

Framework (formerly Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland) to the UK-EU Withdrawal Agreement, specifically in relation to issues with an island of Ireland dimension.⁸

B. Strategy statement requirements

The Commission has a statutory duty to produce a Strategy Statement every 3 years. It published its first *Strategy Statement 2016–2018* in January 2016,⁹ its second *Strategy Statement 2019–2021* in February 2019,¹⁰ and its third *Strategy Statement 2022-2024* in February 2022.¹¹ The Commission’s next *Strategy Statement 2025-2027* must be finalised for laying before both Houses of the Oireachtas by the end of 2024.

As set out in Section 25 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014:

“A Strategy Statement shall:

(a) Comprise

(i) The key objectives and related strategies, including the use of resources of the Commission, and

(ii) having had regard to subparagraph (i) the key priorities and objectives of the Chief Commissioner for his or her term of office, and

(b) have regard to the need to ensure the most beneficial, effective and efficient use of the resources of the Commission.”

The Act further requires that:

“The Commission shall, in preparing a strategy statement, consult in such manner as the Commission considers appropriate with such bodies and groups as it sees fit including but not limited to educational institutions, representatives of relevant agencies and civil society, Departments of State and other public bodies”.

The interpretation provisions of the 2014 Act provide that a reference to “*relevant agencies and civil society*” includes a reference to

“(a) non-governmental organisations concerned with the promotion or protection of human rights or equality, including organisations specialising in the promotion of economic and social development,
(b) trade unions and other business, professional and social organisations,
(c) third level institutions and other experts in education,
(d) religious bodies, secular bodies (within the meaning of the Civil Registration (Amendment) Act 2012) or other groups that are representative of religious thought and beliefs or philosophical beliefs, and
(e) public bodies.”

The Commission has also its own agreed Consultation Principles and Procedures, which the successful respondent will need to consider duly in their design and delivery of the consultation elements of the services required.

⁸ [Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland](#).

⁹ IHREC, [Strategy Statement 2016–2018](#).

¹⁰ IHREC, [Strategy Statement 2019–2021](#).

¹¹ IHREC, [Strategy Statement 2022-2024](#).

The Commission's consultation principles are:

- Participation
- Targeted and appropriate methods
- Transparency, openness and accountability
- Clear, concise communication and language
- Accessibility
- Reasonable accommodation and positive action

The Commission's consultation procedures consist of these steps:

1. Define consultation purpose and subject
2. Develop questions
3. Identify key stakeholders
4. Design consultation methodology
5. Plan data collection and analysis
6. Provide feedback

3. Service requirements

IHREC is seeking tender proposals from suitably qualified Tenderers who wish to be considered to provide the services outlined. The successful respondent will support the Chief Commissioner, Members of the Commission and IHREC's Senior Management Team and the wider IHREC team in developing the Commission's *Strategy Statement 2025–2027*, with the services to include the following.

1. Evaluate written responses to a public consultation that Commission staff will run, consisting of an online questionnaire to issue in February and close at the end of March. Commission staff will support this evaluation process. A report evaluating the responses will be furnished to the Commission on 30 May.
2. Design and facilitate 2 one-day strategy sessions with Commission members. The first is expected to take place in April and the second in September. There are 15 members, one of whom is the Chief Commissioner.
3. Support the design of, and analysis of key insights arising from, 3 x half-day 'Thought Forum' civil society consultation events which will be organised and delivered by Commission staff. These are expected to take place in April, May and June.
4. Design, conduct and analyse interviews with an estimated 15 key stakeholders (who Commission staff will identify). The interviews will take place in person or online and will be completed by 30 June 2024.
5. Design and facilitate 2 one-day consultation sessions with Commission staff. The first is expected to take place in April and the second in June. There are approximately 90 members of staff.
6. Prepare briefings for the Commission and Senior Management Team regarding emerging issues throughout the strategic planning process and a contemporaneous narrative document recording discussions and decision points throughout the strategic planning process.

7. Produce a report analyzing and synthesizing the data gathered from the public consultation, Thought Forums with civil society, stakeholder interviews, and the Commission and staff strategy sessions. This report will implement an evidenced-based, scenario-building prioritisation methodology to identify and advise on emergent strategic priorities to be considered for inclusion in the *Strategy Statement 2025–2027*. It will be delivered by 31 July 2024.
8. Based on the findings of the abovementioned report, prepare a draft *Strategy Statement 2025–2027* to be brought to the Commission’s second strategy planning session in September 2024.
9. Prepare revised drafts of the *Strategy Statement 2025–2027* as needed, with an advanced draft to be furnished to the Commission in October.
10. Deliver a final draft *Strategy Statement 2025–2027* by 25 November.

The successful respondent will liaise closely and be supported by the Office of the Director and Senior Management Team in IHREC as required throughout the process.

4. Specification

The Commission is seeking quotations from suitably qualified individuals and organisations who wish to be considered to provide the services outlined. Responding Tenderers should have a strong track record in providing the required services with a robust and purposed approach to engaging with a diversity of stakeholders and perspectives, and, preferably, have experience of small public sector bodies with specific statutory mandates and experience of the civil society /NGO sectors.

Proposals must address all of the following matters in the order in which they are set out:

A. Description

- i. *Description of Proposer*: Provide a description of the individual or organisation, types of activities undertaken and details of recent client projects. Respondents are asked to provide evidence of 3 years’ minimum relevant consulting and advising experience on strategic planning including within the public sector, and clearly demonstrate their ability and track record in dealing with the areas outlined above.
- ii. *Financial Capacity*: Provide the latest available Audited Financial Statements.
- iii. *Track Record and Experience of key members of the potential team*: Provide CVs of relevant staff available to work on this project.
- iv. *Reference details*: Provide reference contact information for (at least two) clients of recent projects. The Commission reserves the right to contact any of the supplied referees unless it is expressly stated not to do so.

B. Approach

- i. *Approach to the Service/Work Required*: Provide an outline of how it is intended to deliver the service.
- ii. *Quality control*: Outline the current controls that are in place and will be in place in future to ensure the highest possible quality of both service and product.
- iii. *Other*: Any other comments or information regarding the service provision that is felt appropriate to include.

C. Costings

- i. Statement of Costs: Tender proposals must include full costing of all elements of the proposed service. Costings may include a daily rate, but reduced rates/price breaks should be clearly indicated for bulk purchasing. All costs must be included.
- ii. Treatment of VAT: All pricing should be VAT exclusive and the applicable VAT rate should be separately noted.

D. Data Protection

- i. The protection and security of an individual's personal data is of the utmost importance to IHREC. All suppliers of service should have in place policies, procedures and processes that comply with their obligations under the Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (EU 2016/679). Where the supplier is acting as a data processor, the supplier will be expected to enter a data processor agreement with IHREC. Tenderers are required to confirm their compliance in this regard.

5. Award Criteria

Marks will be awarded according to the award criteria outlined in the Table below. The total number of marks available is one thousand (1,000). Marks will be rounded to the nearest whole number. Tenderers who do not meet the minimum marks per criterion will be eliminated. The Commission reserves the right to not award this tender if no satisfactory responses are received.

Award Criteria	Maximum Marks Available	Minimum Marks per Criterion
A: Cost	250	N/A
B: Quality & Relevance of Proposed Team	350	300
C: Approach & Methodology to Service Delivery	300	200
D: Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty	50	40
E: Accessibility	50	40
Total	1,000	N/A

A: Cost Criteria (250 marks)

A detailed cost schedule, with a detailed breakdown of the following rates for the proposed individual/individuals is required.

Resource	Daily rate	Half-day rate	Estimated No. of Days Required
Proposed Individual			

Tenderers must include the daily/half-day rates for the proposed individual/s and may add new rows for additional individuals if required. Tenderers should include the specific title for each proposed team member.

Tenderers should state a total fixed cost for providing all of the required services (including a daily rate, if appropriate). Submitted quotations should confirm that quoted costs hold good for 90 days after the closing date for receipt of quotation.

Specifically, tenders should state the fixed cost for carrying out all of the work required to satisfy the requirement specification. This sum shall include all costs e.g.

The daily rate and number of days being charged in respect of each individual to be involved in the project.

- (a) The costs must be in euro.
- (b) Travel costs, travel time, subsistence and other incidental expenses are not reimbursed by IHREC.
- (c) The costs shall be exclusive of all taxes including VAT. VAT and other appropriate taxes shall be quoted separately where appropriate and at the appropriate rate. Where VAT is not applicable this should be explicitly stated.
- (d) Unquantified costs will not be accepted.
- (e) Tenderers should indicate clearly any discounts to which the Commission may be entitled, including:
 - a. Public sector discounts
 - b. Any other discounts
- (f) Tenderers should provide an itemised breakdown of the cost of any options being proposed beyond the minimum requirements.
- (g) IHREC will not be responsible for any errors on the calculation of the costs provided in response to this Request for Quotation. It is the responsibility of bidders to ensure that the costs quoted are correct and properly calculated.

Cost Criteria Scoring

The following formula will be used:

Lowest tendered cost X Max number of marks available (250)

Cost under Evaluation

B. Quality & Relevance of Proposed Team (350 marks)

B.1: Quality of Proposed Resource (200 marks):

Tenderers are asked to provide comprehensive detail as regards their approach to providing a suitable and expert individual/s for the delivery of outlined services to the IHREC. This approach should demonstrate that the person/s has the relevant experience to deliver on the services outlined.

B.2: Experience of Proposed Resource (150 marks): Tenderers are asked to provide CV's for the proposed person(s) that will deliver on the services required.

Tenderers will be evaluated based on the quality of the proposed approach.

C. Approach & Methodology to Service Delivery (300 marks)

Tenderers are asked to provide comprehensive detail as regards their Proposed Approach & Methodology to the delivery of services outlined to the IHREC. Including the number of days envisaged and the estimated completion date.

This proposal should at a minimum address the following:

C.1: Approach to the Service Delivery (200 marks):

Provide an outline of how it is intended to deliver the service.

C.2: Quality control (50 marks):

Outline the current controls that are in place and will be in place in future to ensure the highest possible quality of both service and product.

C.3: Value Added/ Other (50 marks):

Any other comments or information regarding the service provision that adds value to your proposal.

Tenderers will be evaluated based on the quality of the proposed approach.

D. Public sector equality and human rights duty (50 marks)

Under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014, IHREC has a statutory obligation, in the performance of its functions, to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services and to protect the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services (Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty). Further detail is available at <https://www.ihrec.ie/our-work/public-sector-duty>

Public procurement is a functional area of IHREC. In accordance with its Public Sector Duty obligations, IHREC requires that tenderers confirm their commitment to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services and to protect the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services. Tenderers should demonstrate how they meet the requirements of the public sector equality and human rights duty.

E. Accessibility (50 marks)

Making our documents as accessible as possible for disabled people is core to the Commission's function and purpose in promoting human rights and equality and advancing disability rights is a central aspect across our legal, policy and research work. At a minimum, the following is required

- Final document needs to be prepared in Plain English
- Care should be given for the final .pdf to be made accessible to the widest range of users with in-built accessible checks complete
- A word version for screen readers and other Assistive Technology is also required.

The National Disability Authority's guidance on accessible .pdf and word is available as a resource.¹²

¹² <https://universaldesign.ie/communications-digital/web-and-mobile-accessibility/web-accessibility-techniques/content-providers-introduction-and-index>.

Tenderers will be evaluated based on the quality of the proposed approach.

6. Application process

Tenderers must include the following with their response:

1. Proposal for providing the service, including a response to each award criteria as outlined above.
2. Tax clearance information.

Failure to provide the above may result in your elimination from this competition.

Please forward an application before **12 noon on Friday 8 March** by email to procurement@ihrec.ie with "RFQ Facilitation and Support Services for IHREC Strategy Statement" in the subject line.

Requests for clarification can be submitted via email to procurement@ihrec.ie before 12 noon on Friday 1 March.

An acknowledgement email will be issued within 48 hours for all RFQ submissions received. If you do not receive an acknowledgement of your RFQ submission, please telephone the procurement office on 01 859 2655/ 2642 to ensure your submission has been received.

7. Publication of Contract

IHREC is required to publish certain contracts to the eTenders platform. IHREC reserves the right to award the contract subject to the successful tenderer completing the acceptance process through eTenders.