



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Public Opinion Research in Iraq
Reference Number: P-IQ20061801
Issued: June 18, 2020
Responses Due: July 9, 2020

BACKGROUND

The National Democratic Institute (NDI or the Institute) is implementing a three-year program to enhance the voice and agency of women activists in responding to citizen needs and building inclusive democratic governance in Iraq. Through this program, NDI aims to elevate women's interests in the policy-making process and structure strong working relationships with local officials in order to foster a more inclusive government that improves the wellbeing of women and girls in Iraq.

Through the creation and support of five women's advisory boards (WABs or boards) to strengthen local government in Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salahaddin, women are building evidence-based development plans that respond to community interests and prioritize the safe inclusion of women and girls. The WABs are advocating for and implementing gender-responsive development initiatives—aided by NDI seed funding to incentivize community support for these projects. These projects will seek to enhance the environment and community, such as rehabilitating parks or responding to local needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. NDI is especially interested in the impact of the pandemic on the role that women play in civic and political life. In addition to responding to a direct community need, the development initiatives will contribute to increasing women's visibility and influence in their communities and provide women with the confidence and capacity to become trusted advisors to local authorities and to advocate effectively for local development.

To provide the WABs with reliable analysis on the needs of their communities, NDI seeks to conduct a series of ten focus groups, each including 8-12 persons for a total of approximately 100 participants, all of whom would be from recently liberated and disputed areas. Alternatively, in order to abide by social distancing guidelines to reduce the spread of the virus, NDI is open to conducting a larger number of shorter and smaller focus groups (4-6 participants) online. The focus groups will be supplemented by 10-14 key informant interviews (KIIs) in districts outside the capital cities of each province, inclusive of representatives of ethnic minorities. Like the focus groups, the KIIs could also be conducted online. NDI will present key findings and actionable recommendations to the WABs and will coach the beneficiaries on how to integrate

public opinion research in good governance initiatives. The Boards would then use the research to further inform their issue identification, advocacy, and recommendations to governing institutions in the five provinces.

The research findings would also be shared more broadly with key audiences, such as the Canadian Embassy in Iraq and program implementers supported by the Government of Canada; the broader international community; and Iraqi decision-makers, including the Prime Minister's Office, the leadership of parliament, political party leaders, and women activists. The research would also be made available to the broader research community and academics with an interest in gender issues in the Middle East and internationally.

NDI began working with reform-minded Iraqi politicians in 1999 and established an in-country presence throughout Iraq in 2003. NDI has offices in Baghdad and Erbil. Currently, NDI provides assistance to the two legislative bodies, the Council of Representatives (CoR) and the Kurdistan Parliament of Iraq (KPI), to improve constituent representation, and helps political parties promote the participation of women and minorities. Additionally, NDI supports a cohort of women activists from provinces liberated from ISIS to promote a gender-sensitive perspective on national reconciliation in Iraq.

Since 2003, NDI has conducted public opinion research in Iraq in both election and non-election periods to provide political parties, parliamentary committees, and CSOs with up-to-date information on public attitudes and priorities. In total, the Institute has conducted more than 40 nationwide surveys and more than 400 focus group sessions in Iraq. Opinion research is a cross-cutting objective of NDI's programming, as it helps the Institute and its Iraqi partners identify and analyze the policy concerns of citizens, their opinions about the performance and direction of governing institutions and political leaders, and their level of participation and engagement in political life. NDI works with partners to help them understand the findings of the research, develop policy-making strategies to better reflect the needs of citizens, and build outreach strategies to more effectively engage Iraqis.

TIMELINE

This request for proposals indicates NDI's intention to contract with an opinion research firm to conduct a series of ten (10) gender-segregated focus groups and between ten and fourteen (10-14) KIIs with individuals from recently liberated and disputed areas of Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salahaddin. This contract is expected to last from approximately August 1, 2020 to November 30, 2020. Focus groups and KIIs are expected to take place in August or September 2020.

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES REQUIRED

The Institute would conduct ten (10) gender-segregated focus groups, each including 8-12 persons for a total of approximately 100 participants, OR a larger number of smaller focus groups (4-6 participants) conducted online. The focus groups would include participants from Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salahaddin. In addition to these focus groups, the Institute would conduct ten to fourteen (10-14) key informant interviews (KIIs) in districts outside the capital cities of each province, inclusive of representatives of ethnic minorities. At least 50

percent of the total number of participants would be women. The research would explore public views toward the government's response to COVID-19, participants' strategies to cope with the crisis, top concerns for the future, and gender dimensions of the impact of the current situation. Particular attention would be given to issues of local concern, relationships between citizens and local governments, and the needs and roles of women and girls.

EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews

The public opinion research firm will be responsible for conducting and supervising all research, in collaboration with NDI. Specifically, NDI would expect the public opinion research firm to be responsible for the following tasks:

- Elaborating a methodology plan prior to fielding, for NDI's approval;
- Establishing focus group and KII specifications based on demographic information and other characteristics agreed upon with NDI;
- Recruiting focus group and KII participants according to criteria provided by NDI;
- Preparing focus group screeners and re-screeners in English; providing the translation into Arabic; NDI will review translation into Arabic;
- Developing focus group and KII guidelines in English based on input provided by the Institute; providing the translation into Arabic—NDI will review the translation into Arabic;
- Overseeing, moderating, and (if applicable) providing interpretation for the focus groups and KIIs, with direct oversight conducted by NDI representatives;
- Reviewing focus group and KII transcripts;
- Providing audio recordings and transcripts of all focus groups and KIIs to NDI in English and Arabic; and
- Analyzing transcripts and producing a written report of the findings in English.
- Providing a methodology report once the analysis is completed.

PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Please indicate in the proposal your firm's qualifications to oversee and conduct the survey and focus groups in Iraq. In addition, please include a monetary bid for completing such work and any additional information pertinent to the selection process. To assist NDI in assessing your firm's qualifications, your proposal should include the following:

- General information about your firm and its focus group and KII methodology, including the methods it plans to use to recruit, train, and conduct quality control of moderators and field workers;
- Two research plans and methodologies for proposed work—one under the assumption that focus groups and KIIs will be able to be conducted in-person, and the second that adapts the research instruments (moderator and interviewer guides) to research conducted entirely online in adherence with strict social distancing;

- Proposed methodological approach, facilities, data collection, and analysis;
- A rough timeline for completing the proposed work;
- A list of previous clients;
- Statements of previous experience in conducting surveys and interview-based research in the Middle East, including specifics of any work in Iraq; and
- A sample interview and/or focus group report.

Proposals should include two detailed budgets—one for in-person research, the other for virtual research—containing an itemization of all costs, including staff time, project communications, participants' allowances and reimbursements, operations, and travel expenses, in U.S. Dollars. Vendors should provide quotes for translation of focus group materials (screeners, re-screeners, and guidelines). Pricing for translation should be separated out from other service elements. Travel expenses should be broken down into the average cost of the ticket and per diem, if applicable.

The vendor should be able to secure access to relevant participants in target provinces and to recruit women moderators for women's focus groups.

NDI will evaluate bids based on the vendor's ability to meet the description of product needed, experience and price.

Please submit proposals via email to Senior Program Officer Kyle Herman at NDI's Washington Office (kherman@ndi.org) by July 9, 2020 (early submissions welcomed). Only electronic submissions will be accepted. Bidders shall not contact NDI's field teams directly on this work and shall direct all questions to the above-mentioned representative.

NDI reserves the right to reject any and all bids. The Institute reserves the right to consider bids for modification at any time before a contract is awarded. NDI reserves the right to select all or just components of the services. NDI shall not be liable for any costs associated with the preparation, transmittal, or presentation of any materials submitted in response to the RFP. Proposals are expected to be binding for a period of one hundred and twenty (120) days from the published response date.

Bidders must provide disclosure of any known past, present or prospective relationships with any parties associated with NDI. For example, applicants should disclose if a member of their Board is also a member of NDI's Board currently or has been in the past. The bidder also certifies that the prices offered were arrived at independently and without purpose of restricting competition with other offerers, including but not limited to subsidiaries and that prices have not been and will not be knowingly disclosed to any other offerer unless required by law. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in NDI having to re-evaluate the selection of a potential bid.