

Tender brief for population survey

Background

The National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NACD) was established in July 2000 to advise the Irish Government in relation to the prevalence, prevention, treatment / rehabilitation and consequences of problem drug use in Ireland, based on the analysis of research findings and information. The Committee is overseeing the delivery of a three-year work programme on the extent, nature, causes and effects of drug use in Ireland. The Committee comprises representatives nominated from relevant agencies and sectors, both statutory and non-statutory. The Committee reports to the Minister of State responsible for the National Drugs Strategy. Further information can be obtained from the National Advisory Committee on Drug's website www.nacd.ie.

The Drug and Alcohol Information and Research Unit (DAIRU) was established in May 2001 to develop and manage a programme of information and research work in support of the joint implementation of the Northern Ireland Executive's Drug and Alcohol Strategies, building on previous work to support the Drug Strategy alone. DAIRU is located within the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Further information can be obtained from the DHSSPS website www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/iau.

In Ireland, the measurement of the extent and pattern of drug use in the general population is one of the priorities set out by the NACD in deciding its 3-year work programme. As the extent and pattern of drug use in the general population is one of the key five indicators produced by the EMCDDA¹ (www.emcdda.org) and adopted by EU Member States, it is imperative that reliable and comparable data is obtained in this regard.

In Ireland, the Government has agreed the NACD's three-year work programme. As part of this programme, the NACD has commissioned several research projects to assist in establishing an estimate of problem drug use in Ireland. At present, a Capture/Recapture Study and a Network Analysis Study on Opiate Use are being carried out.

In Northern Ireland, the primary focus of DAIRU is the development of a joint programme of drug and alcohol information and research work in support of the Drug Strategy for Northern Ireland and the Strategy for Reducing Alcohol Related Harm. Both strategies highlight the need for detailed information on drug use and drinking patterns and behaviours in order to effectively target policy and practice. DAIRU is also involved in the evaluation of projects and initiatives funded through the Drug Strategy, management and development of the Northern Ireland Drug Misuse Database and dissemination of available information.

The brief

As part of efforts set out in the EU Action Plan on Drugs 2000 - 2004 to establish the prevalence of drug use in the general population, the NACD and DAIRU have decided to jointly undertake a population survey to be **completed by the end of May 2003** so that for the first time we will have robust statistical information on drug use on an all island basis, and for both jurisdictions. This will enable us to make comparisons across regions and to meet commitments to provide the EMCDDA with the relevant information. The proposed survey will be carried out using a pre-prepared questionnaire and face to face interviews (preferred method under

¹ EMCDDA the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction

EMCDDA guidelines) among the 15 – 64 age group. Information on lifetime use, last year and last month use will be just some of the issues explored.

We are developing our survey based on the guidelines produced by the EMCDDA which state as the main aims:

- (1) To report prevalence and continuation rates of the most common illicit drugs in the general population by gender and age groups;
- (2) To allow cross country assessment of relationships between general patterns of use of illicit and licit drugs;
- (3) To allow the assessment of relationships between particular population attributes and the use of illicit drugs.

Potential bidders should refer to the EMCDDA guidelines on conducting population surveys in relation to drug use, a copy of which is enclosed for your information.

(i) Data Collection

Survey mode

The EMCDDA have produced a questionnaire instrument for this purpose, which we have amended and made more relevant to the all island context (preliminary draft enclosed). It is expected that the successful bidder will, in conjunction with the Research Advisory Group, explore the inclusion of further questions on, for example, cessation of drug use and how drugs are usually obtained. The inclusion of such additional questions cannot jeopardise the integrity of prevalence estimates being derived from this survey. Tenderers are invited to explore these issues in their submission. The population survey will be conducted by **face-to-face** interview and participants will be interviewed on use of all drug types to include alcohol, tobacco, prescribed medicines and illicit drugs.

Sampling frame

The sample population to be surveyed will be the 15 - 64 age group. Information on lifetime use, last year use and last month use is required. Non-contacts and refusals must be dealt with as per EMCDDA guidelines. Tenderers are invited to suggest to us the sampling design appropriate to this survey and what mechanisms you would use to interview difficult to reach age groups.

Research Advisory Group

The Research Advisory Group comprising representatives from the NACD, DAIRU, the Drug Misuse Research Division of the Health Research Board, and other interested parties will be appointed to oversee the project and the tenderers should show how and when progress in the research is to be reported to this Group. Close collaboration with the Research Advisory Group is expected during the lifetime of this research project to enable any design or other research difficulties be identified early and resolved quickly. The Research Advisory Group will expect to have some involvement when fieldworkers are briefed on their tasks and targets and during the pilot-testing phase. The fieldwork company will control the data entry and the company should be able to demonstrate compliance with industry standards and quality assurance protocols consistent with maintaining a code of ethics in carrying out this work.

Exact proceedings will be specified in a technical report as outlined in the EMCDDA Guidelines to be delivered on completion of the fieldwork and before analysis can begin. Records must be maintained on the same database structure as the

EMCDDA for easy transfer of information. All data collected and information from analysis whether in hard copy and/or electronic form will be the property of the NACD and DAIRU and must be returned to the NACD on completion.

(ii) Analysis of data collected

Once the data has been collected a comprehensive analysis must be carried out. The substantive report will include an analysis by drug, by age, by gender and by region (all island, Northern Ireland, Ireland and health boards in both jurisdictions). We expect comparisons to be made between groups together with a commentary on the results. The main findings should be summarised. A separate complete financial report for the project will also be required. Copyright will rest with the NACD and DAIRU.

Reports

Reports should come to the Research Advisory Group in stages; an interim report outlining the agreed sampling design and pilot test, and a second interim report outlining the completed fieldwork with the technical details and financial expenditure. A third and final report should detail the analysis.

Timescale

A final report is expected no later than May 2003. The budget available is in the region of €650,000

Requirements

Tenderers must submit a written proposal detailing the following: the research methodology to be employed; data collection methods (e.g. CAPI; self completion questionnaire; interviewer completed questionnaire etc) and justification of outputs; project management from conception to completion with clear milestones; personnel involved, their credentials, use of consultants and track record of these consultants.

Tenderers should provide a full and detailed breakdown of fees and costs resulting from the study (excluding VAT). There should be a breakdown (in terms of numbers of days) of the time which individual consultants in the team are expected to spend on the project along with a breakdown of the expected fees to be paid for each individual consultant's time. Costings for survey work should also be detailed. Estimates of expenses which will be expected to arise during the course of the project (eg travel), should also be included.

As this is an all island survey, the successful bidder must demonstrate the capacity to conduct interviews in both jurisdictions with an appropriately skilled workforce. However, the Research Advisory Group would welcome consultants forming partnerships with other consultants to bring particular expertise to the project and/or to ensure adequate coverage on an all island basis. However, partnerships will be required to nominate a project manager who will oversee and be responsible for all aspects of the project.

Evaluation of the submissions be will based on the following criteria:

Research methodology:

- Understanding of the issues involved;
- Understanding of the work involved;
- Feasibility of the approach(es) suggested;
- Methods to ensure confidentiality;

Project management

Ability to deliver key outputs on time;
Clarity in description of milestones;
Credibility of personnel and consultants involved;
Track record;

Value for Money

Please send **7 copies** of tenders no later than **12noon Friday 9th August 2002**.

Tenderers may be shortlisted to make a presentation to the Research Advisory Group. Tenderers should also be available by telephone on Friday 16th August 2002 should any clarification relating to the submission be sought by the assessing group.

Tenders should be returned to:

The Secretariat
NACD
3rd Floor
Shelbourne House
Shelbourne Road
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4
Tel No: +353 1 667 0760/765; Fax No: +353 1 667 0828;
Email: info@nacd.ie Web: www.nacd.ie
All tenders should be marked **REF/Ten/Popsurvey**.