



## Evaluation of the Athena Project Invitation to Tender

### 1. Introduction

Rights of Women specialises in supporting women who are experiencing or are at risk of experiencing, gender-based violence, including domestic and sexual violence. We support other disadvantaged and vulnerable women including Black, Minority Ethnic, Refugee and asylum-seeking women (BMER women), women involved in the criminal justice system (as victims and/or offenders) and socially excluded women. By offering a range of services including specialist telephone legal advice lines, legal information and training for professionals we aim to increase women's understanding of their legal rights and improve their access to justice enabling them to live free from violence and make informed, safe, choices about their own and their families' lives.

Despite the work of specialist organisations and committed funders, the position of asylum-seeking and migrant women in the UK is at crisis point. This group of women are caught between ever more complex and politically charged immigration law systems on the one hand and a sustained assault on legal aid and specialist services on the other. During 2013, with funding from the Future Advice Providers Fund, we undertook a thorough strategic review of our immigration and asylum law services including undertaking an analysis of the legal and political environment in which our services operate as well as an analysis of data collected from our existing services for vulnerable migrant women. This process enabled us to develop a significantly different model for the delivery of our immigration and asylum law services; the Athena project.

Funded by Trust for London and Comic Relief, we are looking to commission an independent consultant to support us in the development and delivery of an evaluation framework for the Athena Project and its core activities against which to report by January 2017. This process will include the development of an evaluation framework for each of the core activities of Athena as well as an analysis of its ability to deliver its key objectives, outputs and outcomes and the challenges and barriers to the successful delivery of the new model.

### 2. The project

The Athena Project objectives are to:

- improve and increase the provision of legal advice and representation to meet the needs of asylum-seeking and migrant women
- develop a new model of advice provision in partnership with other specialist organisations that works with, but is not dependant on, legal aid.

The Athena Project will achieve these objectives by the following activities:

- The implementation of a new gateway service on our immigration law advice line. With funding from Unbound Philanthropy we have remodelled our immigration law advice line and employed an Advice Line Gateway Assistant to increase the number of women we can advise

prioritising those who need urgent assistance and providing signposting and information to those who do not (for example, by diverting professionals with enquiries to our Women's Migration and Asylum Network).

- The development of the Women's Migration and Asylum Network (WoMAN) into an interactive forum for the sharing of information and best practice, disseminating research and seeking legal advice and representation for service users. WoMAN is currently supported by a volunteer who is drawing on her considerable expertise to disseminate information and case-law updates.
- Working in partnership with at least 6 specialist organisations (including VAW organisations) and immigration advice providers to provide advice and representation to women with an insecure immigration status that is complimentary to, but not dependant on, legal aid funding.

The Athena Project has two groups of outcomes: one which enables us to monitor its impact on our key beneficiaries, vulnerable migrant women; and the other which enables us to monitor its impact on our own organisational capacity and that of other organisations providing services for these women. Our outcomes are:-

- Rights of Women will have increased capacity and resources to meet the needs of vulnerable migrant women.
- Specialist organisations will have an increased understanding of the needs of vulnerable migrant women who are at risk of, or experiencing, gender-based violence.
- Specialist organisations will have increased skills and ability to meet the immigration advice needs of vulnerable migrant women.
- Women with an insecure immigration status will have an increased ability to make informed decisions based on their rights in the UK.
- Women with an insecure immigration status will have an increased ability to access financial and other sources of support therefore reducing destitution/poverty and the risk of re-victimisation.
- Women with an insecure immigration status will have an increased ability to secure safety and justice in the UK.

Indicators of success will include:

- an increased ability by Rights of Women to respond to the needs of vulnerable migrant women via our telephone advice line and other activities
- an increase in membership of WoMAN and engagement of other organisations in supporting the needs of vulnerable migrant women
- an increased ability by VAW organisations to meet the needs of vulnerable migrant women through the provision of legal advice services
- an increased understanding of other immigration advice providers of VAW and the issues facing their clients/service users and their ability to meet their needs
- an increase in vulnerable migrant women's confidence and self esteem with an increased understanding of the law and their legal rights
- an increase in vulnerable migrant women's independence and ability to make decisions about their (and their families) futures
- an increase in vulnerable migrant women's ability to keep themselves (and their families) safe from violence

### 3. The evaluation brief

The evaluation process has two distinct stages:

1. To provide technical advice and support on strengthening the Athena Project's evaluation framework (this will include a review of existing data collection methods and the development and implementation of new methods)
2. To undertake an evaluation of the Athena Project and report on its findings

This process will enable us to review the implementation and delivery of this new model of delivery against its outcomes and assist in planning for the sustainable development of model.

The evaluation will focus on

- Assessing the effectiveness of the new model and its activities
- Identifying the essential elements of the project, its successes and challenges
- Identifying the lessons learnt from the project
- Assessing the potential for replication in other areas and for other population groups

The key evaluation questions are

- To what extent have the Athena Project activities achieved their outcomes?
- What were the project's key achievements and successes and what elements of the project were the most effective?
- What were the project's challenges and barriers to success? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the new model?
- What are the remaining gaps and barriers to meeting the needs of this group of women and what are the opportunities to develop more effective responses to those needs?

### 4. The evaluation outputs

The key outputs include:

- **The development of an effective evaluation framework and data collection processes by 31 March 2015:** this will include a review of Rights of Women's existing monitoring and evaluation processes alongside the project's outputs and outcomes to effectively monitor the project and its activities. It would also include data available from our partner organisations and identifying any gaps and/or opportunities in data collection.
- **Supporting the implementation of data collection processes:** this will include working with Rights of Women and our partner organisations to ensure that data collection is effective and processes are reviewed and developed as necessary.
- **An interim findings report by 31 October 2015:** this will include a review and analysis of the data and evidence collected by Rights of Women and our partners to date as well as interviews with key stakeholders in order to highlight areas for improvement or development. **A key findings final report by 31 December 2016:** this will be a concise, accessible report of the key findings of the evaluation suitable for external publication by Rights of Women and our funders. The report will include a report of qualitative interviews with key internal and external stakeholders including partner organisations, wider sector stakeholders and key beneficiary groups. The audience for this report will include the women's and immigration advice sectors, other funders and local and national government and will provide a tool for influencing future policy and practice development.

## 5. Timeframe and budget

This evaluation will take place between January 2015 and December 2016 and will include an evaluation of the project which commenced in July 2014.

The budget is £27,000 (inclusive of any VAT or expenses). This includes the costs of all research, interviews and/or focus groups with stakeholders (including travel and expenses), analysis and report writing and meetings with the project team.

## 6. The tender process

We are looking for individuals or organisations who:

- Have sound experience and expertise in social research and evaluation, particularly in relation to evidencing the social and financial value of projects;
- Have proven expertise in writing in an accessible format;
- Have experience of working with voluntary sector organisations;
- Have an understanding of current policy and practice in the women's voluntary sector and/or immigration advice sector, particularly in relation to the needs of vulnerable migrant women;

Proposals should be a maximum of 6 sides of A4 and should include:

- The names of the evaluation team and their experience. This should include their relevant knowledge of this field, capacity and experience, evidence of a proven track record in qualitative and quantitative research and effective project management and ability to work to deadlines;
- A framework and methodology for the evaluation including a key milestones and a timeline;
- Examples of (similar) projects evaluated by the evaluation team/organisation;
- Evidence of the team's commitment to equalities and diversity and the ethos of Rights of Women;
- Full contact details;
- A budget for the work to include a breakdown of major elements, any overheads, management costs, expenses and VAT where applicable;
- Name and contact details for two referees.

The deadline for applications is **12pm 19 December 2014**. Interviews will take place in early January 2015.

If you are interested in submitting a proposal for this work or would like to discuss this further please contact either

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