

Invitation to Tender (ITT):

**Assessing the extent of, and reasons for,
gender imbalance among UK senior actuaries**

Provision of Research Services

Reference	FRC2022-0206- Gender imbalance among UK senior actuaries
Date	15/11/2022

Assessing the extent of, and reasons for, gender imbalance among UK senior actuaries

1 Background and context

The Financial Reporting Council (FRC) regulates auditors, accountants and actuaries and sets the UK's Corporate Governance and Stewardship Codes. We seek to promote transparency and integrity in business; our work is aimed at investors and others who rely on company accounts, audit, and high-quality risk management.

The FRC is encouraging listed companies to increase the level of diversity in their UK operations. Companies need to consider how diversity and inclusion are relevant to the specific circumstances of their business, the markets they operate in, the workforce upon which they rely and the customers and communities they serve.

The FRC aims to maintain high standards and guidance in actuarial work to protect the public interest from the risks arising from actuarial work. In addition to its own promoting of high standards of equality, diversity, and inclusion among our regulated community, the FRC is interested in gathering evidence specifically on the extent of, and reasons for, gender imbalance among Scheme Actuaries (for Pension Schemes) and Chief Actuaries (for Insurers).

2 Project description

2.1 Purpose & Objectives

Despite a lot of good work by the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA) to promote diversity, a gender imbalance persists amongst UK qualified actuaries, tending to increase at higher levels of seniority. This can be observed from the IFoA's 2016 membership statistics¹ and was highlighted in the 2021 IFoA Presidential Address².

Although some general statistics are available, no systematic research has been carried out on what causes this gender imbalance in the qualified actuary population and why it increases at higher levels of seniority. As such, the objectives of this research project are to:

- A. Gather and assess primary evidence on the reasons for gender imbalances among senior actuaries (Scheme Actuaries for Pension Schemes, and Chief Actuaries for Insurers).
- B. Assess the barriers/disincentives for women to progress towards senior actuarial positions. Are there consistent themes to such barriers? At what point(s) in a person's career path do the identified barriers tend to be most often experienced?
- C. Identify (and document) cases where good practice has facilitated women's progression to senior positions in the actuarial profession

¹ [2016 IFoA's membership statistics](#), (membership surveyed here included overseas actuaries)

² [Louise Pryor's Presidential Address \(IFoA President 25 June 2021\)](#), page 11

2.2 Suggested approach and analysis

We anticipate the information needed to meet the objectives outlined above will best be gathered using interviews and focus groups. However, bidders may suggest alternative engagement formats, approaches and innovations if beneficial.

The engagements would be driven by an interview/topic guide developed by the contractor's research team, working closely with the FRC's subject matter experts, as well as any other expertise the contractor can offer (please specify in your proposal). Bidders should provide examples of potential topics and questions in their proposals. These should be of sufficient breadth and depth to demonstrate the research team's knowledge of the relevant issues, as well as their ability to apply this effectively in the specified engagement formats.

The FRC recognises that, due to the subject matter, participants may wish to remain anonymous. The research contractor will need to assure participants of the confidentiality of any information they disclose and that it will only be used in anonymised form. Please outline in your proposal the steps you would take in this regard to maximise participation.

2.3 Target participant group

The participant sample should comprise pensions and insurance actuaries working in senior roles and other ranks of the profession including those at a more junior level. These should be drawn from a representative sample of companies. In addition, the sample should also include former actuaries who have now left the profession.

The participant sample should comprise a mix of genders, skewed towards those that are less represented at senior ranks of the actuarial profession.

Bidders for this research project should explain in their proposals how they would successfully recruit a sufficient number of participants matching the characteristics above. Proposals should also specify which engagement format(s) would be used (e.g. interviews, focus groups, other formats), and their details including the time duration, the number of participants in each and the total number of participants that will be covered, while remaining within the project budget and timeline.

2.4 Deliverables

The output from this research project will be a final report, of publishable³ quality, addressing the research objectives in section 2.1 above. It should set out the evidence gathered, analysis of that evidence and the findings, giving specific examples to illustrate the points made. We would expect the research, and hence the report, to contribute to a better understanding of the issue of gender imbalance among UK senior actuaries and prompt a discussion among the FRC's actuarial-related stakeholders. The main report should be accessible to a non-technical audience.

³ The intention is for the research project to lead to an FRC publication on these matters, but this should not be read as a commitment by the FRC to publish.

2.5 Liaison arrangements

The FRC policy team should be updated on project progress and consulted on key decisions in the research design and operationalisation.

- Regular updates throughout the project (by conference call), including progress on participant recruitment.
- The FRC to sign-off topic sets and questions for each engagement format.
- Presentation of initial observations/preliminary findings to the FRC. This will enable the FRC to ask that subsequent analysis and report writing goes into greater detail in particular areas of interest.
- Draft report and final report both to be signed-off.

2.6 High-level project timeline

<i>Week commencing</i>	<i>Deliverable / milestone</i>
02-01-2023	Kick-off meeting, agree detailed project timeline and methods for each phase
23-01-2023	Agree questions/topic guide; agree target populations/samples
23-01-2023	Participant recruitment begins
13-02-2023	Fieldwork begins
06-03-2023	Discussion on initial observations/preliminary findings
17-04-2023	Interim findings presentation
24-04-2023	Agree final report structure
19-06-2023	Draft final report to FRC for comment
24-07-2023	Final report to the FRC

2.7 Cost and financials

Bidders should provide a fixed fee for the work, exclusive of VAT, inclusive of all expenses. Costs should be detailed in the Tender Response Documents in the format specified. No other costs should be charged on top of the fixed fee, unless the scope materially changes from what is set out / agreed. Changes to the scope / cost of the project must be mutually agreed.

The FRC does not anticipate tender bids over £50,000 excl. VAT

2.8 Your tender response

The proposal should be no more than 7 pages in total, excluding annexes, and include:

- A succinct summary of the proposal, including an estimated timeline of project milestones.
- Details of the proposed:
 - research approach
 - methodology; including examples of potential topics and questions
 - recruitment strategy; including how you will recruit a sufficient number of participants and the steps that will be taken to maximise participation.
- An estimated timeline of project milestones.
- Your organisation's experience of similar projects and relevant research capability.
- The arrangements to be put in place for managing this work and quality assuring outputs.
- A budget, including a breakdown of time and costs per activity.
- Details of personnel to be involved, including their role for this project and their relevant experience.
- CVs for the project team should be included in an annex, along with any additional information about your organisation that you consider relevant.
- Bids should identify any real or perceived conflicts of interest.

2.9 Tender evaluation

Bids will be assessed against the following principal criteria:

- (20%) Understanding of our requirement (supported by relevant experience, track record and / or transferrable knowledge).
- (35%) The suitability of the approach (including methodology and management).
- (25%) Experience / relevant experience of the proposed personnel.
- (20%) Pricing / cost of your proposal.

3 References

The FRC reserves the right to take up references. You may be required to provide references in the Tender Response Document / upon request. References must be relevant to the FRC requirement and in the last five years

4 Use of ITT & publication

Tenderers **must not** undertake any publicity activity regarding the procurement within any section of the media.

5 Questions & Clarifications

Tenderers may raise questions or seek clarification regarding any aspect of this tender at any time prior to the tender clarification deadline.

Tenderers may raise questions or seek clarification within the timeframe by sending questions to procurement@frc.org.uk in the following format.

Nature of query / clarification	Query / Clarification

The FRC will not enter into exclusive discussions regarding the requirements of this ITT with tenderers.

To ensure that all tenderers have equal access to information regarding this tender opportunity, FRC will publish all its responses to questions raised by Tenderers on an anonymous basis.

Responses will be published in a questions and answers document to all Tenderers who have indicated that they wish to participate.

6 Tender process timeline

DATE/TIME	ACTIVITY
15/11/2022	Publication of the Invitation to Tender
28/11/2022 By 12.00noon	Deadline to submit clarification questions
02/12/2022	Deadline for publication of responses to clarification questions The FRC will endeavour to meet this deadline
13/12/2022 By 12.00noon	Deadline for supplier submission of tender to the FRC.
by 21/12/2022	Tender Outcome (and contracting)
w/c 02/01/2023	Project Kick Off (subject to availability)

7 Conduct

The tenderer must not communicate to any person the tender price, even approximately, before the date of the contract award other than to obtain, in strict confidence, a price for insurance required to submit the tender.

The tenderer must not try to obtain any information about any other person's tender or proposed tender before the date of the contract award.

The tenderer must not make any arrangements with any other person about whether or not they should tender, or about their tender price.

The tenderer must not offer any incentive to any member of FRC's staff for doing or refraining from doing any act in relation to the tender.

If the tenderer engages in any of the activities set out in this section or if the FRC considers the tenderer's behaviour is in any way unethical, the FRC reserves the right to disqualify the tenderer from the procurement.

The tenderer represents and warrants that a conflicts of interest check has been carried out, and that check revealed no conflicts of interest.

Where a conflict of interest exists or arises or may exist or arise during the procurement process or following contract award the tenderer must inform the FRC and submit proposals to avoid such conflicts.

Tenderers must obtain for themselves at their own responsibility and expense all information necessary for the preparation of tenders. The FRC is not liable for any costs incurred by the

tenderer as a result of the tendering procedure. Any work undertaken by the tenderer prior to the award of contract is a matter solely for the tenderer's own commercial judgement.

8 Due Diligence

While reasonable care has been taken in preparing the information in this ITT and any supporting documents, the information within the documents does not purport to be exhaustive nor has it been independently verified.

Neither the FRC, nor its representatives, employees, agents or advisers:

- makes any representation or warranty, express or implied, as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the ITT and supporting documents; or
- accepts any responsibility for the adequacy, accuracy or completeness of the information contained in the ITT and supporting documents nor shall any of them be liable for any loss or damage, other than in respect of fraudulent misrepresentation, arising as a result of reliance on such information or any subsequent communication.

It is the tenderer's sole responsibility to undertake such investigations and take such advice, including professional advice, as it considers appropriate in order to make decisions regarding the content of its tenders and in order to verify any information provided to it during the procurement process and to query any ambiguity, whether actual or potential.

It is a requirement that the successful supplier (i) comply with all applicable laws and regulations including, without limitation, the Bribery Act 2010, the Equality Act 2010 and the Modern Slavery Act 2015; and (ii) in addition to any contractual requirement(s), inform the FRC immediately upon becoming aware of any event (including actual or threatened court proceedings) which may impact upon the reputation of the FRC, whether or not connected with the Supplies and/or Services.

9 Submitting a Tender

Tenderers must submit their tender response within the deadline to procurement@frc.org.uk.

Where a Tender Response Template is provided, potential providers must align their tender response with that format.

A Tender must remain valid and capable of acceptance by the Authority for a period of 90 days following the Tender Submission Deadline. A Tender with a shorter validity period may be rejected.

10 Evaluation

The FRC will award the contract on the basis of the tender which best meets the evaluation criteria aligned to the requirements.

11 Acceptance of Tender & Notification of Award

The FRC reserves the right to amend, add to or withdraw all or any part of this ITT at any time during the procurement.

The FRC shall not be under any obligation to accept the lowest price tender or any tender and reserves the right to accept such portion or portions as it may decide, unless the tenderer includes a formal statement to the contrary in the tender. The FRC also reserves the right to award more than one contract to fulfil the requirement.

The tenderer will be notified of the outcome of the tender submission at the earliest possible time.

Where the procurement process is subject to EU public procurement directives, a minimum standstill period of 10 calendar days will apply between communicating the award decision electronically to tenderers and awarding the contract.

Nothing in the documentation provided by the FRC to the tenderer during this procurement or any communication between the tenderer and the FRC or the FRC's representatives, employees, agents or advisers shall be taken as constituting an offer to contract or a contract. No tender will be deemed to have been formally accepted until the successful tenderer has received a formal contract award letter from the FRC.

12 Additional Information

Please use the attached Tender Response Document for your reply.

The Terms and Conditions that will apply to this proposed Agreement are attached. **Suppliers should accept the T&C's with no material changes.**