

	safefood Research
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RESEARCH TENDER CALL



TENDER INFORMATION DOCUMENT

Project Reference No.: 04-2022

Project Title: Communicating food poverty – understanding the current discourse on the island of Ireland

1. Objective/Knowledge Gap

Food poverty is complex in nature and there is a common misperception that it is related only to poor choices by individuals therefore it can be a challenging topic on which to communicate. The current proposal aims to explore discourses on the topic of food poverty in the media on the island of Ireland to facilitate more effective communication and awareness.

The objectives are to:

- Identify where food poverty features in public policy documentation, detailing the language used and how food poverty is framed and links with other policies
- Explore the media discourse on food poverty in broadcast (national and local radio, TV) and non-broadcast media (national and local newspapers) on the island of Ireland (IOI)
- Explore from the above the placement of food poverty stories, related research findings and other stimuli.
- Investigate key stakeholder's (policy makers, media and community representatives) understanding and perceived relevance of food poverty using qualitative research
- Investigate the public perceptions on how the topic of food poverty is framed in the media.

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Ultimately, this research project and its recommendations should support a more effective way to communicate food poverty by policy makers and food poverty advocates to the media, to raise awareness and improve knowledge of food poverty and to destigmatise the issue of food poverty for those who experience it.

2. **Background**

Inequality in accessing a nutritionally adequate and acceptable diet i.e. food poverty is a major risk factor for non-communicable diseases. Food poverty is defined as *'the inability to have an adequate and nutritious diet due to issues of affordability and access to food, with related impacts on health, culture and social participation being felt'*. Food poverty therefore not only affects what people eat, it also impacts on people's lifestyles, social interactions and health. Data published by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency show that 17% of the population were in relative poverty in 2019/20 and 13% in absolute poverty (before housing costs) (1). In Ireland 9% of households experienced food poverty in 2017 (2).

Food Poverty is a priority for both governments on the IOI. An All-island Food Poverty Network was established in 2009 to provide a co-ordinated and strategic approach to tackling food poverty on the island of Ireland. The Network supports the development of consensus on related issues, collaboration and shared learning (3) and is co-chaired by **safefood** and The Food Standards Agency, Northern Ireland. One of the objectives of the All-island Food Poverty Network is to raise awareness of Food Poverty on the island, and to that end **safefood** is undertaking this piece of research to generate data on the reporting and awareness of food poverty on the IOI from a number of different perspectives. This will help to better inform and support communications in this area by all parties. This research project acknowledges the important role that media plays in framing and contextualising a social problem like food poverty and how it can influence directly or indirectly the policy process (4).

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3. **Approach**

It is proposed that the aim of the project be in-part achieved through an initial literature review of existing data (from both the IOI and internationally). It is proposed that the aims and objectives of the current research are met by using a mixture of methods including qualitative and quantitative methods.

4. **Technical Specification**

(a) **Scope of research**

The research should:

- Consider policy documents published over a period of at least 10 years with direct and indirect relevance to and for food poverty
- Consider media content published and broadcast over a period of at least 5 years
- From the above consider how food poverty and its drivers were described, ensuing debates and which solutions were favoured by the different actors
- Ensure that public participants in the qualitative work represent different agenda in terms of social class, age, region and rural/urban and those with experiences of food poverty
- Be collaborative across a number of relevant disciplines including experts in public health, policy, content analysis and communications and other relevant fields.

It should be noted that safefood is not an active participant in the project and sole responsibility lies with the successful tenderer.

(b) **Literature review**

The literature review should include peer-reviewed publications and a systemised search of the grey literature. Detail must be provided regarding how the literature review will be structured and completed along with quality assurance mechanisms e.g., review by more than one researcher. A separate review of government and key food poverty organisation reports, and conference proceedings should be conducted for the same time period as the

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formal literature review. Details on how the policy review will be conducted should be included.

(c) Qualitative and quantitative research

A full justification and rationale for the proposed methodology and analytical approach will be required. It will be necessary to indicate for all aspects of the project how the proposed data will be collected, analysed and reported. The research should be mixed in nature. The contractor is responsible for developing and piloting any topic guide which will be used to facilitate the qualitative discussions. The contractor is encouraged to use tools such as vignettes or visual aids to facilitate a more relevant and open discussion for the participants. These vignettes should be developed from the formal literature and policy reviews. They could focus on how the interviewees or members of focus groups respond to stories.

(d) Outline of proposed data sources

For this study, different data sources will be required. The researcher must enumerate the sources they intend to use and demonstrate access and experience in the use of the proposed data sources, as well as the relevant permissions to do so. The data sources will include data from:

- Review of relevant policy documents
- Media content analysis to build a dataset of relevant newspaper articles and broadcast media pieces to identify stakeholders
- Focus groups and/or qualitative methods with key stakeholder's (policy makers, media, NGO food poverty agencies and community members including users or recipients of food welfare and charity)
- Focus groups with the public.

(e) Analysis

A full and detailed methodology must be provided on how the data sources are going to be identified, utilised, analysed and interpreted to meet the objectives of the project.

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(f) Data handling and Reporting

- The contractor will submit to **safefood**, on a six-monthly basis, an interim report containing details of the progress for each deliverable of the project
- The contractor is responsible for collating all results and a final report will be submitted to **safefood** on completion of the study
- All forms, documentation and electronic files must be retained by the contractor for **safefood** for a minimum period of 7 years in case of issues arising after the completion of the research.

(g) Quality assurance

- Ethical approval will be an essential component where data collection from participants is involved
- The contractor will use validated methods where applicable and will apply best practice quality controls to approaches.
- To ensure transparency and reproducibility, all data sources used in the research must be specified, and all data used must be explicitly specified and justified
- **safefood** may visit the contractors during the course of the research to assess how the work is being carried out.

5. Proposed Activities/Deliverables

- Recommendations on how to communicate food poverty to different audiences, including guidance for the community sector on best practices to highlight food poverty, to raise awareness and communicate it as a priority
- Guidance for reporter and journalists on reporting food poverty
- Similarities and differences between Northern Ireland and Ireland in reporting and framing of studies
- Differences of how national and local media and broadcast outlets in both jurisdictions report food poverty and how they are perceived by audiences
- Urban/rural differences in the importance of media outlets and reporting/framing of food poverty
- Submission on a 6-monthly basis of an interim report on progress

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- Analysis of the final dataset, collation of the results and drafting of a final report to be submitted to **safefood** at the end of the 12-month study period.

6. Evaluation of Tenders

Tender bids will be evaluated according to the quality of proposals and applicants using the following criteria:

Quality of the proposal:

- ✓ Anticipated deliverables
- ✓ Research method, facilities and the inclusion of key stakeholders in the qualitative research (journalists, policy makers/influencers and those who have experienced food poverty)
- ✓ Value for money including added value and innovation in the research approach
- ✓ Potential for application
- ✓ Work plan, including the overall timeframe.

Quality of Applicants:

- ✓ Experience in subject areas including food poverty and media analysis;
- ✓ Quality Assurance and Quality Control measures in place.

7. Duration of Project

Estimated duration of the project: Total of 12 months. A detailed timescale of research should be submitted by the applicant.

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8. **Tender Application Forms and Guidelines**

The Tender Application Form and associated Guidelines can be downloaded from www.safefood.net/research-tender-2022. They can also be obtained by emailing research@safefood.net, quoting the project reference number. Alternatively, please contact:

Ms. Gillian Fox
 Research Coordinator
safefood
 7 Eastgate Avenue
 Little Island, Co. Cork
 Tel: +353 21-2304100

The closing date for receipt of applications by **safefood** is no later than **4pm on Thursday 14th April 2022**.

References

1. Department for Communities. Poverty Bulletin: Northern Ireland 2019/20. 2021.
2. Protection DoEAS. Social Inclusion Monitor 2017. 2019 May 2019.
3. safefood "All-island Food Poverty Network." safefood 2020 [cited 03 August 2021] <https://www.safefood.net/food-poverty-network>
4. Buse, K., Mays, N. and Walt, G. (2012), Making Health Policy: Second Edition, Open University Press, Maidenhead, Berkshire.