

## National consultant to conduct study on the cost of politics in Nigeria

### Terms of Reference

**November 2024**

Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) invites interested individuals, firms, or research teams to submit short technical and financial proposals to conduct qualitative research on the cost of politics in Nigeria, with a particular focus on the challenges and impacts it poses for youth, persons with disabilities (PWDs) and women's political participation and engagement.

Interested parties are requested to submit their proposal – to comprise a short technical proposal (max 3 pages), a budget, a sample of previous work and the CVs of research team members – by **20 November 2024**.

#### 1. Introduction

To hold nationwide elections and sustain political campaigns, both key elements of any democracy, requires resources. Increasingly important, money may not guarantee electoral success, however, those with limited funds rarely win elections. How that money is raised and spent, as well as who receives it and how, are important but under-researched questions.

The “cost of politics” approach focuses on the spending of individuals contesting for political office rather than those of political parties. It is broad in its scope, aiming to cover expenditures incurred across the election cycle: following the money spent, from the candidates' decision to stand for political office at the party primary phase, to the end of an individual's elected tenure.

The approach attempts to better understand what factors drive individual choices when it comes to spending funds on politics. In doing so, it can help explain why there is a divergence between stated rules and regulations and their implementation or lack thereof and provide a clearer indication of the obstacles to regulating and curbing, or better monitoring, spending on political campaigns.

The “cost of politics” has escalated with the greater political competition offered by multi-party democratic systems. Demands, from constituents, political parties, and other stakeholders on legislators to deliver personalised goods during the election cycle contributes to the erosion of vertical accountability - citizens role in holding their leaders to account - and horizontal accountability – internal checks and

oversight processes. This, along with issues of increased corruption, exclusion and disillusionment are some of the implications that existing studies conducted in Africa, Eastern Europe and Latin America have uncovered. For more see [www.costofpolitics.net](http://www.costofpolitics.net).

## **2. Study objectives**

The proposed study on the cost of politics aims to build on the findings of a similar [research](#) conducted by WFD in 2016, which analysed the cost of parliamentary politics following the 2015 general elections. The study highlighted an upward trend in political spending and showed that financial resources, rather than the credibility of candidates or their manifestos, became the deciding factor in elections. Since then, two general elections have taken place (2019 and 2023), and a fresh examination of the dynamics of the cost of legislative politics is essential.

This qualitative study will gather data on the indicative costs, and implications of seeking and holding political office in Nigeria with a focus on the 2023 general elections.

It is envisaged that the study will be used to deepen the understanding of electoral incentives; stimulate national dialogue; inform legal and policy advocacy, particularly electoral reform processes; and improve democratic processes, particularly for youth, PWDs and women, ahead of future polls. The following key questions will underpin this research:

- a) What are the key social, economic, and political drivers of the cost of parliamentary/legislative politics?
- b) What are some of the types of costs incurred by prospective aspirants? And how does this differ depending on who they are or which political party they seek to contest with?
- c) How did the cost of politics differ between the 2019 and 2023 general elections in terms of campaign financing, political spending, and election-related expenses?
- d) How do the cost of politics impact on the participation of marginalised and special interest groups - youth, women and persons living with disabilities - in electoral politics?
- e) How do the cost of politics impact on the socio-economic development of the country?
- f) What are the legal, policy and programming options likely to reduce or regulate the cost of politics?

## **3. Suggested methodology, deliverables, and timeframes**

The research should be conducted using a combination of desk-based research or relevant literature and reports, alongside predominantly qualitative key informant interviews and focus group discussions with critical stakeholders, including political

aspirants, academics, civil society/media representatives and other relevant stakeholders. Other tools and methods can be proposed. WFD is particularly interested to hear from, and reflect, on the experiences of women, PWDs and youth in this study.

In addition to producing a report summarising the findings, the selected researcher will also be expected to facilitate 2 event/roundtable discussions where the findings will be first validated and finally presented to relevant stakeholders. The researcher is also expected to offer support and guidance to WFD in its follow-up engagements and outreach. The costs for this should be included in the proposed budget.

We expect the research to be undertaken in November and December 2024.

#### **4. Funding**

Funding for this study will be provided by WFD. The individual or research team is required to submit a financial proposal between NGN 10 million - 13 million naira (inclusive of all costs) in response to this terms of reference.

#### **5. Skills and qualifications**

The individual/research team/firm should have experience conducting similar studies as well as the following qualifications and skills:

- The lead researcher should hold a postgraduate or advanced university degree (preferably a PhD) in political science, public policy, or another relevant domain. Previous management of a research team is highly preferred.
- A member of the team should have experience of conducting qualitative interviews with political stakeholders.
- A member should have experience leading focus group discussions with political stakeholders.
- Conceptual and practical knowledge of politics and electoral democracy.
- Strong writing and analytical skills in English

#### **6. Application procedure**

Qualified and interested applicants are hereby requested to send their bids to [procurement@wfd.org](mailto:procurement@wfd.org) cc WFD's Cost of Politics Manager, Jamie Hitchen ([j.c.hitchen@gmail.com](mailto:j.c.hitchen@gmail.com)) by 20 November 2024 using the subject heading "EOI: Nigeria Cost of Politics Study". Any queries can also be directed to this email address.

The application should contain the following:

- a) **A technical proposal:** To include a summary of the applicant's qualifications and experience, a brief methodology, outlining how they will approach and complete the research, and a tentative timeline.
- b) **A financial proposal:** This should indicate the all-inclusive fixed total contract price and be supported by a brief breakdown of costs by activities.
- c) **Evidence of competence:** CVs of key team members and one example of a recent or relevant research study which the team/individual team members have undertaken.

Bids will be assessed and scored against the following criteria: relevant experience (25%), methodological approach (35%), qualifications of research team (20%) and value for money (20%).