

## Invitation to tender

# External consultant to report on the feasibility of a Future Generations Commissioner in Ireland

**DEADLINE: Midnight April 7th 2024**

### About the SDGs and Coalition 2030:

In September 2015, all 193 UN member states agreed to work towards achieving 17 ‘Sustainable Development Goals’ or SDGs by 2030. Ireland, along with Kenya, co-led the negotiations that led to the agreement on these goals. They constitute the bedrock of the ‘2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ which represents a shared global vision. The SDGs are the only universally agreed framework for implementing a social floor informed by human rights, while also working to prevent overshoot of planetary boundaries.

The goals are interdependent and have the ability to mutually reinforce or hinder one another. They are also indivisible, in that progress in one area cannot and should not be disentangled from progress (or lack thereof) in another. The framework seeks to acknowledge the intersections and interactions between policy areas in order to reduce siloed policy-making. It also highlights the trade-offs that emerge in the act of policy-making so that they can be addressed, and advocates for substantive Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an ambitious, systems-level approach to solve extreme global poverty, inequality, and climate change by 2030. The five dimensions of the 2030 Agenda—Prosperity, People, Planet, Peace, and Partnerships (The 5 P’s)—articulate the scope of this vision. At its heart are the principles of ‘Leaving No One Behind’ and reaching the ‘furthest behind first.’

Coalition 2030 is an alliance of over 70 civil society organisations (CSOs) that are working together to ensure that Ireland reaches the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The Coalition is made up of four ‘pillars’ representing four sectors of Irish civil society: International Development, Domestic Anti-Poverty and Equality, Environmental, and Trade Union. Coalition 2030 receives academic expertise from academics across Ireland.

### The role:

Recommendation 49 of the Report on the examination of the recommendations of the Citizens’ Assembly report on Biodiversity Loss<sup>1</sup> (published December 14th) is:

*The Committee acknowledges that our country’s progress should not be based solely on the narrow lens of economic growth, but instead should capture overall quality of life across health, environmental, social and economic areas. To this end, the Committee recommends the establishment of a new Ombudsman for Future Generations with the resources of an office, or a Future Generations Commission to protect the long-term interests of human and ecological well-being for current and future generations.*

Coalition 2030 is seeking an external consultant to undertake a feasibility study into the potential of a Future Generations Commissioner in Ireland. This is a short term consultancy, and the desired outcome is a concise report outlining the feasibility of this role in Ireland, in short answering the question, “*how might this role work in the Republic of Ireland’s political system?*”

The [Commission for Future Generations Bill 2023](#) introduced by Deputy Marc Ó Cathasaigh TD would, if passed, establish an independent commission for future generations to consider and report within 12 months on how best to set up an office of ombudsman for future generations in Ireland. The proposed commission for future generations could also make recommendations on a number of areas, including the measurement of progress of the overall well-being of our society; how best to ensure best practice among public bodies and Government Departments, while adhering to the principle of sustainable development; and the potential role of a joint Oireachtas committee on future generations. This bill is currently at 2nd stage waiting to be chosen as part of the lottery process.

In September 2024 the Summit of the Future will take place at the UN. It is expected that a Special Envoy for Future Generations will be established at the UN and in the Secretary General’s Policy Brief on Future Generations published in 2023<sup>2</sup> member States are urged to ‘Commit to take future generations into account in decision-making at the international and national levels’. This is the way the wind is blowing, and Ireland could be a first-mover. The next government needs to commit to bringing this idea to fruition in an Irish context, and a feasibility study would clarify the process for how this would work in practice.

Coalition 2030 is calling on the Irish government to abide by the definition of sustainable development - *meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs* - and govern for future generations. We are calling on them to lead in this space by, at this Summit, announcing our commitment to establish a Future Generations Commissioner. We also want to see this commitment in every Party’s General Election manifesto.

### **Why a Future Generations Commissioner?**

*“What Wales is doing today, the world will do tomorrow.”*

- The United Nations

The philosophy of ‘long-termism’ can be summed up in three statements. Future people count. There could be a lot of them. And we can make their lives better.

The people of the future do not have a voice in matters of grave importance to them. They cannot advocate for their rights, or vote, and their needs are subservient to the whims of decision-makers encumbered by short-term political cycles. In today’s politics, future people don’t technically count as they don’t have a vote and are unable to advocate for themselves, even though in our hearts they may morally count. This is not unique to Ireland.

Yet Ireland has the opportunity to situate itself as a first-mover in the area of future governance by establishing a mechanism whereby proposed laws and policies could be assessed for their potential impact on the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

### **Precedent: The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015**

In 2015, Wales passed a groundbreaking law, ‘The Well-being of Future Generations Act’.<sup>3</sup> The Act requires public institutions and government to meet current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. It sets out seven national well-being goals (see image to the right) and new ways of working and has established an independent, statutory Commissioner. The Act demands long-term solutions to some of our current

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/our-common-agenda-policy-brief-future-generations-en.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>

challenges and asks that public services collaborate with one another and involve communities in decisions that affect their social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being.

**Wales is the first country in the world to provide a legal link between the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and domestic legislation, translating them into country-level goals, shaped and owned by citizens.** This reflects the tireless efforts of people across Wales to strengthen the way in which the country's future is shaped, and Welsh society's commitment to a better quality of life for both current and future generations.

The Act extends historic obligations to promote sustainable development to 44 public bodies, legislating for sustainable development to be the central organising principle of each organisation. The world's first independent Future Generations Commissioner for Wales was appointed to be an advocate for the long-term and to support decision makers in Wales, thus providing a mechanism for Government and public bodies to consider the long-term impact of developments on future generations. The Act has transformed the way public bodies spend money, moving from finding the cheapest option to instead choosing the option that promotes well-being in its widest sense.



A significant element of the Commissioner's role is to advise public bodies as to how they can increase the wellbeing of current and future generations and assist them in their work to promote the Wellbeing Act. However, should the Commissioner deem a proposed action out of line with the Act, the proposer must provide appropriate rationale for the action, or review their proposal.

The establishment of the Commissioner has had a significant impact in Wales. A £1.4bn motorway that would have torn through a nature reserve was scrapped and the funds were instead put towards public transport, and all road building has been paused. A progressive school curriculum with an emphasis on skills and attributes for the future was developed, and a new way to define prosperity was embraced – valuing green, low-carbon, fair work over a rise in GDP.

### The role (continued):

The study should answer:

1. What legislation would the role be underpinned by, in the absence of a Wellbeing of Future Generations Act?
2. How could this role hold public bodies to account?
3. Would the existence of an Ombudsman for Future Generations fulfil the same requirements as a Commissioner?
4. How might this role interact with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC)?

### Output:

Report on the feasibility of a Future Generations Commissioner in Ireland produced **by 31st July 2024**.

The study should be no shorter than 12 pages at size 12 font 15 spaced, and no longer than 20 pages.

The study should engage with questions of:

- a) Legislative requirements
- b) Interaction with the Oireachtas
- c) Connection to IHREC and the Ombudsman for Children

The study should involve engagement with the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner in Wales and should a study visit be required, that can be arranged.

The final report should not be disseminated to the public until completely signed off by Coalition 2030 and designed in line with Coalition 2030 brand guidelines. The report design and print is not included in this tender and will be carried out by Coalition 2030.

**Methodology:**

This consultancy will be mainly desk based. The Coordinator will liaise closely with the consultant and help guide the work as it is developed, as required.

We expect the consultancy to begin in April/May and be completed by the end of July. A maximum of €4,500 will be available for this project. We expect the consultancy will involve 1 day per week from mid-May to end-July.

Coalition 2030 will not be liable for payment of PAYE, PRSI or USC in respect of this consultancy. Payment of all appropriate taxes remains the responsibility of the Consultant. Payment for the days worked will be facilitated by the Irish Environmental Network and made on the production of a final invoice when work is completed to the satisfaction of the Steering Committee.

**Required skills and experience:**

- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Prior consultation and report-writing experience
- Legal acumen
- Fluency in English

**Desirable skills and experience:**

- Qualitative research skills
- Experience in the Irish non-profit sector

**Application deadline:** Midnight April 7th.

**Reports to:** Coalition 2030 Coordinator

**Budget:** This is a fixed-sum consultancy with remuneration (ex VAT) of **€4,500 + expenses** agreed in advance as required. Price increases during the term of contract will not be accepted. All costs are in Euro. Other costs not included in the proposal and that arise during the work must be approved by Coalition 2030 before being incurred and in order to consider eligibility.

**Proposed Payment Schedule:**

Full payment within 10 working days of report sign-off..

**Location:** The position is remote, however if you require a desk in order to do your work that can be facilitated, and this desk will be in the IEN office in the MACRO Centre on Green Street, Dublin 7. This must be arranged in advance with the Coalition 2030 Coordinator.

**Equal access statement:** We endeavour to ensure that everyone, particularly marginalised and disadvantaged groups who might be affected by policy are considered and included in roles such as this one. Coalition 2030 understands the fact that there may be barriers to participation in NGO and consultancy work. We strive to expand and diversify civic engagement, by creating spaces for everybody to participate and be included in political change. As part of this commitment we strongly encourage applications from those with often marginalised identities including, for

example: people of colour, LGBTQIA+ people, those seeking asylum or with refugee status, people with a disability, or people who are members of an ethnic minority.

**Terms and Conditions:** Conditions are according to Irish legislation including the legal ability to live and work in Ireland. Coalition 2030 is a project of the Irish Environmental Network (IEN) which adheres to Irish employment law that prohibits discrimination on basis of age, sexual orientation, marital status, birth, fortune, religious, philosophical or political beliefs, language, present or future state of health, disability, physical or genetic characteristics, sex, pregnancy, childbirth, maternity, change of sex, nationality, alleged race, skin colour, ancestry, national, ethnic or social origin. The working language is English, but applicants are not required to be native speakers.

**To Apply:** Please submit your CV and a proposed methodology for the work to be carried out to [meaghan@coalition2030.ie](mailto:meaghan@coalition2030.ie) by midnight on April 7th 2024. Please include the role title in the subject of your email. The successful candidate will be expected to begin work as soon as is practicable.

**GDPR:** *All documentation received by Coalition 2030 will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Acts, 1988 and 2003 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR; 2018). The information will only be used by Coalition 2030 in the processing of job applications and for ongoing administrative purposes with job candidates. We may store this information in order to consider you for future vacancies which may become available. All offers of contractual employment are made subject to satisfactory completion of reference checks.*