



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NON-COMPULSORY BRIEFING SESSION – MS TEAMS

DATE: 04 March 2025
TIME: 10:00 to 11:00
TENDER NUMBER DBE203
DESCRIPTION: Appointment of a service provider or a consortium of service providers with professional and technical expertise in educational research on large scale national and international assessments for Systemic Evaluation in South Africa for a period of four years.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Ms N Metula:

- i. Welcomed everyone and introduced the Department of Basic Education's (DBE) team; Ms T Skosana, Mr R Legodi and Mr R Legodi (Supply Chain Management) and Dr M Chetty and Ms D Mathebe (Project Managers).
- ii. She gave the bidders an opportunity to introduce themselves (indicating the individual's names and the name of the company/ organisation one is presenting).

2. BID PRESENTATION

Ms Mathebe did the presentation of the Terms of Reference (TORs).

3. SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT (SCM) MATTERS

The SCM indicated that:

- i. The briefing session is non-compulsory as indicated in the Tender advert. Non-attendance to the briefing session does not lead to disqualification of the bidders' proposal/s.
- ii. The tender is closing on **20 March 2025 at 11:00**. A bid which is submitted after 11:00 will be regarded as late and will not be accepted by the DBE. The tender box is situated on the right-hand side before accessing the main entrance (from the gate) to the reception; and is clearly marked "TENDERS". With regard to the submission of bigger documents, reception will call the SCM officials who would register the document/s in the Register for receiving the tender documents.
- iii. Bids must be submitted as hard copies; electronic/ emailed submissions will not be accepted by the DBE.
- iv. An original bid proposal/ document will suffice, there is no need for copies as well.
- v. The discussions during the briefing session and the questions raised after the briefing session will be consolidated, responded to and uploaded on the Department's website (www.education.gov.za), eTender Portal (www.etenders.gov.za) where the tender advert and documents are published. Bidders can still forward the clarity seeking questions regarding the bid until 12 days before the tender closes. Make a reference to a tender number when raising a question regarding that tender. The questions should be directed to tenders@dbe.gov.za.
- vi. Bidders must read Mandatory Requirements carefully as listed in the TORs and ensure that they respond as required. Also see the tax requirements listed on SBD1, Part B. Below the table it is stated that "Failure to provide/ or comply with any of the above particulars may render the bid invalid.
- vii. Bidders must fully complete, sign and submit (with their bid document) the SBD forms which were uploaded with this tender document by the Department. Alteration or re-typing of the SBD forms is not allowed and will lead to the disqualification of the bid submitted.

4. QUESTIONS RAISED AND RESPONSES PROVIDED DURING THE BRIEFING SESSION

No.	Question	Response/ clarity
1.	On the mandatory requirements 8.1.1, where it requires a letter that talks about the technical services provided to ministries of education, if we don't have any experience on that, will the bid not be considered, that includes 8.1.2 as well?	The requirements listed on Section 8, are most critical to go through in detail because these are mandatory requirements and if any of these paragraphs/ requirements are not complied with, the bidder will be eliminated/ disqualified. All the mandatory requirements must be met in order for the bid to go through to functionality evaluation.

5. Closing remarks by:

- a. Dr Chetty:
 - i. Bidders should fully complete the correct SBD forms because if the incorrect SBD forms are filled in, this will lead to elimination from the bid.
 - ii. This is a high stakes study, in the previous Systemic Evaluation cycle there was a public launch where the Minister released the results to the public and also reported the results to the Presidency and Parliament and the oversight structures. Therefore, it is critical that the appointed bidder has the required expertise and skills so that when the Department releases the results that should be done with confidence and credibility. Hence emphasising all those mandatory requirements especially Paragraph 8.1.4 where the skills in terms of capacity required are listed to check the bidder's capacity to complete the task.
 - iii. The DBE does not want a bidder which, half way down the line; finds out that it does not have the skills set/ required and the Department has to engage the service provider as to whether it can complete the task. Therefore, on Paragraph 12.6, the DBE has a right to terminate the contract if the service provider is displaying unsatisfactory performance at different stages of the study.
 - iv. Paragraph 8.1.8 is a requirement for capital/ the bidder should have sufficient funds to complete at least the initial phases of the project. Bidders should not take that for granted and expect the Department to do partial payments or deviate from payment requirements stipulated in the TORs. This is a study that requires capital in advance to be able to complete the study.
 - v. The evaluation criteria is heavily weighted against companies with existing resources; if a bidder is still looking for resources they would score lower than the bidders with existing resources.
 - vi. This project is one of the flagship programmes of the Department, it needs to be conducted properly with the right amount of rigor and robustness.
- b. Ms Metula thanked the Bidders for attending the Briefing Session and wished them well with the preparation and submission of their bids.

The session was adjourned.

6. QUESTIONS RAISED AFTER THE BRIEFING SESSION AND THE RESPONSES

No.	Question	Response/ clarity
1.	What is the relationship between the technical functionality evaluation criteria (100 points) and the price and preference evaluation (100 points)? Are the points awarded in the technical evaluation considered in the overall evaluation or is the technical evaluation just a gatekeeping mechanism to the price evaluation?	The technical evaluation just a gatekeeping mechanism to the price evaluation
2.	In the briefing it was clearly stated that the SBD forms must be completed in the format within the DBE203 PDF and that they should not be re-typed. In the PDF the SBD forms are scanned versions and not electronically editable. We note there is very little room for response in some of the boxes. Is there a version of these forms that can be downloaded and completed electronically? If not, is it acceptable to convert the forms to Word version and complete them electronically?	The PDF versions should not be altered, and the available spaces should be completed as required with handwritten responses. Perhaps the additional information can be attached where the space on the form is not enough.
3.	Mandatory requirement 8.1.2 states that "Bidders must provide a published report of a national or international study using item response theory as a basis for analysis." Is a hard copy required of a report required or will a bibliographic reference and link to an online version be accepted?	A hard copy is required.
4.	The experience and publications sub-section of the work plan section states "(a link to the report and paper must be provided)". Can you confirm that a bibliographic reference and link to an online version is sufficient to meet this requirement?	A paper version will be preferred but a link will be acceptable but should be accessible. The size of the download should be taken into account.
5.	Mandatory requirement 8.1.1 states that "Bidders must provide a letter(s) that states the kind of technical support/service they have rendered..." Is this a letter from and signed by the bidder? If not, how is it different to mandatory requirement 8.1.7 which state "Bidders must submit no less than two (2) reference letters from different sources..."? Can one of the	i. Paragraph 8.1.1 refers to signed letters by the bidder indicating that they have provided technical support/service to a national ministry or ministries of education in conducting large scale national assessment and/or international studies with primary and or secondary school going children. These should be on the

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	letters provided for mandatory requirement 8.1.7 also be used to fulfil mandatory requirement 8.1.1?	<p>bidders' letterhead and could be more than one if the service was offered on different projects. These will be verified by DBE.</p> <p>ii. Paragraph 8.1.7 is the reference letter signed by the client that the bidder had offered and completed the service. This is on the client's letterhead.</p>
6.	Can you state an indicative number of working days for the service provider, either based on SASE 2022 or the expected workload for 2025, or an indication of the total cost envelope?	SASE 2022 was disrupted due to COVID, so the administration took longer than planned. Over the 4-year (48 month) period, actual workdays will depend on the capacity and resources of the service provider. Please refer to the timeframes in table 3 in section 6 5 for anticipated timeframes.
7.	Table 3 in section 6.5 mentions software for a field trial but it is not clear if and how the service provider is expected to contribute to otherwise the field trial. Can you clarify the role of the service provider during the field trial?	<p>The role of the service provider relating to activities of the field trial includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Sampling of schools and learners for the field trial of test instruments b) Review of all instruments prior to field trial and new items developed by DBE. c) Development of codebooks for data capture using appropriate software d) Analysis of field trial results, including a technical report on the item analysis <p>Please refer to phase 1 for further details.</p>
8.	Section 6.1.2 for phase 1 and section 6.2 for phase 2 make references to "observers" to monitor data collection and data capture. Please clarify the expected scope observations expected by the service provider, e.g. as a proportion or fixed number of test sessions, and the envisaged model for observing data capture, assuming that this will be centralized at DBE in Pretoria.	Observers are expected to oversee that activities that fall within the scope of the DBE are standardised and do not compromise the credibility of data that the service provider will be working with. This will enable the service provider to advise the DBE for the next cycle on how best processes can be improved. Observers may only cover a sample of schools.

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9.	Our understanding is that all assessment and questionnaire materials will be provided by DBE, including in Braille and sign-language formats and/or in all official or required languages as the case may be. Please confirm that no translation or translation verification work is expected from the service provider.	Yes, all material will be provided by the DBE. However, the service provider must advise on quality assurance processes employed by the DBE on translation verification.
10.	<p>Can you provide details on the structure and objectives of the Pilot/Field Trial? Specifically, we would like to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The sample size and selection criteria for schools and learners participating in the Pilot/Field Trial. b) The extent of test item and instrument validation during this phase. c) The expected psychometric analysis to be performed post-Pilot/Field trial to guide item revisions. d) Whether results from the Pilot/Field Trial will inform potential refinements to test administration protocols. e) If the Pilot/Field Trial will include a full implementation of the contextual questionnaires or if those will only be tested selectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The sample should include a purposeful sample of schools and learners allowing for sufficient analysis of learner responses on test items. Selection of schools should accommodate all official languages (11 in Grade 3 and 2 in Grades 6 and 9) to generate data on translation verification. This coverage could include schools from 1-3 provinces. b) This will include a review of existing instruments prior to field trial and validation of new items post the field trial. c) The analysis should be able to determine floor and ceiling effects, differential item analysis, and translation effects. d) Yes, items from the FT will influence the refinement of the instruments. There are items from the 2022 SASE that have been refined, and new items have been developed. The service provider will make recommendations to the DBE on potential refinements. e) These will only be tested selectively. The DBE anticipates that a few additional questions on the implementation of Mother-tongue based bi-lingual education should be added to the existing questionnaires to address new policy concerns.

No.	Question	Response/ clarity
11.	The form "Annexure A" (Pricing Schedule) states that additional rows may be added in each phase for each of the activities. However, the Mandatory Bidding Requirement Section 8.1.6 indicates that any alteration to the official forms will lead to disqualification, and SBD1 (Part B – Terms and Conditions for Bidding) specifies that the official forms may not be re-typed. Given these restrictions, could you kindly confirm the correct procedure for adding additional rows in Annexure A?	The amendment of the forms only applies to all SBD forms not Annexure A. However, the format and structure of the form must remain the same as the original.

TENDER CLOSING DATE IS 20 MARCH 2025 at 11:00.