

Website Maintenance and Domain Renewal Specification

1. Overview

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) seeks to appoint a service provider to deliver WordPress website maintenance, support, and technical development services for its publishing platforms—HSRC Press and BestRed—over a 24-month period from August 2025 as well as domain registration renewal for the two websites. Hosting services will be provided by a separate vendor; this specification focuses solely on website maintenance and domain renewal. The appointed service provider will ensure platform stability, performance, and operational continuity to support HSRC’s publishing objectives.

2. Websites to be Maintained and Domains to be Renewed.

- www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- www.bestred.co.za

3. Objectives

- Ensure high availability and up time for the two sites.
- Keep WordPress core, themes, and plugins updated without disrupting functionality.
- Protect websites from cyber threats and security vulnerabilities.
- Timely support for content updates, design changes, and product publishing.
- Improved user experience and discoverability of academic content.
- Optimize loading speed and server performance.
- Provide strategic insights through analytics, SEO support, and global usage tracking.
- Domain renewal.

4. Standard Requirements

- Minimum of **5 years’ experience** in WordPress website development and support.
- Proven capability to manage both technical and content-related aspects - **Portfolio of past WordPress sites (At least 5 live links/screenshots).**
- Availability of a dedicated team to coordinate support activities. – **CVs of team**
- **Three (3) recent references** of similar work done within the last 2 years.
- Defined service levels and performance expectations in a **formal Service Level Agreement (SLA).**

5. Scope of Services

5.1- Domain Management

- Domain renewal.
- DNS configuration and security.
- Full support services for domain lifecycle.

5.2 Technical Maintenance

- Regular updates of WordPress core, themes, and plugins.
- Testing for compatibility and performance issues.
- Troubleshooting and technical issue resolution.
- Collaboration with the hosting provider for DNS, SSL, and server-level issues.

5.3 Security & Stability

- Security monitoring and malware scanning.
- Regular vulnerability scans and patching.
- Immediate alert and response in case of breaches or suspicious activity.
- Monthly security reports

5.4 Content Management Support

- Up to 12 hours/month of content publishing, layout adjustments, graphic updates, and uploading content.

5.5 SEO & Discoverability

- On-page SEO setup and optimization.
- Sitemap and metadata management for academic indexing and Google visibility.
- Optimization of internal linking and permalinks

5.6 Analytics & Reporting

- Monthly reporting on website traffic, content engagement, and user locations.
- Highlighting country reach and trends.

5.7 Training & Knowledge Transfer

- User training on publishing workflows, uploads, and plugin usage.
- Provision of quick reference guides and troubleshooting documents.

5.8 Strategic Support

- UX improvements and architecture advice.
- Integration guidance with third-party systems.
- Recommendations for future tech adoption.

6. Evaluation Checklist

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) is a Schedule 3 (A) national public entity in terms of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) 1999 (Act No.1 of 1999 as amended). The HSRC is governed by a Board appointed by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation. In delivering 'social science that makes a difference' in South Africa and the region, the Research Programmes and Units of the Human Sciences Research Council initiate and undertake policy-oriented research projects and programmes from its offices in Cape Town, Pietermaritzburg, and Pretoria. Its public-purpose mandate is set out in the Human Sciences Research Council Act of 2008.

As per the Supply Chain Management Policy of the HSRC, the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act will be applied in bid adjudications for Specific Goals to justify the tender, identified as

Specific goals (PFFA pa2 2)	Number of points (80/20 system)	Required proof/documents to be submitted
SMME	4	CSD report showing EME/QSE classification
Owned by black people (50% or more)	4	CSD report/ CSD registration number (MAAA number)
Owned by black people who are youth (30% or more)	4	CSD report/ CSD registration number (MAAA number)
Owned by black people who are women (30% or more)	4	CSD report/ CSD registration number (MAAA number)
Owned by black people who have disabilities (30% or more)	4	CSD report/ CSD registration number (MAAA number) Certified medical certificate from a

		registered medical practitioner
Total points to be claimed	20	

Functionality	Weight
<p>1.) Extensive knowledge which includes working knowledge of website maintenance using technical aspects of website. Proof that the Service Provider has been in existence and in practice for a period of 5 Years. Proven capability to manage both technical and content-related aspects - Portfolio of past WordPress sites (live links/screen shots).</p> <p>Less than 3 links in line with references – 0 points A minimum of 5 links in line with references –10 points A minimum of 6-7 links in line with references – 20 points A minimum of 8 and more links in line with references - 30 points</p>	30
<p>2.) Project Management and quality control: 2.1) The service provider needs to successfully deliver a website maintenance execution project plan demonstrating the understanding of the supporting all of the above requirements. The service provider must have the ability to plan successfully and complete the maintenance of the website within the prescribed timeframes (12 hours per month) as in below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular updates of WordPress core, themes, and plugins. • Testing for compatibility and performance issues. • Troubleshooting and technical issue resolution. • Collaboration with the hosting provider for DNS, SSL, and server-level issues <p>Poor project management– 0 points Moderate project management – 10 points Good project management – 15 points Excellent project management - 20 points</p>	20

