



merSETA

MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING
AND RELATED SERVICES SETA

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

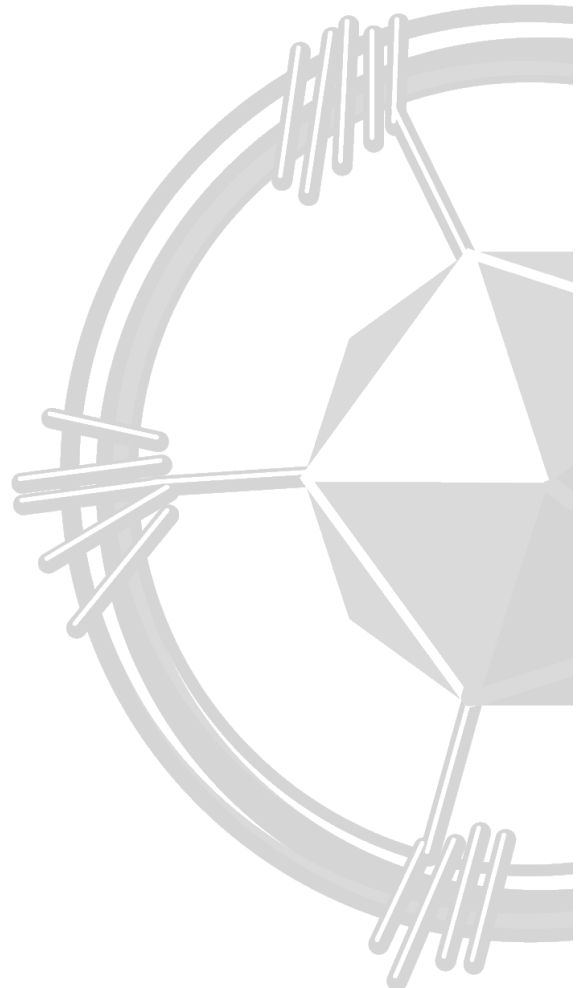
RFP NUMBER: RFQ/HRM/25/26/334			
CLOSING DATE	17 April 2026	CLOSING TIME	12:00

SUPPLY CHAIN CONTACTS AND ENQUIRIES	
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Reviewed: Senior Manager: Supply Chain and Contract Management		Controlled: Chief Executive Officer	

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1. Introduction to Request for Proposal (RFP)

1.1 The Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA) is a Schedule 3A public entity established in terms of the Skills Development Act (Act No. 97 of 1998), Registration Number 17/merSETA/01/04/20, to facilitate skills development for the Metal and Engineering, Motor Retail and Components Manufacturing, Automobile Manufacturing, Plastics Manufacturing and New tyre Manufacturing Sectors Automotive Components Manufacturing Chamber.

The merSETA is inviting potential service providers to submit the proposal for the services described under scope of work.

1.2 This RFP is subject to the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act (Act No. 5 of 2000) and the Preferential Procurement Regulations (2022 Regulations), the General Conditions of Contract (GCC), and, if applicable, any other special conditions of contract. Where, however, the special conditions of the contract conflict with the general conditions of the contract, the special conditions of the contract prevail.

2 Background Information

2.1 This Request for Proposal (RFP) is issued to appoint an experienced service provider to conduct a forensic investigation into an alleged bribery incident.

NOTE: The successful service provider must be able to travel to merSETA regional offices, where necessary.

3 Objectives of the Service

- To conduct a forensic investigation into the alleged bribery incident and based on the briefing session expand the scope of the investigation.

4 Scope of Work (Service)

4.1 The appointed service provider will be responsible for conducting a forensic investigation into an allegation of bribery arising from a discretionary grant contract, including the tasks set out below. The scope may be refined and expanded based on the initial briefing session and facts emerging during the investigation, subject to merSETA approval.

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4.1.1 Inception, Independence and Investigation Plan: Attend an inception meeting with merSETA, confirm terms of reference, independence and any conflicts of interest, agree communication and reporting lines, and submit a detailed investigation plan (methodology, milestones, resources, information required, interview strategy, and risk/constraint assumptions).

4.1.2 Evidence Preservation and Chain of Custody: Identify, secure and preserve relevant evidence (hard copy and electronic) and maintain a complete chain of custody, including an evidence register, collection notes and secure storage controls. Where required, coordinate with merSETA IT/third parties to prevent alteration or deletion of relevant data.

4.1.3 Document and Contract Review: Obtain and review all relevant documentation relating to the discretionary grant contract and associated processes, including (as applicable) bid/quotation records, evaluation and adjudication documents, approvals, contract and amendments, deliverables, invoices, payment records, correspondence, declarations of interest, and relevant policies/procedures.

4.1.4 Grant Process and Control Assessment: Assess whether the discretionary grant process and award/administration complied with applicable requirements (including merSETA delegations, Discretionary Grant Policy and Guidelines, PFMA-related controls, and internal governance requirements) and identify control breakdowns that may have enabled the alleged bribery.

4.1.5 Financial Analysis and Payment Testing: Perform forensic financial analysis related to the discretionary grant contract, including testing of invoices, payments, supporting documentation, bank details changes, split payments, unusual/duplicate payments, and verification of goods/services delivered versus amounts paid.

4.1.6 Third-Party and Conflict of Interest Review: Identify relevant third parties (service provider, subcontractors, intermediaries/agents) and assess relationships, conflicts of interest and red flags (including links to employees/officials), using available records and declarations. Where appropriate, perform basic open-source and entity verification checks, subject to lawful access and merSETA instruction.

4.1.7 Electronic Data Review (where applicable): Review relevant electronic communications and data sources (e.g., emails, shared drives, messaging

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records, case management/procurement systems) to identify evidence of solicitation, offer, payment or receipt of bribes, undue influence, bid manipulation or concealment. Any forensic imaging/eDiscovery activities must be agreed upfront with merSETA.

4.1.8 Interviews and Statements: Plan and conduct interviews with relevant persons (including complainant/whistleblower where feasible, merSETA officials, committee members, end-users, service provider representatives and other witnesses). Prepare interview notes/summaries and obtain written statements where appropriate.

4.1.9 Findings, Quantification and Root Cause Analysis: Analyse evidence and develop factual findings on the bribery allegation, including how the discretionary grant contract was influenced/awarded/managed, the role of each implicated party, and the financial impact (actual and potential loss). Identify root causes and control weaknesses.

4.1.10 Reporting, Briefings and Post-Report Support: Provide periodic progress updates, prepare a draft and final forensic report (with referenced exhibits), present findings to designated merSETA stakeholders, and (where instructed) support disciplinary proceedings and/or referral to law enforcement/regulators by preparing an indexed evidence pack and making investigators available as witnesses.

5 Special Conditions

- The service provider must submit proof of similar services rendered over the last four (4) years (2022 to 2026). Please provide 3 reference letters on the letterhead of the client to whom similar service was rendered.
- A detailed CV and qualifications/certificates of the investigator(s) must be provided and must show an advanced knowledge of criminal procedure, public sector knowledge and rules of evidence.
- The bid proposal must include a fully detailed and all-inclusive quotation, including VAT. No hidden costs will be accepted.
- The service provider must supply training manuals covering all aspects of the training.
- The service provider must issue certificates of attendance to all participants.
- The training content must be aligned to the merSETA environment.

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6 Deliverables

6.1 Inception Meeting and Investigation Plan: Conduct an inception meeting with merSETA, confirm reporting lines, refine the scope, and submit a written investigation plan covering methodology, milestones, data sources, roles, and assumptions.

6.2 Evidence Preservation and Chain of Custody Pack: Preserve relevant evidence (physical and/or electronic) and maintain a documented chain of custody, including evidence register, collection notes, hash values (where applicable), and secure storage controls.

6.3 Interviews and Statements: Conduct interviews with relevant parties and produce interview summaries and/or signed statements, including an interview plan, attendance registers, and supporting exhibits where appropriate.

6.4 Forensic Analysis and Working Papers: Perform forensic analysis (e.g., procurement and payment testing, document review, email/data analytics where applicable) and retain complete working papers that support findings, including schedules, reconciliations, and an indexed bundle of key exhibits.

6.5 Draft Forensic Investigation Report: Provide a draft report setting out background, scope, methodology, limitations, factual findings, analysis, supporting evidence references, and preliminary recommendations for comment by merSETA.

6.6 Final Forensic Investigation Report: Submit a final signed report incorporating comments, with a clear conclusion on allegations (substantiated/unsubstantiated/inconclusive based on evidence) and detailed recommendations.

6.7 Recommendations and Management Action Plan (if required): Provide practical recommendations to address control weaknesses and a proposed action plan with owners and timeframes (where merSETA supplies owner/timeframe inputs).

6.8 Referral/Disciplinary Support Pack (where applicable): Prepare an indexed evidence pack and witness summary suitable for internal disciplinary proceedings and/or referral to law enforcement/regulators, subject to merSETA instruction and applicable legal requirements.

6.8 Referral/Disciplinary Support Pack (where applicable): Prepare an indexed evidence pack and witness summary suitable for internal disciplinary proceedings

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and/or referral to law enforcement/regulators, subject to merSETA instruction and applicable legal requirements.

6.9 SAPS Reporting Pack (Criminal Procedure Act and PRECCA): Where the evidence indicates the commission of an offence and as instructed by merSETA (and/or guided by merSETA's legal advisors), compile and submit a SAPS-ready reporting package in accordance with applicable requirements, including a summary of allegations and facts, applicable offence framing, a chronology, witness list, draft affidavits/statements (where appropriate), and an indexed bundle of exhibits with chain-of-custody documentation to support opening a criminal case.

6.10 Management/Board Briefing: Present key findings, evidence themes, root causes and recommendations to the designated merSETA stakeholders and respond to clarification questions.

6.11 Handover, Data Return and Close-Out: Return all original documents and merSETA data (and/or securely destroy duplicates as instructed), hand over working files/evidence registers, and provide a close-out memo confirming what was received, retained, returned and disposed of.

6.12 Project Timeline

6.12.1 The service provider must commence work within five (5) working days of appointment (or such other period agreed in writing) and submit a detailed investigation plan and information request list within the first ten (10) working days.

6.12.2 The investigation is expected to be completed within a period to be proposed by the bidder (recommended: 8–12 weeks), subject to the availability of information, witness access and any required forensic data collection.

6.12.3 Phase 1 (Planning and Preservation): inception, scope confirmation, evidence preservation, document holds and initial data collection.

6.12.4 Phase 2 (Fieldwork): detailed document review, financial/procurement testing, system/data review (where applicable) and interviews.

6.12.5 Phase 3 (Analysis and Reporting): evaluation of evidence, drafting of findings, quantification, root cause analysis, and submission of the draft report for comment.

6.12.6 Phase 4 (Finalisation and Briefing): incorporation of comments, submission of final report and presentation to designated stakeholders.

6 RFP Submission

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6.1 Bid documents may be emailed to quotations@merseta.org.za on or before the closing date and closing time.

6.2 The merSETA will only consider bid documents received on or before the closing date and time, regardless of the method used to provide them.

6.3 Late submissions of the RFP

Submission of quotation(s) received late (after the closing date and time) will not be considered.

7 Request for Proposal (RFP) Rules

The following rules will apply for this Request for Proposal:

7.1 The price(s) quoted shall be valid for a minimum period of 60 days from the closing date and time of this RFP.

7.2 The price(s) quoted must be firm and inclusive of value-added tax (VAT) where applicable.

7.3 The price(s) must include all related expenses, i.e., transport, accommodation, etc. (where applicable). Ind

7.4 A potential supplier or service provider must be validly registered on the Central Supplier Database (CSD), as hosted by the National Treasury.

7.5 Only an official purchase order or appointment letter issued by the merSETA will bind the merSETA.

8 RFP Evaluation Process

9.1 The RFQ will be evaluated in terms of PPPFA 05 of 2000 and Preferential Procurement Regulation 2022 (80/20). Three (3) stages of evaluation process will be undertaken.

9.2 Evaluation Stage 1: Compliance

9.2.1 All bidders must comply with the administrative requirements outlined in the Standard Bidding Documents and the mandatory requirements listed below. All bidders failing to provide the required information and documentation in this evaluation stage may face disqualification from further evaluation. Failure to comply with the requirements assessed in Stage 1 (compliance) may lead to the disqualification of bids.

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Criteria Description	Supporting Documents
A detailed proposal with a quotation.	Attach detailed proposal & quotation.
Valid proof of accreditation	Relevant proof of service provider accreditation must be submitted.
Bidders must submit a fully complete Bidder's Disclosure form (failure to declare honestly will lead to bidder being disqualified)	Standard Bidding Document (SBD) 4 and 6.1
In the event that the bidder(s) are entering into joint venture or consortium, the joint venture agreement must be submitted.	Valid JV contract

9.3 Evaluation Stage 2: Technical Evaluation

9.3.1 The bids will be evaluated for functionality based on the evaluation criteria and the minimum threshold as shown in the table below.

No	Evaluation Criteria	Descriptive Indicators	Comply	Did Not Comply
1.		<p>The service provider is well established in conducting forensic investigations. Demonstrates a proven track record of delivering similar services at three or more recognized public institutions focusing on criminal procedure and investigation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has relevant experience spanning at least the last four (4) years (2022 to 2026) in the public sector.. • Provides 3 (three) (2022 to 2026) signed, contactable reference letters on official company letterhead which indicates where similar services were rendered. 		
2.	Methodology and approach	<p>The provider demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive understanding of key objectives and deliverables in the RFP 		

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No	Evaluati on Criteria	Descriptive Indicators	Comply	Did Not Comply
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed methodology for fulfilling the specified scope of work Clear and actionable working plan aligned with project goals 		
3.	Organisation / Company Capacity	<p><u>CV / Profiles with qualifications attached</u></p> <p>The proposal includes CVs or profiles for at least two (2) or more experienced forensic investigators who will deliver on the project scope.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear evidence is provided of relevant experience and qualifications for each investigator.. Copies of qualifications attached. 		

Each proposal that passed functional evaluation will be on equal footing to proceed to this final round of evaluation on price and specific goals.

9.4 Evaluation Stage 3: Preference Point System

9.4.1 The 80/20 preference point system shall be applicable to this phase, where 80 points represent the maximum obtainable points for the lowest acceptable price and 20 points represent the specific goals. The bid documentation's table below will award points to a bidder for achieving the specific goals.

The specific goals allocated points in terms of this tender	Number of points Allocated (80/20 system) (To be completed by the organ of state)	Number of points claimed (80/20 system) (To be completed by the tenderer)
Tenderer who has 51% to 100% black people ownership	6	
Tenderer who has 30% to 100% black women ownership	4	
Tenderer who has 30% to 100% black youth ownership	4	
Tenderer who has 30% to 100% White women ownership	2	
Tenderer who has 20% or more owners with disability	4	
Total Points allocated to Specific Goals	20	

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Note: Refer to Annexure A for Proof or documentation that may be considered to claim points for specific goal related to persons or categories of persons historically disadvantaged by unfair discrimination.

10 Cost Proposal

10.1 All prices must be VAT inclusive (where applicable) and must be quoted in South African Rand (ZAR).

10.2 The rates of remuneration will be subject to negotiation, not exceeding the applicable rates as contained in the guidelines:

10.2.1 The “Guideline on Fees for Audits done on behalf of the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA)¹” as issued by the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA);

10.2.2 The “Guide on Hourly Fee Rates for Consultants”, as issued by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA); and/or

10.2.3 Remuneration guidelines issued by professional service organisations or regulatory bodies, as may be relevant.

11 merSETA’s RIGHTS

11.1 The merSETA is entitled to amend any bid condition, bid validity period, RFP specification, or extend the bid closing date, all before the bid closing date. All bidders, to whom the RFP documents have been issued and where the merSETA has records of such bidders, may be advised in writing of such amendments in good time, and any such changes will also be posted on the merSETA’s website under the relevant tender information. Therefore, before submitting their bid response, prospective bidders should regularly check the website to stay informed about any amendments related to this matter.

11.2 The merSETA reserves the right not to accept the lowest priced bid or any bid in part or in whole. It normally awards the contract to the bidder who proves to be fully capable of handling the contract and whose bid is functionally acceptable and/or financially advantageous to the merSETA.

11.3 The merSETA reserves the right to award this bid as a whole or in part.

11.4 The merSETA reserves the right to conduct site visits at bidder’s corporate offices and or at client sites if so required.

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- 11.5 The merSETA reserves the right to consider the guidelines and prescribed hourly remuneration rates for consultants as provided in National Treasury Instruction 02 of 2016/2017: Cost Containment Measures, where relevant.
- 11.6 The merSETA reserves the right to request all relevant information, agreements, and other documents to verify the information supplied in the bid response. The bidder hereby gives consent to the merSETA to conduct background checks, including FICA verification, on the bidding entity and any of its directors, trustees, shareholders or members.
- 11.7 The merSETA reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to appoint any number of vendors to be part of this panel of service providers, if applicable (i.e., where a panel is considered).
- 11.8 The merSETA reserves the right to make a final decision on the interpretation of its tender requirements and responses thereto.
- 11.9 The merSETA reserves the right to consider the professional conduct and experiences it had with any bidder that rendered similar services to the merSETA in the past 5 years over and above the references put forward by the bidder in its response.

12 UNDERTAKINGS BY THE BIDDER

- 12.1 By submitting a bid in response to the RFP, the bidder will be taken to have offered to render all or any of the services described in the bid response submitted by it to the merSETA on the terms and conditions and in accordance with the specifications stipulated in this RFQ document.
- 12.2 The bidder shall prepare for a possible presentation should merSETA require such, and the bidder will be required to make such a presentation within five (5) days from the date the bidder is notified or such a time determined by merSETA of the presentation. Such a presentation may include a practical demonstration of products or services as called for in this RFP.
- 12.3 The bidder agrees that the offer contained in its bid shall remain binding upon him/her and receptive for acceptance by the merSETA during the bid validity period indicated in this RFP, and its acceptance shall be subject to the terms and conditions contained in this RFP document read with the bid.
- 12.4 The bidder furthermore confirms that he/she has satisfied himself/herself as to the correctness and validity of his/her bid response; that the price(s) and rate(s) quoted cover all the work/item(s) specified in the bid response documents; and that the price(s)

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and rate(s) cover all his/her obligations under a resulting contract for the services contemplated in this RFP; and that he/she accepts that any mistakes regarding price(s) and calculations will be at his/her risk.

12.5 The successful bidder accepts full responsibility for the proper execution and fulfillment of all obligations and conditions devolving on him/her under the supply agreement and SLA to be concluded with merSETA, as the principal(s) liable for the due fulfillment of such a contract.

12.6 The bidder accepts that all costs incurred in the preparation, presentation, and demonstration of the solution offered by it shall be for the account of the bidder. All supporting documentation and manuals submitted with the bid will become merSETA property unless otherwise stated by the bidder(s) at the time of submission.



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ANNEXURE A

Specific Goal Guide – Preferential points (80/20)

This specific goal guide will be used to assist providers in submitting relevant documents to confirm specific goals.

“**Specific goals**” means specific goals as contemplated in section 2 (1) (d) of the Act which may include contracting with persons, or categories of persons, historically disadvantaged by unfair discrimination on the basis of race, gender and disability including the implementation of programmes of Reconstruction and Development programme as published in government gazette No. 16085 dated 23 November 1994.

Please note that:

- Financial account, management account or auditors’ letter should be submitted confirming turnover of the company determining BBBEE status on Affidavit and B-BBEE CIPC certificate in order for the specific goals can be awarded.

Preferential points for tenders without local content requirements.

7

Specific goal	80/20 Preference Point system	Example of Submission	Tick if relevant document submitted	Indicate which document have been submitted
Black People Ownership – 51% or more	6	Valid B-BBEE certificate/Affidavit or B-BBEE CIPC		
Black Women Ownership – 30% or More	4	Valid B-BBEE certificate/Affidavit or B-BBEE CIPC		
Black Youth Ownership – 30% or More	4	Valid BBBEE certificate/Affidavit or B-BBEE CIPC		
White Women Ownership – 30% or More	2	Valid B-BBEE certificate/Affidavit or B-BBEE CIPC		
People with Disability (PwD) Ownership	4	Medical certificate		
Total Points allocated to Specific Goals	20			

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AUTHORISATION SIGNATORIES TO CONFIRM RFP

The employee signing below hereby affirms the accuracy of the information requested for the proposal.

Supply Chain Management Representative

Full Names	Asisipho Matomane	Date	
Signature			

Technical Representative

Full Names	Mariam Ssonko	Date	
Signature			



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