

Specification for the appointment of a supplier to provide *Reverse-billed data services for community research project.*

1. Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)

The HSRC is a statutory research council mandated to undertake and promote research in the human and social sciences. Its mandate and objectives are outlined in the Human Sciences Research Council Act, Act No. 17 of 2008. The HSRC conducts policy-relevant studies to inform the work of public-sector users, non-governmental organisations, the broader academic community, and international development agencies.

2. Background

The HSRC, under its mandate, conducts numerous research projects that are public-focused and required engagement with stakeholders at many levels. The HSRC plans to conduct online surveys and assessments as one of the activities in one such project. To facilitate broad access to the survey tools and reduce barriers to participation among eligible participants the HSRC plans to procure *reverse-billed data services* (RBDS) to ensure zero-cost access to the research project participants.

3. Services Required

The HSRC wishes to appoint a suitable service provider for the provision the following services: Reverse-billed data services for the provision of data access to specified survey links, websites, web pages, online text, video or audio material.

This includes the facilitation of zero-cost data access to research participants and stakeholders for online content. The quotation or proposal must be costed on a per megabyte basis to be billed to the HSRC under the zero-rating and data usage models of the service provider (thus reversing the data cost from the participant to the HSRC's account).

The services required include:

- **Reverse-billed data services for online content, websites (or web pages)**
- **Reverse-billed data services for online surveys**
- **Reverse-billed data services for qualitative research (remote video / audio)**

Supporting information required with proposal for Reverse-billed data *service provider*:

- Evidence of a current (reviewed within the last 12 months) POPI (Protection of Personal Information) policy that is in line with South African POPI Act, 2013.
- Demonstrate information security measures in place: Provide summary of information security and encryption measures in place with and index of current relevant IT security policies.
- Schedule of successful projects and partners in the provision of Reverse-billed services: Provide a schedule of completed projects within the last 3 years indicating client name, contact person, contact telephone, contact email and value of the project.

- Experience in large-scale provision of Reverse-billed data services, applications or websites: Provide schedule of recently completed or on-going reverse billed projects that exceed R 250,000.00 in value.
- Experience in applying Reverse-billed data technology to qualitative remote interviews (using video conference technology on smartphones / tablets / desktops)

4. Service provider responsibilities

The service provider **will be** responsible for:

- Provision of a quotation for the scope of the desired work to be Reverse-billed
- Setup and management of the links required to be Reverse-billed
- Ensuring zero-cost access to the participants of the specified online content/activity

These services will be provided within the financial bounds of a maximum value specified in the HSRC Purchase Order (PO) for the period of 24 months.

5. Required Response

Your proposal submission must include the following technical and experience evidence:

Mandatory requirements:

1. Provider's current POPIA compliant policy.
2. Summary certifying current IT security and encryption framework with a list of relevant current IT security policies.
3. The supplier to furnish the HSRC with **Evidence of interoperability** of reverse billed data services across various categories of devices (mobile, desktop or smart devices): Provide written certification of compatibility with mobile and desktop operating systems and browsers (iOS, Windows, Android etc and Chrome, Safari, Google for Android)

Evaluation documents:

1. The supplier to furnish the HSRC with a list of completed projects in the provision of Reverse-billed services involving **online surveys**, within in the last 3 years. (project names, client/partner, contact person, telephone and email contact details, value of the contract).
2. The supplier to furnish the HSRC with a list of completed projects in the provision of Reverse-billed services involving **online webpage cost zero rating**, within in the last 35 years. (project names, client/partner, contact person, telephone and email contact details, value of the contract).

6. Proposal evaluation criteria

80/20 Preference Point System

Criteria and evidence for:	Points	Score*
<p>1. <i>Institutional organogram highlighting the resources assigned to this project including the Chief Technology/Information Officer, Project Manager and Technical Support person.</i></p> <p>The supplier to furnish the HSRC with an organogram indicating the capacity of the supplier to provide the quoted services with the biosketch/CVs of the persons in the following roles (provide 2 CVs): Project Manager (10) Technical Support (10)</p> <p><i>Scoring as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No CV/biosketch or 1 year or less relevant experience in the role – 0 points;</i> • <i>More than 1 year and up to 5 years relevant experience in the role – 5 points;</i> • <i>More than 5 years relevant experience in the role – 10 points</i> 	20	
<p>2. <i>Portfolio of completed online surveys in the provision of Reverse-billed services (project names, client/partner, contact person, telephone and email contact details, start and end date of service).</i></p> <p>The supplier to furnish the HSRC with a list of completed/ongoing projects in the provision of Reverse-billed services involving online surveys, within in the last 3 years.</p> <p><i>Scoring as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No evidence of completed/ongoing online surveys - 0 points;</i> • <i>Less than 3 completed/ongoing online survey – 10 points;</i> • <i>3 to 5 completed/ongoing online surveys – 20 points;</i> • <i>More than 5 completed/ongoing online surveys – 30 points</i> 	30	
<p>3. <i>Portfolio of completed online focus groups or interviews in the provision of Reverse-billed services (project names, client/partner, contact person, telephone and email contact details, start and end date of service).</i></p> <p>The supplier to furnish the HSRC with a list of completed projects in the provision of Reverse-billed services involving online focus groups or interviews, within in the last 3 years.</p> <p><i>Scoring as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No evidence of completed/ongoing FGD/online interviews - 0 points;</i> • <i>Less than 3 completed/ongoing FGD/online interviews – 10 points;</i> • <i>3 to 5 completed/ongoing FGD/online interviews – 20 points;</i> • <i>More than 5 completed/ongoing FGD/online interviews – 30 points</i> 	30	
<p>4. <i>Provide process flow document that details:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Procedure to activate data free access and query resolution access for an online survey/FGD/online interview with contact person and activation timeframe benchmarks.</i> <p><i>Scoring as follows for activation plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No process document - 0 points;</i> • <i>Summary narrative, generic detail, some timeframes: 1-10 points</i> • <i>Detailed narrative with explanations of process and realistic timeframes (within 72 hours): 11-20 points</i> 	20	

Total	100	
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*Minimum points threshold is 70 points out of 100 (70%)

Should you have any technical or procedural queries please do not hesitate to contact the allocated buyer within the [HSRC Supply Chain Management Department](#).

Closing date for RFQ's responses is **17 November 2025**.

Non-compulsory briefing session: 11 November 2025 via MS Teams @ 11:30 am

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_MjNjZGJlZDQtZTc5MC00MTNhLWExZigtMTZkZDZlZDhjMWUx%40thead.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22161524ab-4f53-4300-a494-dcdbaeb8e86c%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2220d2b759-9b2d-4193-a056-6de3a3c48ddc%22%7d

Estimated project start date: 01 December 2025

SCM Documents to be submitted by 17 November 2025 @16:00pm

1. **Mandatory Requirements evidence as per TOR**
2. Quotation & Proposal
3. Completed & Signed SBD4 & SBD 6.1
4. Valid BBBEE certificate Affidavit
5. CSD Report
6. Bank confirmation letter