



**HSRC**  
Human Sciences  
Research Council

HSRC PUBLISHING  
TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Appointment of service provider to provide Book Sales,  
Marketing, Distribution and Warehousing Services to the  
HSRC for a period of thirty-six (36) months**

## **1. BACKGROUND**

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.

HSRC Publishing, a unit within the organisation, is the publishing division which undertakes to publish evidenced-based research in the form of books from within the HSRC and from external authors in order to make humanities and social science research from Africa more visible and accessible to local and international audiences.

In the process of rendering its core business function, HSRC Publishing relies on the services of an external book sales, marketing and distribution company with specialisation in the academic/scholarly sector. The company would also need to have warehousing facilities or an agreement with a reputable third party for stock inventory and management.

Having determined that the appropriate capacity within the HSRC is extremely limited, the organisation seeks to appoint such a professional service provider for at least three (3) years.

The current service provider's contract term will end on 8 November 2025. The Start date of this contract is 9 November 2025

HSRC Publishing is a member of the professional body the Publishers Association of South Africa (PASA).

## **2. SCOPE OF SERVICE**

The services must include the following:

- The provider needs to have professional experience in academic and scholarly sales, marketing, distribution, and warehousing for the book market in South Africa.
- The service needs to cover South Africa in its entirety as well as the southern African region.
- Key functions include providing distribution, marketing and sales, and warehousing services. This includes providing regular, accurate, granular, and timeous sales and inventory reports for all HSRC Publishing books and products.
- Core functions required include direct marketing and sales of physical and digital products to ensure the widest availability to the southern African audience of individual customers, booksellers, retailers, e-tailers, librarians

and library suppliers, institutions, wholesalers, and other outlets not yet known.

- The provider needs to advertise the publisher's titles and promotional events on their website and social media pages as well as attend local and global conferences and book fairs where they promote their publisher's titles.
- The provider needs to assist with marketing activities across South Africa by either selling books at events or arranging for their sales agents or a bookshop to sell if the HSRC Publishing sales and marketing team are unable to attend in person.
- The provider needs to fulfil warehousing needs or have a service agreement with a reputable warehouse that can provide suitable logistical solutions for the book supply chain. This includes receiving goods and taking them into storage; inventory management using global supply chain industry standard management software; order fulfilment; shipping and delivery, return management and quality control.
- The provider needs to have demonstrable experience in collaborating with publishers and printers across South Africa to ensure smooth logistical movement of stock to and from the warehouse to various customers in the supply chain. This includes reference to physical stock but can include and should include eBook sales channels.
- The provider must be able to offer a digital distribution plan as part of their offering (E sales channels and Print-On-Demand).

### **3. DATE OF COMMENCEMENT AND DURATION OF CONTRACT**

The Agreement shall commence upon the Effective Date and shall remain in force for a 36-month period all the work to be performed by the Service Provider in terms on this agreement and all matters relating to the Assignment are fulfilled.

### **4. SERVICES / DELIVERABLES**

The Service Provider shall execute all services/deliverables in accordance with the Budget and Deliverables and in line with the precise job objectives, duties and responsibilities as may be assigned by the Human Sciences Research HSRC (the HSRC) from time to time.

Deliverable 1: Establish a reliable service provider to handle sales, marketing, distribution, and warehousing operations efficiently.

Deliverable 2: Increase the visibility and accessibility of HSRC publications in the southern/African market.

Deliverable 3: Enhance sales performance and market penetration in trade, academic, and library sectors.

It is specifically agreed to between the Parties that the Service Provider shall be granted the exclusive right to sell and distribute the full list of the HSRC Publishing

titles to Bookshops, Library Suppliers and Book E/Retail outlets within South Africa, and the right to sell and distribute the same to the rest of Africa on a non-exclusive basis.

## **5. TIMELINES**

The Service Provider shall ensure the completion of all deliverables contained in the service level agreement as stated in the period above. Monthly reports are required by the client. Once a book is received into stock, the books must be distributed to end users within 7 – 10 days of stock receipt.

## **6. MONITORING AND REPORTING**

The Service Provider agrees to provide the HSRC with monthly sales reports by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the following calendar month detailing the names of the customers, the numbers of books sold, the trade discount granted and the net proceeds.

The Service Provider shall provide the HSRC with any information relating to the services and the project as and when required to do so.

The Service Provider will hold the HSRC's stock on a consignment basis and such stock will be paid for to the HSRC within 30 (thirty) days of being sold and supplied by the Service Provider. Ownership of the consignment stock remains with the HSRC until invoiced out to and paid for by the purchaser.

In line with this service, any orders placed directly by Bookshops, Libraries and Retailers within South Africa with the HSRC will be referred to the Service Provider for processing.

## **7. SLOW MOVING STOCK**

The Service Provider needs to outline their process on how they manage slow moving stock and provide a breakdown on the pricing charges. The Service Provider needs to indicate if they are using a third party to manage the stock inventory. The Provider needs to outline annual strategies to mitigate slow moving stock charges for the duration of the contract.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

It is specifically recorded that the service provider will be issued with purchase orders (PO's) including service level agreement that will govern the relationship with the service provider for the duration of time and services on a needs basis.

## **9. FEES AND PAYMENT**

The Service Provider shall be paid in accordance with the projected sales income for a three-year period as detailed in the HSRC's budget and payment schedule.

The HSRC will be responsible for bearing the cost of delivery of promotional material and stock of newly published titles and reprints from the printer or production house to the appointed Service Provider Distribution Centre/ Warehouse.

In return for the services described herein, the Service Provider needs to indicate the percentage on Net Receipts (distributor's commission) on all the HSRC's titles sold and invoiced out by the Service Provider and/or its agents. This fee must be VAT inclusive.

Based on the Sales Reports supplied by the Service Provider, the HSRC will raise an invoice for the amount/s due. Similarly, if, based on these reports, there is a net negative sale for the calendar month, the HSRC will raise a credit note for the amount/s due by them to the Service Provider.

The HSRC shall pay the amounts due to the Service Provider within 30 (thirty) days after the date of submission of the invoice to the HSRC. Similarly, the HSRC requires the Service Provider to pay the HSRC within 30 days of invoicing.

## **10. PRICING SCHEDULE**

The Service Provider needs to provide quotes on these items:

- Monthly stock charges per imprint based on sales
- Fees on 'free' stock moved from the warehouse to the HSRC
- Slow moving stock charges per imprint
- Any additional costs (such as marketing, courier fees, shipping charges, print-on-demand fulfillment)

## **11. SERVICE PROVIDER PROFILE /PROPOSAL**

The service provider is expected to submit a detailed profile and proposal that includes the components to evaluate functional criteria as per the Terms of Reference.

### **11.1)TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SERVICE PROVIDER**

- The service provider should have a minimum of 5 years' experience in the academic/scholarly book sector.
- Demonstrate extensive knowledge of operations in the scholarly and academic book sector.
- Be competent in sales, marketing and distribution of books. This can be demonstrated through examples.
- Have the capabilities to perform the deliverables required by the HSRC as outlined under point 4 (Services/Deliverables).
- Be competent in account management and quality control.
- The service provider should have the software and services required to market the titles.

- The service provider should have a network of partners locally and globally to market the titles and demonstrate a local and global footprint.

## 12.MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

The Service Provider should have the most current technology and software for interoperability across the book supply chain. These are non-negotiable services required:

- The service provider should subscribe to Bookmaster software and to Nielsen Book Data services.
- The service provider should ingest Onix for book metadata.
- The service provider must utilise metadata in their marketing material
- Warehouse to be in Cape Town.
- The Service Provider must demonstrate they have the infrastructure to house multiple titles per requirements listed below:
  1. Space to house 30 000 books
  2. Security to ensure safety of books.
  3. Shelving and packing area as well-ventilated area for books to be preserved and kept for the duration of contract

## 13.EVALUATION CRITERIA

**Note: A noncompulsory briefing session will be held online.**

### FUNCTIONALITY EVALUATION CRITERIA = 100 POINTS

The functionality criteria aim to assess the bidder's capabilities, reliability and overall ability to execute and maintain a bid and / or contract. The minimum number of points that bidders have to obtain in order to progress to the next stage of evaluation is **80**.

Bids that score less than **80** on functionality criteria will be disqualified and will not progress to the next stage of evaluation.

Functionality	Weight
<b>1.) Extensive knowledge of the academic and scholarly book publishing sector. And, clear competence in distribution, sales, marketing and warehousing of scholarly books in Africa</b>	20
1.1) Proof that the Service Provider has been in existence and in practice for a period. References and contact details (name of contact person, with telephone / cellphone number and e-mail	



Functionality	Weight
<p>address) of at least three clients for whom such work has been undertaken within the last four years.</p> <p>A minimum of 5 years' experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than 5 years (0 points)</li> <li>• 5 years (10 points)</li> <li>• Between 6-8 years (15 points)</li> <li>• More than 8 years (20 points)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2) Account Management and Quality Control:</b></p> <p>2.1) Management and monitoring of inventory movement and provide accurate reports of less than 4 years as an example.</p> <p>2.2) To demonstrate year-end inventory accounting for auditing.</p> <p>2.3) Outline the support offered for inventory stock take.</p> <p>2.4) Monthly reports on distribution and sales of books through the book supply chain. This should include submission cycles, timeous order fulfillment, sales reports, inventory reports, and slow-moving stock reports. Submit examples of work completed with clients that are not older than 4 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 samples of reports (0 points)</li> <li>• Between 3 – 5 sample of reports (10 points)</li> <li>• Over 5 sample reports (20 points)</li> </ul>	20
<p><b>3. Sales and Marketing Services and Support in South and Southern Africa</b></p> <p>3.1) The Service Provider needs to be active in sales and marketing books for the scholarly/academic and general trade audience to the book retail sector and have established networks with library suppliers and e-aggregators and e-tailers. Demonstrate with book analytical data, strategic planning document.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poorly constructed strategic book analytics presented (1-10 points)</li> <li>• Moderate constructed strategic book analytics presented (11-20 points)</li> <li>• Well-constructed strategic book analytics presented (21-30 points)</li> </ul>	30

