

TERMS OF REFERENCE

FRENCH (AFRICAN DIALECT) TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES

BACKGROUND

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) is a research organisation that advances social sciences and humanities for public use. The HSRC subscribes to the values of good governance, accountable public administration, and sound management of resources as reflected in the Public Financial Management Act (PFMA, Act 1 of 1999, as amended) and other applicable laws and regulations.

Established in 1968 as South Africa's statutory research agency, the HSRC is Africa's largest social science and humanities research institute. It conducts innovative research to inform policy, foster dialogue, and promote development across the continent.

The HSRC is a partner in the **Youth Futures Portfolio in Dignified and Fulfilling Work in Africa**, a multi-country study supported by the Mastercard Foundation. The programme spans eight African countries — Ghana, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Senegal, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, and South Africa — and explores how young Africans can access dignified and fulfilling work through evidence-based research, innovation, and youth-centred engagement.

INTRODUCTION

To support the implementation of the Youth Futures Portfolio in **Senegal**, the HSRC seeks the services of a French (African dialect) Translator for the remaining two years (2026–2027) of the project.

The service provider will **work closely with a team of mid- to senior-level researchers at the HSRC** in South Africa and, on occasion, with the research team in Senegal. The service provider will facilitate effective communication and knowledge exchange between French-speaking participants, researchers, and stakeholders by providing accurate and culturally sensitive translation, transcription, and interpretation services.

THE ASSIGNMENT

The main objective of this assignment is to ensure high-quality French–English and English–French translation and interpretation for project-related materials, meetings, and research activities conducted in Senegal and other francophone contexts.

SCOPE OF WORK

The service provider will be expected to:

- **Translate** written materials from French (including **Senegalese dialects**) into English and vice versa. These may include interview guides, questionnaires, consent forms, transcripts, research reports, and communication materials.
- Provide **real-time interpretation** during meetings, workshops, and conferences, both virtual and in-person, as required by the HSRC and project partners.
- **Translate and transcribe** recorded interviews, focus group discussions, and other research materials from French into English.
- Provide translation for **subtitling** of video materials (e.g. digital stories, project reels social media artefacts).
- Ensure translation **accuracy** while maintaining the academic and socio-cultural nuances of social science research materials.
- Work closely with HSRC researchers and communication teams to ensure **terminology consistency and contextual relevance**.
- Adhere to **confidentiality requirements and ethical standards** in handling research and participant data.
- Use **MS OneDrive** for sharing and receiving materials.
- Have a **Premium Microsoft Teams licence** to facilitate seamless participation in project meetings and collaborative sessions.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- High-quality, accurately translated documents (English ↔ French) suitable for academic and professional use.
- Translated and transcribed interview and meeting recordings.
- Subtitled video materials for dissemination.
- On-demand live interpretation services during project events and virtual meetings.
- Glossary of frequently used academic and project-specific terms (English–French).

HSRC RESPONSIBILITIES

The HSRC will:

- Provide source materials and related project documentation.
- Facilitate access to recordings, transcripts, and research materials requiring translation.
- Coordinate meeting schedules requiring live interpretation.
- Review and approve translated drafts.
- Provide context and guidance on technical terms and project-specific concepts.
- Arrange and pay for travel expenses, where necessary.
- Approve quotation prior to the execution of each task/batch of tasks

SERVICE PROVIDER REQUIREMENTS

The appointed individual/company must:

- Demonstrate professional experience in translation and interpretation between English and French, preferably with experience in **African francophone dialects** (particularly Senegalese French influence).
 - Have experience translating academic and social science research materials.
 - Demonstrate familiarity with terminology related to youth, work, education, and socio-economic development.
 - Show the ability to maintain **accuracy, tone, and context** in translation while ensuring readability.
 - Have the technical capacity to provide transcription and **subtitling services**.
 - Uphold **confidentiality and ethical standards** in all project-related communication.
 - Be **responsive and available** to meet project timelines.
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TIME FRAME

Duration: 24 months (January 2026 – December 2027)

Deliverables: Ongoing translation, transcription, and interpretation services as per HSRC needs and activity schedule.

PROPOSAL AND BUDGET

Interested service providers are requested to submit a detailed proposal including:

- Competency / Translation test submission:
Suppliers will receive a sample document which must be translated into French (African dialect) which must be submitted along with their proposal.
- Understanding of the assignment:
Submission of short narrative (maximum two pages) demonstrating the applicant's understanding of the project context and linguistic requirements, including sensitivity to Senegalese and West African dialects. The narrative should also provide an overview on the methodology and work approach outlining how translation accuracy, consistency, and confidentiality will be ensured.
- Team composition and experience:
CV(s) of translator(s)/interpreters, highlighting relevant qualifications and experience.
- Budget:
The HSRC anticipates 4-8 hours of work per month although these will vary based on project activity. Service providers are required to submit an itemised quotation based on an hourly / per word rate (as applicable) which must be inclusive of all translation, transcription, subtitling, meeting participation, and other costs as deemed relevant by the supplier. Suppliers are therefore requested to submit a pricing schedule accordingly (see example below), showing the rate per hour/word.
- References:
Three reference letters with contact details from previous clients.

Table1: Pricing Schedule

Item description	Year 1	Year 2
Translation of documents (per word)		
Audio transcription (per minute)		
Subtitling of audio / visual clips (per minute)		
Live translation services (virtual) (per hour)		
Live translation services (in-person) (per hour)		

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

- MS Teams Premium License
- At least three years of professional translation and interpretation experience in social science or development contexts.
- A minimum of 2 project members clearly identified for the duration of this project.

BRIEFING SESSION

A non-compulsory virtual briefing session will be held on Friday 28 November 2025 at 13h00 SAST. Interested suppliers must email znkosi@hsrc.ac.za for the link.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Previous experience and team capacity
- Demonstrated understanding of the brief
- Team capacity and project management

80/20 Preference Point System

<p>1. EXPERIENCE</p> <p>a) Submission of an updated company profile showcasing similar previous assignments, list of clients, quality and relevance within the last 3 years. Bidders are welcome to include a minimum of 3 reference letters to supplement the company profile.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little to no relevant/similar work - (0 points) • Reasonable similar assignments, with a brief company profile, and 1-2 reference letters provided - (1 – 5 points) • Relevant previous work in similar contexts, a thought through and detailed profile with reference letters that contain enough information to assess proposal - (6-10 points) <p>b) Team capacity</p> <p>Comprehensive resume (max 1 page) of the team members envisaged to work on this project and their roles on this project, clearly identifying the project manager.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No submission showcasing team- (0 points) 	20
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor (poor team composition, less than 2 years' experience of project manager)- (1-5 points) • Good (reasonable team composition, 2-4 years' experience of project manager)- (6-10 points) 	
2. COMPETENCY TEST RESULTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Experience in translation and interpretation between English and French, preferably in African francophone dialects. b) Experience translating academic and social science research materials. c) Familiarity with terminology related to youth, work, education, and socio-economic development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No competency returned- (0 points) • Poor quality- (1-15 points) • Fair sample- (16- 30 points) • Good- (31-40 points) • Excellent- (41-50 points) 	50
3. UNDERSTANDING AND APPROACH TO THE ASSIGNMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Demonstrated grasp of the project context, objectives and deliverables b) Realistic scheduling and coordination mechanisms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No understanding of the assignment- (0 points) • Poor (poor articulation of project context, objectives and deliverables) - (1-10 points) • Good (reasonable articulation of project context, objectives and deliverables)- (11-20 points) • Excellent (comprehensive understanding of project context, objectives and deliverables)- (21-30 points) 	30
TOTAL	100

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 to progress to the next stage of evaluation is **75**.

Bids that score less than 75 on functionality criteria will be disqualified and will not progress to the next stage of evaluation.