

APPOINTMENT OF A SERVICE PROVIDER FOR ELECTRONIC DATA CAPTURE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE ELECTION SATISFACTION SURVEY (ESS) for the 2026 Local Government Elections with the possibility for an extension for two (2) additional rounds (*conditional on performance and funding status*)

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) invites suitably qualified service providers to submit a proposal for the provision of the electronic data capture technology (software) and support services for the 2026 Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS). The HSRC will appoint the fieldworkers. The appointed service provider will be responsible for ensuring robust electronic data capture, management and technical support. Below are the details and background for the project.

This appointment may be extended for up to two additional rounds (the first in 2029 and the second in 2031), subject to satisfactory performance and delivery on the initial (2026) survey round as well as availability of funding.

1. BACKGROUND ELECTION SATISFACTION SURVEY (ESS) 2026

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) has been commissioned by the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) to conduct an Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS) for the 2026 Local Government Elections. The intention of the 2026 ESS is to determine opinions and perceptions of both voters regarding the free and fairness of the electoral process. A further aim of the study is to assess the operational efficiency of the IEC in managing the 2026 Local Government Elections as well as to determine the experiences of voters on Election Day. The results from this study will be used by the IEC as an input in declaring the elections as free and fair. This study will be conducted on Election Day (**4 November 2026**) The questionnaire will be short, consisting of approximately 40 questions.

2. REQUIREMENTS FROM SERVICE PROVIDER

The service provider is required to provide the HSRC with the following:

- an electronic data collection technology with a built-in monitoring system that enables real-time tracking of data collection activities, supports the download of data in multiple formats (e.g., CSV, Excel, SPSS, Stata), and facilitates the secure transfer and management of data collected through fieldwork devices;
- the training of HSRC researchers and fieldworkers in all facets of implementation of the technology; and
- support in relation to the data collection technology.

More specifically the service provider is required to:

- recommend and provide the data collection technology;
- set the technology up on the tablets;
- provide training in the use of the data collection technology on a web platform and on the tablets;
- give technical assistance when required;
- print and provide electronic maps of the 300 sampled voting district / station areas.

3. SCOPE OF THE WORK

The HSRC will design the survey questionnaires in English and translate them into eight other official South African languages. The service provider will be responsible for setting up and loading all these questionnaires onto the

electronic devices. The service provider must ensure that all questionnaires are accurately uploaded and aligned with the approved questionnaire. The service provider will also have to provide the HSRC with SIM cards and other criteria (e.g. airtime, etc.) that would be needed to undertake this project electronically.

The service provider will be required to provide the HSRC with:

- a reliable platform to host the data;
- 330 tablets or so-called Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs). These tablets must be Android devices.
- a cleaned, merged dataset needs to be handed over to the HSRC at the end of the project;

The service provider must:

- ensure that the data is adequately cleaned.
- ensure that data is securely and routinely saved, stored, archived and shared with the HSRC;
- demonstrate that the software they propose has all functionalities as stipulated in the area of data programming and data management.

The following aspects must be considered in your proposal:

- Provide survey data collection technology that can function on Android devices. Set up the software on the tablets and provide training in the use of the data collection technology, as well as the web platform, on the tablets.
- The proposed data collection technology must be simple to use, so that HSRC personnel will be able to manage day-to-day field activities, including setting up of the PDAs, programming and making edits of the questionnaire using a web-based interface, addressing technical issues, and publishing changes to the questionnaire real-time to the PDAs.
- The data entry on questionnaires must be simple and follow a logical sequence to ensure the highest data collection integrity.
- The programming of the questionnaire must be intuitive and allow drag and drop functionality in the design.
- Data collection technology must be able to allow use of questionnaires in different languages.
- The data collection technology must include familiar concepts used in the conducting of surveys and programming of questionnaires in South Africa (e.g., multiple question types, skip patterns, branching, changes in logical sequencing of questions, variable referencing, specialist questionnaire scripting) but be sufficiently flexible for it to be used in a number of different fieldwork applications.
- The data collection technology must be able to perform the random selection of participants.
- The data collection technology must allow the capturing of photos, GPS coordinates, signatures, sketches, and barcode scanning as well as searchable option lists (e.g., municipality name).
- The data collection technology must include a web-based platform with a central database for the real-time storing of completed questionnaires but enable the offline collecting of data for transfer to the central database at a later stage.
- The data collection technology through the web platform must provide real-time monitoring of the data collection in the field and enable HSRC personnel to engage via the technology with field teams.
- The data collection technology must allow for real-time viewing of individual records and summary reports using tables, charts, and maps.
- The management of PDAs, questionnaire updates, setting controls as well as application and questionnaire updates must be managed through a centralised web platform.
- Data security must follow international protocols to ensure the security and confidentiality of all collected data including data encryption, multi-level access control and logging of all events, as well as secure data storage, backup, and recovery plans.
- Because of the short turnaround time in implementing ESS (Election Day), the HSRC requires a solution that includes hands-on training, access to virtual training material, and access to a support team in South Africa that can provide personal, telephonic, electronic & remote support to deal with urgent issues.

4. THE REQUIREMENTS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

a) ELECTRONIC DATA COLLECTION TECHNOLOGY

- The service provider must provide convincing evidence that the data collection technology proposed will be able to meet the solution parameters set out above.
- The service provider must include the name of the software that will be utilised on the devices (i.e., the tablets) and provide the name and description of the platform to be utilised.
- The service provider must secure subscription to the data collection technology.
- The exporting of data to a central database should be simple. The analytics software should be easy to interpret and should be easily exported to data analysis programmes such as SPSS or Stata.
- The proposed technology must adhere to standard regulatory frameworks and laws (including POPIA).
- Data must be secured and protected at rest, transits and in use. The service provider must clearly indicate how data protection will be achieved.
- Data must be available to HSRC at all times for accessing and managing.
- The proposed platform/system should comply with HSRC Information Security Framework based on ISO 27001.
- The service provider must indicate the geographical location where the data will be primarily stored and backed up.

b) SET UP OF PERSONAL DIGITAL ASSISTANTS

- Assess the electronic devices for suitability, and upload and update the software needed for the platform and data collection.
- Obtain the SIM cards required for the PDAs and identify their IMEI and mobile phone numbers.
- Install SIM Cards in the PDAs and set up the data collection technology on the PDAs as well as on the web console.
- Monitoring the handsets and ensuring airtime and topping up data bundles
- Monitoring airtime for misuse
- Provide 330 tablets and there should be Android devices.

c) QUESTIONNAIRE PROGRAMMING

- Provide questionnaire programming to be able to:
 - Randomly select the respondent
 - Have the capability that questionnaires can easily be edited and updated on demand (real time).
 - Include translations on the PDA and allow for interchangeable language selection in any point of the interview.
- Provide questionnaire programming for electronic data collection and ensure that all skip patterns, validations, routing instructions, response options, and data quality checks are accurately programmed, tested, and verified to be error-free before deployment.

d) TRAINING

There should be a strong emphasis on training. The appointed service provider will train, at least, HSRC researchers virtually (online) in all aspects of the application of the technology (including usage, management, monitoring and troubleshooting). Support must also be provided during the scheduled provincial training of fieldworkers.

e) SUPPORT

The applicant must have personnel that can be allocated full time to the project and be based in South Africa. Personnel must be available to provide training for HSRC core personnel. Personnel must also be available for virtual training sessions. Support personnel must have a thorough knowledge of the proposed data collection technology and be able to show its practical use in projects implemented by the applicant.

The service provider should be able to assist with data management and cleaning of the data. Daily monitoring of progress in the field should be done by the service provider via a progress chart. Monitoring should be done of the data and any anomalies reported. The service provider should be available for trouble shooting for the project period. As part of the proposal, the applicant should provide the CVs of person(s) who will be assigned to this project to assist for the duration.

f) PRINTING OF MAPS

The service provider must also provide the researchers with printed maps of the areas displaying the location of the selected voting stations that have been sampled. The map should include the geo-coordinates of the voting station on the map, to assist data collectors successfully and easily navigate to the voting stations.

Provision of the following services/Spatial data

- Production and sharing of one (1) National A0 map showing sample with reference data showing the 300 selected voting stations with reference data.
- Production and sharing of nine (9) x A1 maps showing the provincial sample of voting stations, with associated reference data.
- Printing of 300 A3 SAL maps showing the voting station and immediate surrounding area on colour aerial photography with GPS coordinates.
- Provide GPS co-ordinates and assist the team to navigate the areas.

5. MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

- a. The applicant/company/supplier must have a minimum of at least 5 years' proven experience in survey fieldwork and the use of electronic data collection technologies.
- b. Primary trainers and support staff must have at least three years of relevant survey experience.
- c. Applicants must provide a list of relevant previous projects with contactable references. In addition, we require letters of reference for relevant projects undertaken in the last 5 years. Letters must be on a company letterhead as well as signed and dated.
- d. The company/supplier should have at least 3 years' experience in printing geospatial maps for survey fieldwork, which in this instance will be produced using the sample that the HSRC will provide.
- e. The company/supplier must have experience of geolocation technology in order to find the samples areas using longitude and latitude coordinates.
- f. The service provider is required to provide a Proposal and Budget for survey round 1 (ESS 2026), plus an envisaged percentage escalation in the cost for survey rounds 2 and 3 (ESS 2029 and 2031) based on the same specifications above. Subject to financial availability and performance in the 2026 survey, the selected service provider will be asked to supply detailed budgets for the 2029 and 2031 surveys, based on the estimated percentage escalation in cost provided and other economically influenced circumstances deemed relevant by the HSRC.

EVALUATION CRITERIA THAT WILL BE APPLIED**80/20 Preference Point System (80: Price; 20: Specific Goals)**

	Criteria	Weight
1	Database Hosting, Platform Support, Platform Features: • Programme for software suitable for Android devices • Programming data quality control checks to detect invalid data, avoid empty data fields and follow skip logic. • Accommodate changes to the survey (additional items or removal of items) • Surveys captured on handsets to be transmitted to a web console. • Randomized programming for selection of respondents • Putting translated versions of questionnaires on tablets • None – (0 points) • Poor Response – (1-5 points) • Good Response - (6-10 points) • Excellent Response - (11-15 points)	15
2	Data management and data download: • Provide web console access. • Download datasets to EXCEL from web console. • Generate and view data reports on the web console • None – (0 points) • Poor Response – (1-5 points) • Good Response - (6-10 points) • Excellent Response - (11-15 points)	15
3	Training and technical support: Training and technical support plan describing the proposed training approach, personnel experience, local availability, Election Day support arrangements, troubleshooting and escalation procedures, and fieldwork monitoring support. The proposal must include profiles and CVs of the trainers and technical support personnel assigned to the project, each of whom must have at least three years of relevant survey experience. CVs will be used to substantiate the capacity and experience presented in the plan. • No plan (0 points): No training and technical support plan provided. • Poor (1–5 points): Limited plan addressing only some requirements, with inadequate training, personnel or technical support arrangements. • Good (6–10 points): Clear plan addressing most requirements, with experienced personnel and adequate training, troubleshooting and fieldwork support. • Excellent (11–20 points): Comprehensive plan addressing all requirements, with experienced personnel, strong training and monitoring, and rapid technical support, particularly on Election Day.	20
4.	Map production: Capability of service provider to access STATS SA data and geo-map the boundaries of the selected SALs. • No capability – (0 points) • Capability to access STATS SA data – (1-5 points) • Capability to access STATS SA data and geo-map the boundaries of the selected SALs - (6-10 points)	10

	Criteria	Weight
5.	Experience: Minimum experience in similar projects - 5 years. Proof that the Service Provider has been in existence and in practice for a period, • Less than 5 years (0 points) • 5 years- (5 points) • 6-8 years- (15 points) • 9 years and above - (20 points)	20
6.	Reference letters: References and contact details (name of contact person, with telephone/ cellphone number and e-mail address) of at least three clients for whom such work has been undertaken within the last five years, including details of the nature of project. Letters must be on a company letterhead as well as signed and dated. • No valid reference Letter (0 points) • 1 letter - (5 points) • 2 letters - (15 points) • 3+ letters - (20 points)	20
	TOTAL	100

The minimum threshold on functionality is 75%.

BIDDERS SUPPLY CHAIN COMPLIANCE DOCUMENTS

- Contract to be signed annually with the preferred bidder
- The bidder must be tax compliant
- The bidder must be registered with Central Supplier Database.

Escalation percentage Cost for Survey 2 and Survey 3

Survey 2: (2029 National and Provincial Elections)	
Survey 3: (2031 Local Government Elections)	

NON COMPULSORY BRIEFING:

- Non Compulsory Briefing: 24 August 2026 @ 10:00.

CLOSING DATE:

- The closing date for the submission of proposals is 01 September 2026

TECHNICAL ENQUIRIES:

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