



Request for Proposal (RFP)

ULWAZI LWETHU PROJECT: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND REVIEW OF AFRICAN LANGUAGE FOUNDATION PHASE READING MATERIALS

Issue date: **6 JULY 2022**
Closing date: **25 JULY 2022**

1. Introduction

This Request for Proposal (RFP) is directed at organisations and/or individuals who are suitably qualified to quality assure Grade 1-3 readers developed in nine indigenous South African languages.

2. Background

A major contributor to the reading challenges amongst South African children is the paucity of level-appropriate reading material in indigenous South African languages. In particular, there is a dearth of books that are linguistically sound, age appropriate, and reflect the realities of the majority of South African children.

The Ulwazi Lwethu Project brings together four expert organisations in the children's literacy space and draws on their expertise to produce high-quality African language leisure¹ and graded² readers for the Foundation Phase (Grade 1 to 3). The organisations are Room to Read, the Nelson Mandela Institute, Molteno and SAIDE's African Storybook Project.

This request for proposal is intended to assess the quality of the readers as learning material that promotes the teaching of reading in Grades 1-3. The findings and recommendations will be used to improve the readers in order for them to be widely distributed in schools across South Africa.

3. Materials to be Reviewed

Submissions must include a high-level rendering of possible approaches to this exercise. Please include supporting documentation with your proposal.

Materials Development

¹ Leisure readers extend learners' vocabulary development, nurture independent reading, facilitate reading for enjoyment and help to expand background knowledge.

² Graded readers are a comprehensive series of readers which teach children to read. They systematically help them with decoding, letter sound, word recognition, reading fluency and comprehension skills which are the basis for reading.

The Ulwazi Lwethu Project originated readers in the nine indigenous South African languages, namely, **Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu.**

The following materials were developed:

1. **72 Graded/Levelled** readers for the purposes of teaching reading. These materials support the teaching and development of a phonics-based approach, using decodable texts, to teaching reading.
2. **73 Leisure** readers for the purpose of reading for enjoyment, expanding vocabulary and promoting exposure to a variety of knowledge areas.

Further information about the above-mentioned reading materials:

- a) Each of the 145 (72+73) original stories have been versioned or adapted into the other eight South African languages.
- b) None of the texts have been *translated*. This means that in some instances some stories use words and phrases that are not in the original story to preserve sense and to maintain age/grade level appropriate decodeability in the target language (i.e., the language into which a text is versioned.)
- c) The 145 original titles comprise both fiction and non-fiction on a roughly 40:60 ratio.
- d) The titles/stories are written by home language speakers of the respective nine South African languages. All authors and illustrators were recruited and trained by the four expert literacy organisations listed above. However, because of the inevitable and welcome regional linguistic and cultural variation in the various African languages, editing of texts should be based on the principle of an inclusive and dynamic spoken and written language. Also, social and cultural allusions made in texts should be as inclusive as possible.

4. Purpose of the Review

The Zenex Foundation seeks the services of organisations and/or individuals or a consortium of experts who wish to undertake a review of the above-mentioned materials to establish:

1. The graded readers' appropriateness for teaching reading. Do they:
 - 1.1. Support teachers to teach foundational reading skills in a systematic, sequential, and explicit way?
 - 1.2. Promote the appropriate progression, coherence, accuracy, and scaffolding of phonic/decodable structures in each of the nine languages?
 - 1.3. Gradually and systematically expose learners to text that increases in levels of difficulty as the learners' reading ability develops?
 - 1.4. Align with the DBE CAPS curriculum?
 - 1.5. Show consistency with the orthography of the respective languages?
2. The leisure readers' appropriateness to ignite interest in reading and strengthen reading capability. Do they:
 - 2.1. Develop and build children's vocabulary?
 - 2.2. Expose children to a diversity of subjects or a variety of content knowledge?
 - 2.3. Expand children's view of the world and the society they live in?
 - 2.4. Help children identify and explore their emotions and spark their imagination?
 - 2.5. Include illustrations which support the meaning of the story?

- 2.6. Tell stories which model good literacy practices? (no grammatical, punctuation or vocabulary mistakes).
3. In relation to the entire Ulwazi Lwethu children's book collection storytelling/narrative and visual imagery in the nine African languages:
- 3.1. What is the overall quality assessment in relation to look and feel, and its consistency as an all-inclusive series?
 - 3.2. To what extent do the titles draw on and use South African children's multilingual realities and varied contexts?
 - 3.3. To what extent are the texts interesting, captivating and meaningful in building self-worth?
 - 3.4. Are the texts appropriate for young children in terms of content, conceptual level and characterisation?
 - 3.5. Is there evidence of the use of diverse genres and styles in relation to children's books?

5. Task Interpretation: Service Provider Proposal

Kindly submit a proposal by the **25 July 2022** outlining how you understand the task and how you will undertake the task. Please include information on the team that will be involved and the precise expertise they will bring to the team. Kindly ensure that the following information is included:

- **Rationale:**
 - Describe how you propose to approach the Project.
 - Describe the methodology you will use to review and quality assure these readers, across languages and grades.
 - Describe what instruments and tools you will use to complete this process.
- **Workplan:**
 - Prepare and describe a detailed workplan that includes the activities, milestones, outputs, timeframes and review processes.
- **The Review Team:**
 - Describe the team roles and lines of responsibilities.
 - Provide supporting documentation to demonstrate experience of early grade reading knowledge, story writing for children, proficiency of the nine South African languages or language groups in relation to children's reading development, knowledge of the CAPS curriculum.
 - Identify risks, and how you would manage and mitigate these risks.
 - Provide supporting references.
- **Detailed Budget:**
 - Stipulate the details and cost breakdown of line items. This should, where applicable, include cost per unit, number of units, frequency, sub-total and total.
 - Zenex allows 10% to cover organizational overheads such as administration and management costs.
- **Reporting and Deliverables:**
 - A Progress Report
 - A Final Report

- An Executive Summary of the final report
- A presentation to key stakeholders

Please note that this review must be completed by 9 September 2022

6. Selection Process

Interviews will be scheduled with shortlisted candidates, after which an appointment will be made. A clarificatory meeting will be scheduled in the week following communication of the decision to the successful applicant/s. This meeting will clarify and finalise the brief, agree on the design and methods, activities and the nature and timing of reports. As an outcome of this meeting, you will be required to submit a final proposal that documents the decisions of this meeting including a Project Plan, activities, deliverables and deadlines.

7. Submission Deadline

The deadline for responses to this RFP must be received no later than 17h00 on 25 July 2022. Late proposals will not be considered. Please email queries and proposals to Noluthando Ncube on ulwazi2020@gmail.com

We thank all applicants in advance for taking the time to submit a proposal.

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