



## Funda Uphumelele Research Study Terms of Reference for Project Manager

April 2024

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<b>Position:</b>	Project Manager: Funda Uphumelele Research Study (FURS)
<b>Location:</b>	Department of Basic Education 222 Struben Street Pretoria, South Africa
<b>Salary:</b>	Based on experience
<b>Type of Contract:</b>	Temporary, office-based
<b>Duration of Initial Contract:</b>	18 months (with possible extension)
<b>Closing Date:</b>	15 April 2024

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### 1. Introduction

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) is leading the Funda Uphumelele Reading Study (FURS) which will be the first study to develop language-appropriate assessments aligned to the newly developed reading benchmarks. The assessment will measure core skills for reading in African languages with appropriate word structures, complexity and meaning for early grades. In addition, teacher guides with language-specific strategies addressing gaps (where learners do not reach the reading benchmarks) will be developed.

A consortium of donors is partnering with the DBE to support this project. In partnership with the consortium, the Department seeks to contract an experienced Project Manager to manage the implementation of the survey.

**NOTE:** The Zenex Foundation is acting as the fund administrator for the project on behalf of the donors and the Department. The Project Manager will therefore be contracted by Zenex Foundation and seconded to the Department for the duration of the project. Therefore, whilst the Zenex Foundation will be contracting for this position, the work will be physically based at the DBE and the successful candidate will be supervised and report to a Technical Working Group (TWG).

### 2. Background

Through participation in the Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study (PIRLS) that assesses reading comprehension at the Grade 4 level, South Africa has been able to track the percentage of Grade 4 learners who are attaining grade-appropriate reading comprehension. South Africa's low reading comprehension levels in Grade 4 reflected in PIRLS indicates that the setbacks in early literacy development emerge in the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3). This means a high number of learners have problems with skills that precede reading comprehension. These are foundational and technical aspects



of reading that relate to knowledge of the written code. There are currently no national assessments in South Africa measuring these early technical skills.

### 3. Programme Description and Outcomes

The survey will be split into 5 phases. The Project Manager will be responsible for providing support to the DBE in overseeing the first four phases of the project.

#### **PHASE 1: DEVELOPMENT**

Phase 1 will be on the development of instruments. Approximately 12 instruments per language will be developed. These instruments will be developed by two linguists and/or Foundation Phase specialists per language through an iterative process. This process will be coordinated and overseen by the Department's Research Coordination, Monitoring, and Evaluation (RCME) directorate.

#### **PHASE 2: PILOTING AND DATA COLLECTION**

The survey will consist of at least 2 pilots to test the appropriateness of the new instruments. This will involve the employment of field officers through a data collection company in an iterative process with the linguists. A third pilot may be conducted if necessary.

Data collection for the **pilots** will be limited to **six provinces**, however all **11 languages** will be reached.

#### **PHASE 3: ANALYSIS AND REPORT WRITING**

Analysis and report writing of all the data will commence in Phase 2 as the pilots begin and continue through Phase 3. Various personnel will need to be appointed to assist with the analysis and report writing. The main data analysis will be led internally by RCME, with additional quantitative analysis capacity added if necessary.

#### **PHASE 4: CURRICULUM AND SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING**

Specific curriculum-strengthening efforts and deliverables are detailed below.

- I. EGRA Update and Training
- II. Strengthening of the CAPS Curriculum
- III. Whole School Evaluation Programme
- IV. Remedial Support for Early Skills
- V. Mother Tongue based Bilingual Education (MTbBE) Implementation

#### **PHASE 5: DISSEMINATION & USE**

A public dissemination to share the findings from the research as well as all the curriculum strengthening will be held where all stakeholders, including affected directorates within the DBE, provinces, NGOs, and donors.



## 4. Timeline

ACTIVITIES	Q4 23-24			Q1 24-25			Q2 24-25			Q3 24-25			Q4 24-25			Q1 25-26		
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
Recruitment of Language Team																		
Appoint Data Collection SP																		
FUNS Instrument Development																		
FUNS Pilot 1 and Revisions																		
FUNS Pilot 2 and Revisions																		
FUNS Pilot 3 and Revisions																		
Instrument Finalisation																		
Fieldwork Training																		
Data Collection																		
Analysis and Report Writing																		
Launch and Dissemination																		

### KEY



Activity



No Activity

## 5. Scope of Work

Under the supervision of the DBE, the Project Manager will support the implementation of FURS and will be responsible for ensuring the delivery of project outputs within the timeframe and budget of the programme by supporting the day-to-day activities and resources of the project. Once the Data Collection for the pilots has been completed, the project manager will also be responsible for managing and supporting the day-to-day activities and resources of the analysis and report writing of the results.

The Project Manager will have oversight over the managerial leadership of the project, with special emphasis on coordination and networking, management, and following up on the mobilisation of resources amongst donors. They will also be responsible for generating innovative ideas to assist with the implementation of the survey. Below are the specific duties and responsibilities.

### a. Specific duties and responsibilities

- Provide project planning, management, administration, coordination, and support services to a consortium of service providers to achieve the project goals and objectives;
- Work closely with and report to the Technical Working Group to develop processes and systems that track, organise and monitor project activities;
- Draft Terms of Reference for the fieldworkers, participating in shortlisting and interviewing candidates



- Facilitate project meetings, networking, and information-sharing opportunities among service providers and key education stakeholders including donors;
- Ensure that service providers deliver quality products on time;
- Compile, consolidate, and analyse narrative and financial reports of the project;
- Manage the project's financial resources;
- Provide logistical support to the consultancies responsible for the development of the survey instruments and the data analysis and report writing;
- Facilitate stakeholder management with the various project partners and be a school, provincial, and district liaison contact person;
- Provide updates, and planning direction and inputs to the Project Steering Committee and the Technical Working Group;
- Collect information, producing and disseminating reports and documents as required;
- Communicate new developments to key donor partners and actively brief them on opportunities for cooperation; and
- Manage responsible parties on the implementation of project tasks.

#### **b. Competencies**

The successful candidate must have an observable professional track record of the following competencies:

- **Knowledge and Learning**
  - Promotes a knowledge-sharing and learning culture; and
  - Actively work towards continuing personal learning and development, acts on learning plan, and applies newly acquired skills.
- **Development and Operational Effectiveness**
  - Ability to support the facilitation of project planning, results-based management, and reporting.
  - Ability to assist/lead implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of project activities organize resources.
  - Strong organisational and planning skills with display of attention to detail in all aspects of work.
- **Management and Leadership**
  - Responds positively to feedback.
  - Strong analytical skills combined with good judgment.
  - Ability to identify gaps and takes initiative in resolving them.
  - Ability to independently solve complex and challenging problems.

#### **c. Required Education, Skills, and Experience**

The requisite candidate must have these skills and experience:

- **Education and Knowledge**
  - A bachelor's degree or equivalent formal education qualification in a field relevant to development, public management, education, or linguistics.
  - An honours or master's degree in a related field will be highly advantageous.



- Demonstrate an emerging understanding of the education sector in South Africa.
- Demonstrate an emerging understanding of social research methods such as sample surveys and impact evaluation methods.
- **Skills**
  - Excellent written and oral communication skills in English including communicating complex technical issues to diverse audiences are required.
  - Spoken and written fluency in **at least** one Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) other than English.
  - Ability to evaluate complex data to prepare precise and accurate reports and oral briefings of information received.
  - Proficiency in basic computer applications, such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and emails.
  - Ability to work in other statistical packages such as SPSS or STATA will be strongly advantageous.
  - Possess a valid drivers' license and willing to undertake multi-provincial travel.
- **Work Experience**
  - **At least** three years' experience in project management. Highly advantageous if experience includes working with a consortium of stakeholders or in a large-scale project.
  - Experience in project implementation, monitoring and/or evaluation in public schools will be highly advantageous.
  - Experience in research institutions, universities, NGOs working in the education sector, or working with or for the South African government is preferable.
  - Experience in administration, organising, and management of budgeting of multiple project activities.
  - Engagement with a wide variety of professional leaders in the academic, public, and private sectors.
  - Experience with interacting productively with individuals of diverse cultural, socio-economic, and educational backgrounds.

## 6. Application Process

### a. Submissions

The deadline for the submission of applications is **15 April 2024**. For an application package to be considered complete, please submit the following:

- A CV of no more than 3 pages with **3** relevant contactable references.
- One page cover letter detailing examples of competencies and experience.
- Submit attachments of the following documents:
  - Copies of relevant certificates and academic records.
  - Anonymised project report based on a project you have overseen as a sample of writing.
- Ensure that all communications include your full name and title of the position for which you are applying.



Please send enquiries and applications to [Zwane.Z@dbe.gov.za](mailto:Zwane.Z@dbe.gov.za) and cc [Sebaeng.L@dbe.gov.za](mailto:Sebaeng.L@dbe.gov.za) by 15 April 2024.

Successful applicants will receive confirmation of shortlisting **one week** after the submission deadline. If you have not received an email or telephonic confirmation in that time, please consider your application unsuccessful.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited for an in-person interview at the DBE offices. As part of the interview, applicants will complete a written assessment.