

REQUESTS FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

M&E PRACTITIONER CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

1. Scope of Call

Zenex Foundation has been involved in education development and transformation programmes in South Africa over several decades. An evidence-based approach is core to Zenex’s work and, in line with this principle, Zenex commissions extensive amounts of research and evaluation. In the process of commissioning this work, Zenex has found that a limited number of experts are available in South Africa who have education research and evaluation expertise. This reality is even more stark when looking at Black African evaluators in the field. As a result of the status quo, and since Zenex also has a strong focus on capacity building at various levels of the education sector, Zenex intends to support capacity building of evaluation experts in the country, in the interests of better knowledge production and learning.

2. Project Objectives

In preparation for the project, Zenex carried out a scoping exercise which revealed that a sufficient number of evaluation agencies exist in South Africa generally for the number of education evaluations commissioned, hence the focus of this project is on developing and supporting existing agencies.

The intended outcome of the project is to build the capacity of **mid-career professionals working in or connected to existing agencies**. Capacity building should be designed to move professionals from an intermediate level to a senior level, as outlined in the table below:

Intermediate Level	Senior Level
<p>Has solid knowledge/ability of (in moderately complex evaluations):</p> <p>Evaluation design and implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying and analysing existing evidence base various types of theories of change determining the scope of an evaluation; developing and adapting realistic work plans to manage budgeting and resources assessing risk and applying contingency plans elaborating or modifying evaluation designs; developing quality terms of references applying a range of evaluation data collection and analysis methods; 	<p>Has excellent knowledge/ability of (in complex evaluations):</p> <p>Evaluation design and implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying and analysing existing evidence base; identifying the need for evaluative work identifying and facilitating the development of theories of change determining the scope of an evaluation; leading development and adaptation of realistic work plans assessing risk and applying contingency plans developing innovative evaluation design approaches; developing high-quality terms of references applying appropriate use of multiple

<p>establishing quality assurance mechanisms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> analysing data from diverse sources; validating data accuracy and data quality; ensuring data collection and analysis have been conducted ethically. <p>Communication and stakeholder management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> communicating results in a clear and user-friendly way; reporting credible conclusions substantiated by evidence; developing clear, realistic and feasible recommendations; writing up evaluation reports coordinating evaluation processes; establishing and managing stakeholder groups. <p>Related skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> knowledge of norms and standards for evaluation, evaluation ethics and current issues in evaluation practice and theory demonstrating facilitation skills, negotiation skills, and conflict management skills pursuing professional networks and self-development; providing peer support. 	<p>and mixed methods data collection and analysis methods; establishing quality assurance mechanisms (and upholding these under pressure)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> confidently analysing both qualitative and quantitative data from diverse sources; using analytical skills to synthesise data; validating data accuracy and data quality; ensuring ethical data collection and analysis. <p>Communication and stakeholder management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> communicating results in a clear, relevant way; reporting credible conclusions based on evidence; developing feasible recommendations; writing up evaluation reports proactively disseminating findings; supporting others to develop communication plans supervising evaluation processes; establishing and supervising stakeholder groups; demonstrating effective engagement with senior stakeholders such as Boards and senior officials. <p>Related skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> knowledge of norms and standards for evaluation; evaluation ethics (and upholding these under pressure) and critically analysing current issues in evaluation practice and theory advanced facilitation skills; advanced negotiation skills; highly developed conflict resolution skills; able to mentor others to develop these skills pursuing and initiating professional networks and self-development; providing mentoring to other evaluators.
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(Adapted from: UNEG Evaluation Competency Framework, 2016)

It is envisioned that this will be a ten-year programme which aims to address capacity building in a rich and sustained manner. By the end of the period, Zenex would like to have a cohort of evaluation professionals with sufficient skills and experience to draw on to independently lead medium- and large-scale evaluations and similar research projects.

Given the intensive and personalised nature of support required, Zenex aims to fund, beginning in 2025, **5 individuals** in what will be the first cohort.

3. Project Description

Zenex Foundation is issuing a call to existing M&E agencies or professionals who work in the field of education evaluation to submit proposals for developing capacity. This may include identifying an existing individual within the agency or contracting a new staff member.

Possible areas of capacity building could include one or more of the following:

- An academic qualification (such as a Master's or PhD degree)
- Short courses on specific topics to fill gaps in knowledge or skills
- Practice-based mentorship/coaching
- Training in key research and evaluation skills (such as evaluation design, methodology, data analysis, writing for publication, communication in non-academic contexts, networking)
- Conference presentation skills and attendance at conferences

A condition of the partnership is that the evaluation agency must be willing to co-fund the individual's capacity building. Details of this co-funding arrangement should be outlined in the proposal.

5. Process

5.1 Submissions

Interested service providers should forward proposals of **not more than four A4 pages**. The proposal should highlight the following aspects:

- A short profile of the organisation, which includes existing experience and expertise in research and evaluations.
- A short profile of the individual candidate for which the capacity building is intended (can be an existing staff member or a staff member who will be appointed).
- Details of the nature of support for capacity building that is required. This is a description of the capacity building project which includes objectives, timeframes, budget, and, if personnel, who, over what period, etc.

5.2 Shortlisting Process

The shortlisted individuals/organisations will be required to do a virtual interview to a panel selected by the Zenex Foundation.

All proposals and queries should be directed to Ms Catherine Langsford at catherine@zenexfoundation.org.za on or by 6 August 2024.

CLOSING DATE: 6 AUGUST 2024

CLOSING TIME: 16H00