



basic education

Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# Funda Uphumelele National Reading Study

## Data Collection Terms of Reference

30 October 2024

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### 1. Introduction

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) is in the process of conducting its inaugural Funda Uphumelele National Reading Survey. This survey will measure grades 1-4 learners' achievement in the foundational skills of reading to track what percentages of learners are on track to reading with meaning. In partnership with the various donors, the department seeks to contract an experienced data collection service provider to collect data for the national survey.

**NOTE: Whilst the Zenex Foundation will facilitate the contracting, the appointed service provider will report to the Research Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate based at the Department of Basic Education (DBE).**

### 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 attaining grade-appropriate reading comprehension. South Africa's low reading comprehension levels measured in Grade 4 as reflected in PIRLS indicate that the setbacks in early literacy development emerge in the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3). This means that 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.

The first round of this survey will establish a national baseline set of statistics. This survey fulfils the national and provincial use of the newly developed reading benchmarks.

### 3. Scope of Work

The Data Collection Service Provider will be responsible for providing support to the DBE in collecting data in all nine provinces to reach all 11 official spoken languages. The data collected will be representative of each language and each province.

The data collection will be followed by data analysis and report writing. The next phase will then be public dissemination of the national statistics as well as ways to support teachers and strengthen the education system.

The specific undertaking by the appointed service provider will be to:

- i. Recruit and manage fieldworkers proficient in all 11 official languages, with at least 4 people per team and 4 teams per language. Two languages will however require 5 teams. The details are in



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Table 3. The service provider will appoint 4 field officers for each of the 11 languages that will be surveyed – we require 5 to be recruited but 4 will be appointed.

- ii. We require the field officer's daily rate be no less than **R500**, and **R700** for team leaders, for data collection days.
- iii. Provide tablets with a minimum **4GB RAM, Android 12 or higher operating system and 8 inch or bigger display** to adequately and efficiently run the tools developed for the survey. Tablets below this specification will not be accepted.
- iv. Provide mobile data for tablets and support the loading and use of learner assessment tools developed by the DBE, ensuring that these are loaded onto the tablet of each fieldworker.
- v. Support the training of fieldworkers, led by the DBE, between **18-23 January 2025**.
- vi. Plan and schedule school visits. Source school contact details where necessary.
- vii. Conduct and manage data collection for approximately **710 schools** over five weeks, **27 January to 28 February 2025** including mop-up.
- viii. Manage and quality assure the data collection process.

The following skills will be assessed in all the data collections. Surveying of principals and two teachers per school will also be conducted.

Table 1: Skills to be assessed per grade and language with estimated duration

Oral one-on-one Assessments				
Task	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
Rapid Object Naming Task	✓			
Morphological awareness Task 1	✓	✓	✓	
Pseudoword Task 1	✓	✓	✓	
Letter sound Task	✓	✓		
HL Word Reading Task	✓	✓	✓	✓
HL Oral Reading Fluency Task 1	✓	✓	✓	✓
HL Oral Reading Fluency Task 2	✓	✓	✓	✓
EFAL Word Reading Task		✓	✓	✓
EFAL Oral Reading Fluency Task			✓	✓
Group Written Assessments				
Task	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
HL Comprehension Task			✓	✓
Pseudoword Task 1-2			✓	✓
Interviews				
Teacher Interviews		✓		✓
Principal Interview			✓	

### 3.1 Data collection sample



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The data collection will be in all 9 provinces. A sample of 59-80 schools per province have been selected to reach a sample size that provides good precision for national statistics and relatively good precision for approximate provincial analysis. Forty learners (10 per grade) will be sampled per school.

Table 2 shows the anticipated sample distribution of number of schools for each language across the provinces. The final sample size per province will be shared during the inception phase with the appointed service provider. The parameters of the sampling considerations for the number of schools per province are as follows:

- Stratified by language and province, first province then language, if more than 5% of the population speaks the language.
- Schools have been selected based on their LoLTA. In the case of dual-medium schools, the language used in the sampling will be maintained and will not be replaceable within the school. The replacement sample will also be selected by the same language.
- Learners in schools that transition to EFAL as LoLTA will be assessed in EFAL in addition to their HL.
- 59-80 schools per province that is ~710 school in total.

Table 2: Distribution of languages assessed across provinces for main data collection.

	EC	FS	GP	KZN	LP	MP	NC	NW	WC	Total Schools	Total Learners
Afrikaans	2	5	5				31	5	20	<b>68</b>	<b>3700</b>
English HL	5	5	19	8	4	5	6	5	23	<b>80</b>	<b>3050</b>
IsiNdebele					15	44				<b>59</b>	<b>3000</b>
IsiXhosa	49		2	2					16	<b>69</b>	<b>4250</b>
Isizulu		3	10	49		5				<b>67</b>	<b>3100</b>
Sepedi			7		42	10				<b>59</b>	<b>3000</b>
Sesotho	3	43	8					5		<b>59</b>	<b>3450</b>
Setswana		3	3				22	44		<b>72</b>	<b>3200</b>
Siswati						59				<b>59</b>	<b>3000</b>
Tshivenda					59					<b>59</b>	<b>3000</b>
Xitsonga			5		39	15				<b>59</b>	<b>3000</b>
English FAL	54	54	35	59	155	133	53	54	36	<b>633</b>	32700
Total Schools	<b>59</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>35750</b>

### 3.2 Fieldwork specifications

It is expected that each school will be visited for one day only. A mop-up day per team should be included in the fieldwork schedule and project plan. The estimated duration of data collection for each school visit is approximately 7 hours. This means that teams will need to arrive at the school by 7am when the school



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opens for the day to make all preparations with the principal before starting the data collection. Late arrivals will not be accepted as it will jeopardise the completion of the data collection at a school.

All the field officers will have to handle the related timing of tasks and complete the required school-teacher-learner linkage and other administration forms. In addition, field officers in teams are jointly responsible for scheduling the programme for the day. At the end of each day fieldworkers will be expected to mark and submit the written assessments.

For this to be feasible, it is required that each team has a minimum of 4 field officers. The Service Provider will not be allowed to change the period stipulated or change the number of teams in the field, except with the explicit consent of the DBE. Approximately 60 fieldworkers that participated in the assessment pilots preceding this study should be recruited for this survey in addition to other recruits identified by the Service Provider.

The learner assessments will be in all the LoLTAs at the Home language level and English at the First Additional Language level. The field officers recruited for each language should be home language fluent speakers in the respective language and they are expected to also conduct assessments in English. A detailed recruitment plan that includes clear language proficiency requirements should be developed and shared with the DBE.

In the 5 weeks of data collection, there will be 15 days of active data collection for most teams except the team collecting data in more 60 schools. An additional 5 days of mop-up need to be scheduled within the 5 weeks. Below is the minimum breakdown of teams.

Table 3: Number of field officers per language for data collection.

Language	Number of Anchor Provinces	Number of Auxiliary Provinces	Approximate Number of Schools	Number of Teams	Number of FOs per Team	Total of Field Officers
Afrikaans	2	4	68	4	4	16
English	2	7	80	5	4	20
IsiNdebele	2	0	59	4	4	16
IsiXhosa	2	2	69	4	4	16
Isizulu	1	3	67	4	4	16
Sepedi	1	2	59	4	4	16
Sesotho	1	3	59	4	4	16
Setswana	2	2	72	5	4	20
Siswati	1	0	59	4	4	16
Tshivenda	1	0	59	4	4	16
Xitsonga	2	1	59	4	4	16
<b>Total</b>			<b>710</b>	<b>46</b>		<b>184</b>

\*Anchor province defined by more than 10 schools in the province



### 3.3 Data Collection Instrument Specifications

All grade assessments will include orally assessed components that field officers must administer in a one-on-one manner using an electronic tablet and the SurveyCTO app. Additionally, the same Grade 3 and 4 learners will complete individual written assessments in a group test setup. Fieldworkers will be expected to mark and capture the written assessments on the same software.

The data collection service provider will be expected to moderate a sample of 10% of the written assessments for Grade 3 and 4 respectively. Details on the moderation approach as well as proposed margins of error and remarking must be clearly indicated in the proposal.

The appointed service provider will not be responsible for electronically versioning data collection instruments (also referred to as the learner assessments). However, the service provider is expected to work closely with the DBE to ensure their functionality for both training and the main study. The Service Provider will also be responsible for printing and compiling learner assessment charts/prompts for each data collector. The learner assessment charts/prompts must be printed in colour. The printing specifications are attached.

Stationery must be provided for the fieldworkers, including pens and markers. Pencils must be provided for learners to use in the written assessments.

## 4. Service Provider Responsibilities

### 4.1. Planning/inception phase

The service provider will be expected to:

- contact all schools and confirm school visits; the visits for the first week of data collection in January 2025 must be scheduled before the end of the 2024 academic year;
- produce a clear and binding work schedule that **includes mop-up plans**;
- deliver a detailed data quality assurance plan describing the procedures which will be established to ensure high data quality during collection, capturing and moderation;
- recruit, select, and take full administrative responsibility for all field officers, supervisors and trainees needed to complete all aspects of the data collection. Fieldworkers must be tested for language proficiency, the linguists supporting the study should be engaged as part of the selection process;
- prepare and procure all printing and other materials required to execute the training, school simulation and data collection. Please note the printing annexure and the need to print both oral reading charts and written assessments for the specified grades.

### 4.2. Equipment

It will be the responsibility of the Service Provider to provide tablets and have an adequate number of extra tablets on hand at training and for use as back-up should devices malfunction or be damaged during data collection. The DBE will require access to at least 3 tablets for training and during fieldwork over and above those used by fieldworkers. The tablets are required to be able to run the assessment tools efficiently. Should they not be able to do so, the service provider will be expected to replace these



urgently. The specifications on the model and make are Samsung (or similar) - **4GB RAM, Android 12 or higher operating system and 8-inch display**. The service provider must ensure that the tablets are able to efficiently run the FUNS assessments. Should the DBE not be satisfied with the running of the forms, the service provider will be required to provide adequate tablets to remedy this.

Data for the tablets should be provided by the service provider for both training and the main data collection.

Chargers for each tablet as well as power banks must be provided by the service provider for each tablet.

### 4.3. Training

The DBE, with support from the Service Provider, will be responsible for conducting a compulsory in-person training workshop for a minimum of six days. The DBE will lead the training with at least 2 days allocated to training by the service provider for all field officers and supervisors. The trainings must be centralised. The venue and catering for training must be located in Pretoria.

Training will take place from **18-23 January 2025** with two in-school simulation days forming part of the training on 21 and 22 January 2024. While each fieldworker will participate in one day of simulation, this will be implemented in two groups, across two days, for efficiency.

To ensure that every individual data collector is able to adhere to the required data collection standards, the trainings will include:

- extensive daily opportunities to practice
- daily Inter-Rater Reliability assessments
- simulations at a school.

One language specialist/linguist per language contracted by the DBE will assist with the training of the administration of the learner assessments.

Training will be conducted mostly in English; however, the different language components of the learner assessments will be facilitated by the respective language specialists. The final screening of the field officers will take place at the end of training to allow **only those who have mastered the data collection or administration procedures to go to the field**. Therefore, the service provider must recruit additional field officers to be trained per language. Field officers must be issued with and wear name tags during training to identify and associate them with this evaluation.

### 4.4. Fieldwork

It is expected that the Service Provider will:

- In consultation with DBE, compile a comprehensive field officer administration manual which will form the basis of the field officer training and the subsequent data collection.
- Provide the final planned fieldwork schedule (data collection visits to schools) in writing. A pre-finalised fieldwork schedule should be submitted, and again by the end of the pilot should updates be made. The expected procedure is to design the schedule upfront; schools should then be contacted, and only if there is a problem with the suggested date for a particular school can the schedule then be rearranged to make sure all schools are tested. It is expected that the schedule contains the



necessary information on the school regarding the date of visit, confirmation that accurate directions to the school have been obtained and the field officers allocated for the visit.

- Provide the DBE with the names and contact details of all the field officers and fieldwork managers, including indications of their experience and language proficiency. A provisional list should be submitted three days prior to training and the final list after training.
- Obtain and verify the GPS location and directions for locating the schools using the DBE data with GPS coordinates and school contact details of the schools provided to the Service Provider.
- Arrange all travel, logistics and accommodation for both the training and data collection of the field officers. Shared transport between different teams of field officers to schools **is not allowed** as this would lead to field officers arriving late and not administering the instruments at the required quality. Each team of field officers would, therefore, need to have access to their own car. The service provider is also required to book accommodation for all field officers.
- To ensure that all field officers administer the tests at the correct school, field officers should request each school to apply its official school stamp to one of the project documents.
- Ensure that the data collected at schools by field officers is accurate and complete.

#### 4.5. Distribution

It is expected that the appointed Service Provider will:

- Print, pack and distribute all relevant materials to field officers ahead of their school visits. It is expected that each field officer should have a copy of the learner assessment, charts, forms and training manual. These documents should be in a flip file in order to ensure that they will remain neat throughout the data collection period. The field officers should also have writing stationery.
- Ensure that each tablet has enough data and battery capacity for each school visit.
- If the tablets intend to be used for navigation or communication purposes, the Service Provider will have to top-up the data bundles and charging equipment accordingly.
- Properly supervise, monitor and support field officers throughout the fieldwork by means of regular and sufficient presence and guidance of experienced fieldwork supervisors.
- Communicate daily with the DBE during fieldwork to discuss any changes to the schedule, any emergencies or actions needed to be taken. The DBE must approve any changes that will result in a reduced number of schools visited or learners assessed. Should this not be the case, the DBE may withhold payment.

#### 4.6. Data Management

It is expected that the Service Provider will:

- Implement the DBE-developed procedures to ensure that all the data collected can be linked.
- Manage the moderation of marked scripts after the first 5 days of data collection and at the end of data collection as part of quality assurance processes.
- Complete a fieldwork report that must contain the following details:
  - List of schools visited;
  - Time of arrival at and departure from each school site;
  - The number of instruments completed at each site per category;
  - Reasons for not completing the required totals; and
  - Specific issues that arose at each school site and how each issue was dealt with.



The confidentiality and security of all procedures, forms, questionnaires and test booklets with their test items must be always safeguarded.

## 5. Key Personnel

The Key Personnel specified below are essential to the work required from the appointed Service Provider. It is important that no one person fulfils more than one role. A profile of each personnel member should be sent along with the proposal.

### 5.1. Project Manager

This person will be responsible for holistic oversight of the project including the administration, logistics, and finances. The project manager will work closely with the field managers in overseeing fieldwork-related activities including recruitment and training. They will be the primary liaison person between the Service Provider and the DBE. They will compile the reports required from the Service Provider and ensure quality assurance. This person must have at least 5 years' experience in project management in large-scale data collection projects.

### 5.2. Data Technician

The DBE data manager will work with the service provider data technician to ensure that all instruments on SurveyCTO are functioning on all tablets for all languages and instruments. The data technician will also be required to support and respond to all fieldworker tablet use issues during fieldwork. They will be the first point of reference to resolve fieldworker data issues during data collection.

The data technician must be available throughout training to support fieldworkers with any tablet issues during training and the fieldwork. The technician must have 3 years' experience with working in SurveyCTO as well as supporting data collection activities.

### 5.3. Field Managers

These will be the point people for all fieldwork-related matters and for managing the teams in the field. They will visit at least one site a day in the field to monitor and assist with any troubles that arise. These individuals will be responsible for managing the teams in the field. Each manager must oversee **one language with all teams within the language**. They will lead the field teams to complete the project within the allotted timelines and problem solve any troubles that arise that the field teams bring to their attention. They will visit each team they supervise at least once during the first week of data collection to monitor and assist with any troubles that arise. They must have at least 3 years' experience working in large-scale projects. Each field manager must be fluent in the language of the team they are overseeing and in tablet usage as well as basic troubleshooting.

Field managers will be required to carry out at least 3 recordings of the full assessments in each grade and language for use in future training.

### 5.4 Administration and logistics team

This survey requires extensive and detailed management of logistics and planning for the school scheduling upfront, as well as ongoing responsiveness and management of the schedule during the data collection. In order to arrive at the scheduled schools well articulated travel and accommodation plans





are required. Maps with confirmed locations and addresses will need to be produced and provided to each field team. It is expected that the Service Provider will put together a team to deliver this work and offer the fieldworkers and field managers logistical support.

### **5.5 Written Assessment moderation team**

The Service Provider is required to provide a detailed plan for marking moderation as specified in this document. The team responsible for this, including their language proficiency and expertise as well as prior experience, are required. The service provider should clearly propose their team for this as well as their expertise.

## **6. Deliverables and Payment Schedule**

All deliverables submitted will be subject to scrutiny by the DBE and approval will only be granted if the deliverables are of the required quality. Thus, finalisation of deliverables may entail several revisions based on feedback provided. Feedback on the submitted deliverables will be completed within 5 days after the receipt of deliverables. The feedback may be the approval of deliverables or a request for revision. Zenex Foundation will make payments within 14 days of approval of the deliverables by the DBE. The table below provides a summary of the phases, planned dates and payment tranches.



Table 2: Timelines, Deliverables and Payment Schedule

No.	DELIVERABLES / MAIN DATES	DUE	PAYMENT %
<b>INCEPTION/PLANNING</b>			
1.	Inception meeting	20 November 2024	
2.	Inception report	Submit within 5 days after inception meeting	10%
3.	Tablet inspection, trialling and approval	25 November 2024	10%
4.	Preliminary field officer list	5 December 2024	
5.	Finalised field officer list for training	7 January 2024	
6.	Instruments for printing received from DBE	5 December 2024	
7.	Instruments on application and tested for data collection	13 December 2024	
8.	Confirmation of simulation training school visits	5 December 2024	
9.	Confirmed school schedule for week 1 data collection	5 December 2024	
10.	Confirmed school schedule including mop-up	24 January 2025	
<b>TRAINING &amp; DATA COLLECTION</b>			
11.	Training Pilot field officers	18-23 January 2025 (simulation 20 and 21 January 2025)	20%
12.	Data collection in 710 schools	27 January – 21 February 2025	20%
13.	Data collection mop-up	24- 28 February 2025	10%
14.	Complete data collection including mop-up, marking and moderation	10 March 2025	
15.	Fieldwork report, final field officer list and schedule	14 March 2025	10%
<b>CLOSE-OUT</b>			
16.	Clean raw data extracted by DBE with number of learners and administration quality assurance completed including moderation of scripts	21 March 2025	
17.	All data, presentations, tools and materials handed over to the DBE	21 March 2025	20%



## 7. Contracting

The implementation plan, deliverables as well as the nature timing of reports and other required data/information will be finalised before the signing of the contract. The contract will be subject to performance reviews by the DBE and Zenex Foundation, who may discontinue the contract at any time based on substandard performance or non-delivery. The Service Provider commits to abiding by all Zenex Foundation and DBE policies and regulations.

### 7.2. Price Cap

All activities associated with the implementation should be budgeted **for no more than R 8 800 000 exclusive of VAT**. Applicant budgets that are submitted must clearly outline VAT charges where they apply. The selected quotation amount specified at application will be the contract ceiling price and cannot be changed upon appointment.

### 7.3. Intellectual Property Data and Copyright

The contract with the service provider will be subject to and include Zenex Foundation-specific principles, policies, regulations, definitions and contractual terms specific to the Zenex Foundation. All rights, title and interest to intellectual property and works, trademarks, copyright, patents, patent applications, data, and property, including the application to be developed in terms of this ToR, will vest in the Department of Basic Education (DBE). Further details will be provided in the contract

## 8. Application Process

Below is the application process that will be followed. Service Providers who do not comply with all the requirements listed will not be considered. The closing date for application is **14 November 2024**. **All proposals should be submitted to [dbe.furs@gmail.com](mailto:dbe.furs@gmail.com)**. Please expect confirmation of receipt by close of business on 15 November 2024.

### 9.1. Service Provider Competencies

Only service providers with the following competencies and capacity should consider applying. Applications from consortiums or joint ventures with these competencies and capacity are also eligible.

- Experience and expertise in quantitative and qualitative data collection using various instruments in multiple primary schools while providing high-quality data management and quality assurance. Preference will be given to providers able to demonstrate capacity and experience with data collection in one-on-one assessments in public schools in South Africa.
- Expertise in the development of the necessary online data collection tools to support timeous and accurate data for analysis.
- Experience and expertise in deploying professionally trained field officers/enumerators to conduct assessments with children.
- Experience and expertise in deploying professionally trained field officers/enumerators to conduct structured classroom observations, school questionnaires and teacher/SMT interviews in the language requirements of the study.
- Internal capacity to conduct full scope of the study.
- Willingness and availability to work closely with the DBE to ensure seamless data collection.



## 9.2. Proposal Package

Only proposals that have the following will be considered:

1. A response proposal detailing a clear work schedule and risk management plan.
2. A profile/CVs of key personnel
3. A project management plan and fieldwork protocol including the following:
  - i. field officer recruitment plan;
  - ii. data management plan; and
  - iii. data quality assurance plan for both data collection and data capture.
4. A detailed budget with clear outline of VAT charges where applicable.
5. Evidence of relevant experience in large-scale data collection in education.
  
6. Sample of similar work previously done – this could include a methodology section or tools previously developed.
7. Evidence and specifications of the tablets and software that will be used.
8. Specific experience in assessing school-going learners aged 7 – 10 is highly desirable.
9. Please include three contactable references from three different projects.
10. An original Tax Clearance Certificate
11. A BBBEE certificate (if applicable)
12. Company Registration Documents
13. 2 Years of Audited Annual Financial Statements for the 2022/23 and 2024/24 financial years.
14. If applying as a Partnership or Joint Venture, the following documents must be attached/addressed:
  - i. The agreement signed by nominated members of both/all partnership or joint venture partners;
  - ii. State the leading company; and
  - iii. Submission of all applicants' (within the consortium/joint venture) original valid tax clearance certificate.

Table 4: Evaluation Weighting Criteria

Criteria	Weight
<b>1. Experience in large-scale national/provincial data collection</b> 1.1. A minimum of 5 years' experience in executing large-scale data collection. 1.2. Specific experience <b>in the education sector</b> and especially in assessing school-going learners aged 7 – 10. 1.3. Specific experience in collecting data using electronic devices/online data collection tools. 1.4. Three recent (no more than 3 years) and relevant reference letters and details of the fieldwork undertaken for each of them.	35



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1.5. Sample of similar work done – this could include a methodology section or tools previously developed.	
<b>2. Industry Standard Methodology:</b> 2.1. Bid response proposal demonstrating understanding of the project and plans to successfully complete the project within the prescribed timeframe. 2.2. A project management plan and fieldwork protocol including a data management plan and data quality assurance plan for both data collection and data capture. 2.3. <b>All required documents</b> for bid application submitted.	20
<b>3. Effective Operational Capacity:</b> 3.1. Organisational structure of team to be on the project 3.2. List and profiles/CVs of key personnel to work on the project including number of black persons (as per B-BBEE definition) who will be on the project. 3.3. Recruitment strategy and Terms of Reference (ToR) for field officers. Include field team make-up (head count for each language). If a full list of field officers by name is available, it may be included. 3.4. Proposed plan for field teams' provincial and language allocations. 3.5. B-BBEE rating	15
<b>4. Competitive Financial Capability:</b> 4.1. Detailed <b>budget, specifying price</b> within the price cap of R 8 800 000 excluding VAT where applicable. 4.2. Audited financial statements for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>