

LTSM in Public Schooling Research Project

Call for Proposals

1. Introduction

This is a call for a researcher or research agency to conduct a study to better understand the policies and processes governing the selection, provision, procurement and distribution of learning and teaching support materials (LTSM) in public primary schools in South Africa, with a particular focus on the Languages subjects.

An amount of **R150,000** is available to undertake this work, which must be completed by **28 March 2027**.

2. Background

The Zenex Foundation has been supporting Language and Mathematics education to improve teaching and learning outcomes in South Africa for 30 years. Zenex has committed significant funding to resource development in the past, including lesson plans, learner workbooks and the Ulwazi Lwethu resources. Research is needed to understand how LTSM are embedded within the system, particularly the policies and processes that govern this embedding. This understanding is needed to assess the sustainability of previous investments in resource development and to identify opportunities to fund such work in future.

This study will explore LTSM provision at the policy level, from national policy through to provincial planning, procurement and distribution, and the retention and retrieval of LTSM at school level. It will indicate how literacy classrooms are currently resourced and how resource development and provision could be better supported in future. The study will be carried out in partnership with the DBE.

3. Research questions

The central aim of this research project is to understand the national and provincial policies and processes through which LTSM are selected, provided, procured and distributed to public primary schools, and the contextual factors that affect the provision, retention and retrieval of LTSM in schools.

The study seeks to answer the following research question: **What are the selection, provision, procurement and distribution policies and processes related to LTSM in public primary schools, with a particular focus on Languages subjects?**

Further sub-questions will guide the study:

- What constitutes Core LTSM, Supplementary LTSM, eLTSM and Open Educational Resources?
- What are the national policy and processes regarding the development of a National Catalogue for Core LTSM?
- How are resources selected for inclusion on the various catalogues and lists?

- What is the national norm regarding the minimum package of LTSM provided to primary schools for Languages? To what extent is the norm implemented at provincial level as prescribed?
- How is planning and procurement of LTSM managed at provincial level? What budgets are available at provincial level and how are these managed?
- Under what conditions can procurement of resources not listed on the catalogue take place? What processes are followed in this case? Or are provinces bound by the catalogue?
- What are the LTSM retention and retrieval processes at provincial and school level? When the catalogue is revised or reissued, how do provinces manage phasing out and/or replacement of existing resources within available budget allocations?

4. Scope of work

4.1 Research design

The study will be carried out through desktop research and interviews with key stakeholders, including government officials and publishers. Three provinces will be selected as case studies to elucidate the procurement and distribution processes at play in Provincial Education Departments, as well as the contextual factors that affect the provision, retention and retrieval of LTSM in schools. The choice of provinces will be agreed with Zenex and the DBE. The primary output will be a research report.

4.2 Activities and deliverables

The researcher(s) will be expected to conduct research with the following activities and deliverables as a guide:

- A clarification workshop with Zenex and the DBE, setting out the refined research design, literature search strategy and detailed workplan.
- A desktop review of national and provincial LTSM policy, guidelines, catalogues, circulars and related documentation, and of relevant literature and previous studies.
- Obtaining the necessary ethical clearance and DBE and provincial research permissions.
- Interviews with key stakeholders, including national and provincial government officials and publishers.
- Case studies of LTSM planning, procurement, distribution, retention and retrieval in three provinces.
- A draft research report for review by Zenex and the DBE, followed by a final report incorporating feedback received.
- Knowledge products for dissemination, such as a short research summary or policy brief, and a presentation of findings at a Zenex and DBE learning event (for example a seminar or roundtable).

Periodic engagement with the Project Management Team on milestones will be expected, which may be in person or virtual.

5. Application process

5.1 Submissions

Interested service providers should submit a proposal of **not more than three A4 pages** that sets out how they will undertake this work. Applicants can also collaborate with other individuals and organisations where necessary. The proposal must include:

- A brief outline of your understanding of the task

- An outline of the process and methodology that you propose
- A plan with high-level activities, period and budget. (The budget should indicate costs for different activities with travel costs specified separately, if relevant.)
- Experience and expertise of the organisation and team that will undertake the study
- List of team members (where applicable) - this includes brief CVs of the team leader and researchers
- A sample of previous work conducted that is similar to the planned work - this may include reports or tools.

5.2 Shortlisting Process

Only shortlisted organisations will be notified. Organisations can submit joint submissions or share the call with others.

The shortlisted individuals/organisations will be required to do a virtual interview on **27 October** to a panel selected by the Zenex Foundation.

All proposals and queries should be directed to Ms Catherine Langsford at catherine@zenexfoundation.org.za.

CLOSING DATE: 23 October 2026

CLOSING TIME: 16:00