REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

HWSETA hereby invites proposals from competent service providers with proven experience in research-based data collection through Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) to implement this study

EOI particulars	Submission details
Title of the EOI	Track and Trace Study of Unemployed Learners Certificated with Occupational Qualifications
Date of this EOI	03/11/2026
EOI reference number	HWSETA-26/27 EvalResearch-0008
Date and closing date	Expressions of interest must be emailed no later than [18/11/2026, 23:59] with subject line ‘‘[HWSETA-26/27 EvalResearch-0008]”
Service category	Evaluation
Attention and submission address	Expressions of interest must be received no later than **18/11/2026** to: **research@hwseta.org.za** (with attachments not exceeding 100-150 MB). Queries may be directed to research@hwseta.org.za no later than [13/11/2026].

Interested service providers must supply,

A technical proposal that responds to the provided terms of reference, including,

- Understanding of the assignment and context
- Evaluation approach, proposed methodology, data management and protection plan, as well as data analytic approach
- Composition, experience and qualification of the evaluation team
- Workplan and timelines
- Examples of previous recent and relevant evaluations
- Proven work experience in conducting similar evaluations

A financial proposal or costing including a detailed budget to implement the project.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

TRACK AND TRACE STUDY OF UNEMPLOYED PERSONS CERTIFICATED WITH OCCUPATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES AND PATHWAYS AFTER CERTIFICATION

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1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA) is central to advancing South Africa's human capital development agenda in the health and social development sectors. Operating under the Skills Development Act (No. 97 of 1998, as amended) and the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) 2030, HWSETA funds and implements programmes aimed at improving employability, occupational mobility and productivity for both unemployed and employed learners. These interventions are designed to address persistent skills shortages, to enhance labour market access for the unemployed and to support career progression for workers.

HWSETA's mandate is underpinned by the Skills Development Levies Act (No. 9 of 1999), which provides the financial basis for SETA operations, and by the SETA Grant Regulations of 2012 (as amended). The broader policy and quality assurance environment is shaped by the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2013), the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act (No. 67 of 2008) and the applicable occupational qualification and assessment arrangements. Occupational qualifications are intended to equip learners for defined occupational roles. The Employment Services Act (No. 4 of 2014) supports the broader objective of facilitating transitions into employment. The National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 and the HWSETA Sector Skills Plan (SSP) further shape strategic priorities by identifying skills shortages and occupations in high demand.

HWSETA therefore also carries a responsibility to evaluate the outcomes of these interventions. The RIME Division must ensure that all strategic outcomes in the HWSETA 2025–2030 Strategic Plan are measured during the strategic period. The data collected will support HWSETA's reporting on the number of studies completed and noted by key stakeholders. The relevant Annual Performance Plan indicator concerns the number of monitoring, evaluation and impact studies, including tracer studies, completed and noted by key stakeholders as measuring the performance of HWSETA learning programmes and projects in the reporting period. Its findings will also inform strategic review and programme improvement. To this end, HWSETA seeks to commission data collection for the Track and Trace Study of Unemployed Learners Certificated with Occupational Qualifications.

The study focuses on learners who were enrolled in Health and Social sector-related occupational qualifications developed by the HWSETA and subsequently certificated with an in-scope occupational qualification. It will contribute evidence towards the following outcome indicator:

Table 1: Outcome indicators relevant for this study

Outcome indicator	Description
6-30	Number of HWSETA learners certificated with occupational qualifications who find jobs in the strategic period.

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2. MAIN GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

This assignment covers learner tracing, contact retrieval, survey administration, quality assurance and data handover only. HWSETA will undertake the substantive analysis, interpretation and study reporting. The data collected will support outcome indicator 6-30 and examination of employment and learning pathways following certification.

Specifically, the data collected must assist HWSETA to respond to the following objectives:

1. To collect self-reported data to determine the number of eligible certificated learners who find qualifying jobs within the applicable strategic-period reporting window, as required for outcome indicator 6-30, and report the proportion among valid respondents
2. To collect data on wage employment, self-employment and other professional opportunities, time to first job and subsequent transitions after certification.
3. To collect data that assesses the nature and quality of employment obtained by certificated learners, including sector, occupation, contract type, hours, income, benefits and alignment with the qualification or skills acquired.
4. To collect data to enable HWSETA to examine pathways into further education and training, including progression to higher, same-level or related qualifications.
5. To ensure that the data provide basis for HWSETA to understand the circumstances of certificated learners who have not transitioned into employment or further study, or who have left employment, including the barriers they face, their job-search activities and support needs.

3. SPECIFIC STUDY QUESTIONS

HWSETA will use the data collected to answer the following study questions. The service provider must ensure that the approved questionnaire and data capture support these questions; substantive analysis, comparisons, interpretation and recommendations remain HWSETA's responsibility.

Table 2: Study focus areas and questions

Focus area	Study question(s)
1. Employment outcomes	a) How many eligible certificated learners found qualifying jobs, based on their self-reported employment histories? b) What proportion of valid respondents are currently employed or self-employed, and how many are also in further study? c) How long after certification did learners obtain their first job, and was it with their host employer? d) How do outcomes differ by occupational qualification, NQF level, province, gender, age, disability and certification cohort?
2. Nature and quality of employment	For those who found employment after certification: a) In which organisations, sectors and occupations are they employed (public, private or NGO; health, social development or other sectors)? b) What contracts do they hold (permanent, fixed-term, part-time or casual), and what hours do they work? c) What are their income levels, benefits and conditions of employment? d) How closely is their work aligned with their occupational qualification and acquired competencies?

Focus area	Study question(s)
3. Pathways into self-employment (exploratory)	Self-employment, informal work and casual work must be recorded separately; For those who are self-employed: a) What motivated them to pursue self-employment or entrepreneurship? b) What enterprises or services have they established, and in which sectors? c) What is their scale (turnover band, clients, employees)? d) What are their perceived prospects for growth and sustainability?
4. Unemployment and barriers to labour market entry	For those without current employment, including learners who previously found work: a) What barriers have hindered access to or retention of employment? b) What job-search strategies and employment support do they use? c) How do location, gender, disability, qualification type and sectoral demand influence outcomes? d) Which learners are seeking and available for work, and which are economically inactive?
5. Progression into further learning	For those who progressed into further studies: a) Have they advanced into qualifications at a higher, the same or a lower NQF level? b) Have they moved into a new or related field of study or occupation? c) How do these pathways contribute to employability or professional development? d) Are they combining learning with employment or self-employment?
6. Cross-cutting and strategic insights	a) To what extent did the learning and workplace exposure received align with the knowledge, practical skills and workplace experience requirements of the applicable occupational qualification curriculum, and how did reported gaps affect preparation for work and subsequent pathways? b) What enables or constrains post-certification outcomes, including workplace exposure and professional registration requirements? c) What changes to employment support, programme design and monitoring are justified?

4. SCOPE OF WORK

4.1 Study population and sampling

The study population comprises of 984 learners who were unemployed at entry and were certificated with HWSETA occupational qualification. Subsequent employment does not remove a learner from the study. The service provider must attempt every eligible record and report achieved responses honestly; a census sampling approach is expected to be utilised. Any change to the completed-survey target requires HWSETA's written agreement. At inception, HWSETA will ensure to address duplicates and learner eligibility, agree on rules for multiple qualifications, and distinguishing full occupational qualifications from part qualifications and skills programmes.

The required learner survey target is as follows:

Table 3: Study population

Programme	Completed survey target	Total target
Occupational qualifications for unemployed learners	984	984

4.2 Learner contact retrieval

HWSETA's learner database includes identity numbers for learners certificated with occupational qualifications, but contact details may be missing, outdated or incomplete. The service provider must have access to a lawful identity-number-based tracing and contact-retrieval service to obtain or update learner contact details. The proposal must identify the proposed approach, demonstrate access to it, and explain the retrieval process, identity-verification procedures and POPIA safeguards. All associated costs must be included in the quoted price. The service provider must record the source and date of retrieved details, contact attempts and tracing outcomes in the learner tracking database and disposition report. Access to identity numbers and retrieved information must be restricted to authorised personnel and managed under HWSETA's approved data-protection requirements, POPI Act regulations and retention requirements.

4.3 Data collection

Telephonic interviews must be conducted primarily telephonically using CATI, or equivalent software capable of real-time capture. SMS, WhatsApp and e-mail may support tracing and appointments; any secondary self-completion mode requires approval and equivalent consent, routing and data-quality checks. The approved core questionnaire, with any supplementary module, must include routing for current employment, former employment, self-employment, unemployment and further learning. The estimated interview length is 20–25 minutes, subject to piloting. The following minimum requirements apply:

- **Contact protocol:** at least three call attempts per learner, spread across different days of the week and times of day (including at least one evening or Saturday attempt), before a learner is classified as a non-contact.
- **Tracing:** for learners who cannot be reached, alternative approaches must be used, including SMS and WhatsApp follow-ups, e-mail, and (with HWSETA approval).
- **Disposition coding:** every record must receive a final agreed code (e.g. valid complete, partial, refused, wrong number, non-contact, deceased, ineligible, duplicate), so that response, contact and refusal rates can be calculated with explicit denominators.
- **Audio recordings:** obtain separate recording consent for interviews, label consenting recordings with a study ID and retain them under approved QA and audit arrangements. Log

unsuccessful attempts without recording third parties or non-consenting individuals. Explain available participation arrangements where recording is declined.

- **Progress tracking:** weekly reports summarising valid completions, response and contact rates by qualification and cohort, non-response, tracing actions and risks to the 984-survey target.

Any deviation from the planned methodology, or any data quality issue, must be flagged to HWSETA promptly for resolution. To ensure that results can be compared with previous HWSETA tracer evidence where appropriate, HWSETA retains ownership of the approved core questionnaire and codebook. HWSETA is responsible for the analytical design, substantive analysis and study reporting. The service provider must implement the approved data-collection design and has no ownership rights in the instruments, data or other assignment outputs.

In addition to CATI/Telephonic interviews, the service provider must conduct at least three learner focus group discussions, each focused on one selected occupational qualification, with a target of six to eight participants per group. HWSETA will select & confirm the qualifications at inception, considering cohort size, available implementation evidence and variation in delivery arrangements or post-certification outcomes. The questionnaire must include a "Consent to Contact" Question, add a checkbox asking: *"Would you be open to participating in a short, follow-up focus group discussion regarding your answers?"* Targeted email/whatsapp follow-up communication should be sent to various learners across qualifications to ensure effective coverage. Each group must include a minimum of six to eight participants.

Discussions should be held virtually or by telephone conference, including suitable mobile applications such as Whatsapp that enable audio recording. The facilitator is expected to obtain separate informed recording consent from every participant before recording. Where a participant declines recording, offer an unrecorded individual discussion captured in detailed de-identified notes and document this substitution.

HWSETA will provide qualification-specific discussion guides informed by the applicable curriculum version. Discussions must explore knowledge content received; practical tasks practised; access to equipment; required workplace tasks and exposure; supervision; gaps between institutional and workplace learning; and preparedness for assessment and occupational tasks. HWSETA will obtain and review applicable curricula, provider delivery and workplace records where available, and triangulate these with learner evidence. The service provider is responsible for qualitative recruitment, facilitation and data handover. Recruitment must be voluntary and purposive, seeking variation in provider, certification cohort and current employment status within each qualification, where feasible. Where numbers are insufficient, HWSETA must approve an alternative such as individual interviews within the agreed qualitative budget.

5. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

The Senior Evaluation and Impact Assessment Officer will coordinate communication between HWSETA, its stakeholders and appointed service provider, consolidate comments, facilitate approvals and manage quality of project delivery. Instrument approval, material scope changes, deliverable acceptance and final sign-off must be given by the HWSETA M&E Manager who is responsible for the overall quality of the reports produced and for managing the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA). The service provider remains responsible for project management and the quality of its outputs. HWSETA will make relevant documentation and administrative data available to the service provider, subject to the data protection provisions of this ToR. All intellectual property, datasets, recordings and reports produced under this assignment remain the property of HWSETA and may not be used or published by the service provider without HWSETA's written permission.

6. EXPECTED TIMEFRAME AND DELIVERABLES

The data-collection assignment will run for approximately 2 ½ months, starting in February 2027 and ending in mid-April 2027, subject to confirmation at contracting. The service provider must propose a feasible implementation plan covering inception, scripting, training, piloting, fieldwork, quality assurance and final data handover.

Table 4: Deliverables

Phase	Deliverable	Format
Inception	Approved inception report including sampling and response strategy; contact protocol; QA, ethics and data protection; risk mitigation; and detailed work plan.	MS Word
	Approved scripted questionnaire and qualification-specific focus group guides approved by HWSETA	CATI script; MS Word
Data collection	Fieldworker training report and script testing; Pilot with 99 eligible learners (10% of the 984-learner census target, rounded up). Pilot learners form part of the census; valid pilot interviews may count towards the 984 completions only where the final approved instrument and QA requirements are met. Where substantive instrument changes occur, re-interview affected pilot learners; revised tools and pilot report.	MS Word
	Atleast three virtual focus group discussions with learners across different qualification groups	MS Word / MP3 / WAV
	984 valid learner surveys, weekly progress and fieldwork progress reports; formal mid-point validation halfway through the approved fieldwork period.	MS Word / Excel
	Telephonic interview recordings; raw and cleaned data, disposition report and de-identified verbatim responses to open-ended survey questions, captured in the dataset (full interview transcription is not required); fieldwork technical report.	MP3 / WAV; Excel / CSV; MS Word
Final data handover	Final handover of raw and cleaned datasets, learner tracking and disposition database, de-identified focus group transcripts or approved individual-interview notes and consented recordings.	MS Word; MS Excel

7. COMPETENCY AND EXPERTISE REQUIREMENTS (FUNCTIONALITY)

- Proposals that meet all mandatory requirements (Section 9) will be scored against the criteria below. **A minimum of 80 out of 100 points** is required to proceed to price and specific goals. Every criterion is scored from the information in the proposal, the completed team tables and the attached documents.
- Service providers may be required to present their proposals as part of the evaluation process.
- Where Artificial Intelligence (AI) was used, service providers are required to declare; this requires a transparent disclosure of how and where AI tools were used, Annexure B.

Table 5: Functionality scoring sheet

Criterion	Scoring	Points
1. Organisational capacity (45 points)		
1.1 CATI and online survey system	Each of the following five functions scores 2 points if the proposal fully describes it, including the specific system or procedure used; otherwise, 0: • management of personal information in line with POPIA (2) • CATI system and software to be used (2) • Data storage, security and back-ups (2) • quality control process (back-checks, audio recordings and data validation) (2) • Web, SMS and WhatsApp survey capability (2)	10
1.2 Previous experience on learner tracing	**Completed telephonic interviews:** score the largest single completed learner/beneficiary tracing project evidenced in the proposal: no evidenced project = 0; 1–1,000 completed interviews = 3; more than 1,000 = 5. **Contact retrieval:** identifies an identity-number-based contact-retrieval service, provides evidence of access and explains its proposed use = 20; otherwise 0.	25
1.3 Fieldworkers / CATI operators (Table A)	At least three operators/fieldworkers listed, each speaking at least three official languages fluently and with at least three years' CATI/telephonic interviews experience. If this minimum is not met, scores 0. Scored on the weakest operator listed: • ***Languages:*** Less than 3 languages = 0 points; Speak 3 official languages or more = 5 points • ***CATI experience:*** Less than 3 years experience = 0 points; Have 3 or more years' experience = 5 points	10

Criterion	Scoring	Points
2. Experience of the project team (15 points)		
2.1 Core team (Table B)	Nominate three separate people: **project manager; CATI/telephone programmer; data manager/quality assurance specialist**. Indicate relevant experience for each role supported by the CV: no relevant experience, unsupported experience or role unfilled = **0**; three or more years = **5**. One person may not fill more than one role.	15
3. Qualifications of the project team (10 points)		
3.1 Core Team	Submit certified qualifications for at least two core team members, including the project manager. Score the lower qualification: below Bachelors = 0; Bachelor's degree = 5 Honours or higher = 10. Relevant disciplines may include: Social Science-related qualifications, Economics, Statistics, Behavioural Science, Research Psychology, Sociology, Monitoring and Evaluation, Development Studies, Organisational and Labour Studies, Public Policy or Political Science, Data Management	10
4. Organisational track record (30 points)		
4.1 Relevant assignment reference	At least one valid reference letter meeting the consolidated standard below = 15 points. A submitted reference letter that does not meet the consolidated validity requirements = 0 points	15
4.2 Large-scale learner tracing experience	At least one valid reference letter meeting the consolidated standard confirms response maximisation for a population or sample exceeding 1,000 learners or beneficiaries = 15 points; otherwise, 0 points. The same letter may support both components of the organisational track-record criterion.	15
Total	**Minimum [80]**	**100**

Qualifications: certified copies are required, with certification not older than six months. International qualifications must be verified by SAQA, with a copy of the verification letter. Missing qualifications/uncertified/older than 6months certified qualifications score 0.

Reference letters are valid only if they are on the client's letterhead, dated and signed, identifies a completed tracer study or comparable beneficiary-tracing assignment and the services provided, and state the signatory's organisation, position and contact details (including an e-mail address). HWSETA may contact referees: a letter is invalid if the referee does not respond within five working days or does not confirm it. References must be contactable and may be verified

Team tables A-C must be copied into the proposal and completed, with a CV attached for every person listed. A table that is missing or incomplete scores 0 for the related criterion. Listed team members may not be replaced after submission without HWSETA's written approval.

Table A: Fieldworkers / CATI operators (at least three)

Name and surname	Title	Official languages spoken fluently	Years of CATI experience

Name and surname	Title	Official languages spoken fluently	Years of CATI experience

Table B: Team leader and core team

Role	Name and surname	Title	Years of relevant experience on tracer studies or comparable survey assignments	Years in this role
Project manager				
CATI or telephonic interview programmer				
Data manager / quality assurance specialist				

8. PRICING

The proposed project price must be **inclusive of VAT** and must be valid for at least 90 days from the closing date.

- HWSETA may require a breakdown of rates for any priced item, and service providers are required to provide it.
- HWSETA reserves the right to negotiate the selection or prioritisation of deliverables in line with the contract price.
- Payment will be made against deliverables approved by HWSETA, in line with the payment schedule agreed at contracting.

Table 6 must be used for the quotation. Additional detail, including staff days and rates, survey unit costs and assumptions, may be provided in the service provider's own format in addition to this table. There is one core learner questionnaire for occupational qualifications. Activity amounts must exclude VAT; show the subtotal excluding VAT, VAT where applicable, and the total inclusive of VAT separately.

Table 6: Pricing schedule

Activity	Deliverable(s)	Quoted amount R excluding VAT
Inception	Inception report, cleaned database including learner contact retrieval and data-collection strategy with risk and mitigation plan	
	Programming / scripting the learner questionnaire	
Data collection	Instrument piloting and pilot report	
	Conducting 984 telephonic surveys including contact attempts, and follow-ups	

Activity	Deliverable(s)	Quoted amount R excluding VAT
	Atleast three virtual focus group discussions with learners across different qualification groups	
	Weekly progress reports; data cleaning, coding, validation and quality assurance; final fieldwork technical report; secure final handover of all datasets, codebook, logs, scripts and consented recordings	
Subtotal excluding VAT		
VAT where applicable		
TOTAL COST inclusive of all costs		

9. MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

The following documents and information must be submitted with the proposal. Proposals that do not include all mandatory documents will be disqualified and will not be evaluated for functionality.

1. Full technical proposal, including the proposed methodology, a detailed work plan aligned to the deliverables in this ToR, and the completed team tables
2. Detailed CVs of the project manager and all team members listed in the team tables
3. Company registration documents, Proof of registration on the National Treasury Central Supplier Database (CSD)
4. The service provider's business address and contact person (name, e-mail address and telephone number)
5. Certified copies of qualifications of the team members (certification not older than six months). International qualifications must be verified by SAQA, with a copy of the verification letter attached
6. At least one reference letter. A submitted letter that does not meet the consolidated validity requirements in Section 7 receives 0 points for the relevant functionality component.
7. Completed pricing schedule (Section 8)
8. Signed POPIA consent form (Annexure A)
9. AI declaration Statement (Annexure B)

ANNEXURE A: CONSENT IN TERMS OF SECTION 11 OF THE PROTECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION ACT, 2013 (POPIA)

For the Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA) to consider the applicant's response to this advertisement to become a service provider of the HWSETA, it will be necessary for the HWSETA to process certain personal information which the service provider may share with the HWSETA for the purpose of the bid.

Access to personal information and purpose specification: The HWSETA will process the service provider's personal information in accordance with its Privacy Policy, for the purposes of assessing the service provider's submission in relation to the advertised EOI and of assessing current services required by the HWSETA. The HWSETA may also share the service provider's personal information with third parties within the Republic of South Africa, including to carry out verification and background checks. The service provider acknowledges that the HWSETA's authorised verification agent(s) and service providers will access personal information and conduct background screening.

Consent: By ticking "Yes" and signing below, the service provider voluntarily consents to the HWSETA, as the Responsible Party in terms of POPIA, collecting, processing, storing and verifying its personal information for purposes related to the evaluation, adjudication and administration of this bid submission.

The service provider understands that this processing may include, where necessary, the disclosure of personal information to authorised third parties or service providers engaged by the HWSETA strictly for these purposes. The HWSETA will ensure that all personal information is processed lawfully, stored securely and used only for the purpose for which it was collected, in accordance with POPIA and the HWSETA's Privacy Policy.

The service provider acknowledges that it may withdraw its consent in writing at any time by notifying the HWSETA at research@hwseta.org.za. However, it understands that withdrawal of consent may limit the HWSETA's ability to evaluate or process the bid submission. All personal information will be retained only for as long as necessary to fulfil the purposes outlined above, and will thereafter be securely destroyed or de-identified in accordance with applicable legislation.

Yes ☐ No ☐

Supplier name	Date	Signature

ANNEXURE B: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE DECLARATION STATEMENT

Artificial Intelligence Tool: [description of tools used];
[Heading]: [description of AI use in that stage of the work/proposal]