

TENDER DESCRIPTION:	APPOINTMENT OF A RESEARCH ORGANISATION/COUNCIL OR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION TO CONDUCT A TRACER AND IMPACT STUDY FOR AGRISETA FOR A PERIOD OF SIX (06) MONTHS.
TENDER NO:	AGRISETA/2025/03
BRIEFING SESSION	26 November 2025

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

1. Question 01

I would like to confirm whether this study will be conducted as a consensus or if it will involve working with a sample.

Answer:

This is not a census; the prospective bidder will be required to work with a sample. The assignment involves conducting a tracer and impact study.

2. Question 02

With respect to the criteria for the Project Leader—specifically the requirement of having five published articles within the last five years—we meet many of the other stipulated qualifications. However, we would like to enquire whether this particular requirement may pose a challenge. We are also uncertain as to whether this could be a potential difficulty for other bidders as well.

Answer 02.

The requirement has been assigned significant weight because it represents one of the most critical components of the Terms of Reference. AgriSETA requires bidders to demonstrate proven experience in conducting tracer and impact studies, as the outcomes of this evaluation are highly important to the organisation. Consequently,

we cannot assume the risk of appointing a Project Leader who lacks the necessary expertise in evaluation studies, particularly those involving tracer and impact assessments.

For this reason, the Project Leader is required to have published articles specifically related to such evaluation studies, in order to provide AgriSETA with confidence that the study will yield the expected results. Unfortunately, if this requirement poses a challenge, it will result in forfeiture of the associated points, and only bidders who meet the criterion will proceed to submission and evaluation.

3. Question 03.

What are the sizes of the databases?

Answer:

AgriSETA supports approximately 5,000 to 9,000 beneficiaries per year. Over a five-year period, this total will naturally multiply, although it is important to note that some beneficiaries begin their programmes but do not complete them. These nuances should be taken into consideration.

Our primary focus for this study is on beneficiaries who have completed their programmes. We aim to determine whether the interventions were impactful in improving their socioeconomic status—for example, whether the training contributed to securing employment or otherwise enhancing their livelihoods.

I will provide the exact beneficiary numbers in due course. However, based on the total population over the five-year period, it is expected that the study will draw a representative sample covering all nine provinces. This is essential to ensure that the data and resulting findings are reliable, allowing us to draw meaningful conclusions.

Such credible evidence is critical for us, as programme management, to make informed decisions based on the outcomes of the tracer and impact study.

4. Question 04

The requirement of 5 published articles scoring 5 points value at 30 points and 4 or less scoring 0 points. Seems very harsh and somewhat weighted. This is not balanced with other evaluation criteria.

Answer

I am not certain how this “balances with the other evaluation criteria” means or how that conclusion was drawn. However, when the weights are totalled, they amount to the required number of points for identifying a successful service provider. This also relates to the initial question raised regarding the requirement for five published articles.

Originally, the requirement for five published articles was intended to be a mandatory criterion—meaning that bidders who did not meet it would be automatically disqualified. We later opted to structure it differently and instead use this briefing session to clarify the intent and importance of the criterion.

I would like to reiterate that the most critical aspect for AgriSETA is ensuring that the appointed service provider demonstrates the experience in conducting evaluation studies, including tracer and impact studies. This requirement has been weighted heavily because of past experience with unreliable service providers in this area. In fact, a previous service provider appointed for this type of study failed to deliver, and we are not prepared to assume such risks again.

This study is vital for our decision-making processes and, ultimately, for the overall mandate and relevance of the SETA. If SETAs cannot demonstrate impact—and cannot measure or prove it—then their purpose is fundamentally undermined. Furthermore, AgriSETA is required to report impact to the DHET, Parliament, and other oversight institutions.

For these reasons, we insist that only bidders with proven experience in evaluation studies apply. General research experience alone is insufficient, as evaluation studies—particularly tracer and impact studies—require specialised approaches and methodologies.

Therefore, if your Project Leader has five published articles within the past five years, you must submit accessible links to these publications. If this requirement is not met, unfortunately, we will not amend the criteria. As stated, this requirement could have been positioned as a mandatory criterion from the outset.

Question 05.

The requirement of 5 published articles is demanding, because while we're constantly conducting research, we do not publish because the research is proprietary

Answer

AgriSETA SCM Manager:

I would like to address the matter of the published articles, as it has been raised repeatedly. We kindly request some time to engage internally with our user department to reassess and weigh the associated risks. We do not wish to proceed with the advertisement if the criterion poses a significant challenge for the majority of the service providers present today.

We will review the issue and determine an appropriate way forward. We have all participants' contact details from the chat, and we will provide a final response in due course. The requirement may either remain unchanged or be revised; however, please note that our timelines are constrained by National Treasury legislation.

User Department:

With regard to the question of proprietary research, please note that the requirement for five published articles is linked specifically to the Project Leader. The expectation

is that the designated Project Leader possesses the necessary experience and a demonstrable record of publications.

However, in certain instances, publications may also be associated with accompany/organisation. As SETAs, we have recently begun undertaking research for publication through our research chair, where the individual researchers are listed as authors on the journal articles.

Following the compulsory briefing session, AgriSETA's Supply Chain Management (SCM) unit and the end-user department engaged further on the matter, including consulting with National Treasury for guidance. National Treasury advised that amending the criteria at this stage would create an unfair and non-transparent process, as some potential bidders may not have attended the compulsory briefing session precisely because they were unable to meet the published requirements. Adjusting the criteria after the briefing would disadvantage such bidders, compromise the integrity of the procurement process, and may result in irregular expenditure.

In line with this guidance, and to ensure fairness, transparency, and compliance with applicable SCM prescripts, the published functional criteria will remain unchanged.

Question 06

There is a section in the TOR which states that the service provider is expected to conduct interviews with key informants and focus groups. Is it mandatory to do both, or can we do one of the two?

Answer

You will be required to determine and propose the methodologies most appropriate for achieving the study objectives and addressing the research questions. If you consider focus groups to be more effective, you should clearly articulate this in your proposal, providing justification and supporting reasons. The same applies should you opt to use interviews or any other data collection method.

The methodology may consist solely of interviews, solely of focus groups, or a combination of both. Given the size of the sample, a mixed approach may, in fact, be suitable. In some cases, individual interviews may be necessary, while in others

instances it may be feasible and efficient to convene participants for a focus group session—particularly where beneficiaries can be accessed simultaneously or can be organized to meet collectively.

Regardless of the approach selected, you must provide a well-motivated rationale to substantiate your methodological choices.

Question 07.

Experience in projects undertaken should weigh more than published articles, which does not prove competency in undertaking such projects. The article's criteria eliminate all who have not done 5 articles meaning four or less. If not, then seems to be a rigged bid.

Answer:

I would like to respond to the statement that published articles do not demonstrate competence. In our view, published work does, in fact, provides clear evidence of both competence and relevant experience. Therefore, I differ with the assertion that publications do not contribute to demonstrating capability. This is precisely why they form part of the evaluation criteria.

Furthermore, the published articles are not the sole basis on which competence is assessed. We also require additional samples of previous work—such as summaries, abstracts, or completed reports—which are likewise included as part of the evaluation criteria. Taken together, these components provide a comprehensive view of the bidder's expertise and ability to undertake the required evaluation study.

Question 08

How about service providers provide proof of having successfully conducted evaluation studies than publications? Just a thought?

Answer

That is already included in the evaluation criteria 4: Project leader: Academic Qualifications & Experience of the bidding institution/ or service provider

Note to bidders regarding criteria 1: Published Articles by Project Leader: Kindly be advised that the criteria remain the same.

