REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Conduct a formative evaluation of the National Digital Ecosystem for Post -School Education and Training Project

TERMS OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND

JET Education Services (JET) and the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA) have initiated a collaborative project titled Post School Education and Training Collaboration and Learning Opportunities and Utilisation of Data (PSET CLOUD).

The purpose of the overall project is to establish an **interoperable digital ecosystem** that will strengthen, coordinate, and improve efficiencies in the governance and management of the post-school education and training (PSET) system. The main objective of the project is to ensure that **data sets are interoperable, well synchronized, and used effectively** as sources of information for planning and improving efficiency in the PSET system.

Phase 1 of the project has been completed and involved a situational analysis of the PSET sector, a mapping study, an international review of similar initiatives, and a feasibility report. A condensed and integrated version of the report titled *UNLOCKING THE POWER OF DATA: A review of the state of readiness of the Post-School Education and Training sector in South Africa for enhanced data interoperability*, will be released early September 2020 and the pre-publication draft will be made available to the chosen service provider. The report of the international review of similar initiatives is available in the public domain and can be accessed at Interoperable Data Ecosystems: An International Review to Inform a South African Innnovation.

A high-level theory of change (ToC) for this project has been developed. This ToC reflects that the project is designed to contribute to the achievement of the **impact** that will see South African citizens being able to make informed decisions that lead to employment in line with National Development Plan targets.

To make this contribution, the project seeks to influence the achievement of a **long-term outcome** where the South African PSET system is aligned to the demand and supply needs of

the labour market. The achievement of this **long-term outcome** will be supported through influencing by the achievement of following intermediate outcomes.

1. South African citizens/learners utilise real-time data to make learning and career decisions; and
2. South African PSET stakeholders utilise real-time data to develop their plans and programmes.

The **immediate outcomes** that the project seeks to deliver in the next few years are:

1. South African citizens/learners and PSET stakeholders have access to an interoperable system for data and information on PSET.
2. A PSET Cloud Minimum Viable Product (MPV) to enable interoperability is available and
3. merSETA as an early adopter has access to an ecosystem architecture that enables it to interact with, engage, and give feedback on the PSET Cloud interoperable enabling MVP.

The **assumptions** that inform the design and serve as preconditions for success and/or risks to be managed are reflected in the annexed infographic of the ToC.

Phase 2 of the project commenced in 2020 with the appointment of two service providers, one to carry out stakeholder engagement and scenario building and the other, influenced by the results of the stakeholder engagement, to develop a business case and minimum viable product for piloting/testing over the next few months.

The purpose of this RFP is to invite well experienced independent service providers to submit proposals to conduct a formative evaluation of the PSET CLOUD project that focuses on real-time feedback.

SCOPE OF WORK

The selected provider will be tasked with conducting a formative evaluation of the intervention design (intervention concepts, the robustness of the theory of change, related plans, etc) and implementation (how the intervention is being implemented, and how it can be strengthened) of the PSET CLOUD project focusing on the following evaluation criteria and key questions:

1. Relevance: To what extent is the design of the PSET CLOUD project appropriate and consistent with the PSET sector priorities and policies? To what extent have partnerships been developed with and between relevant and key stakeholders?
2. Effectiveness: To what extent have the activities and outputs of the PSET CLOUD project been effective in contributing to the likely achievement of the outcomes and impact reflected on the theory of change? What measurable progress has the project made since its inception?
3. Efficiency: To what extent has the implementation of the PSET CLOUD project been efficient with regards to (i) organisational design and applied delivery methodology, (ii) management and administration, including record keeping (ii) the readiness of

merSETA to be early adopter.

4. <u>Sustainability</u>: How sustainable is the PSET CLOUD project likely to be given the many priorities and demands in the PSET sector? What are the challenges to and opportunities for the sustainability of the PSET Cloud intervention in the medium-to-long term? Are there viable alternatives that have potential to address the interoperable principle and ensvisaged outcomes and impact of the project?

5. <u>Project governance and management</u>: Is the governance and project management appropriate for the project?

The evaluation will be conducted over three months starting in October 2020 with the final report due at the end of January 2021. It forms part of a broader longitudinal study of this project, that will culminate in a summative evaluation. The level of effort for this evaluation will not exceed 30-person-days. The evaluator will be expected to submit regular progress reports. The frequency of reporting will be agreed upon during the inception phase. Submitted proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Criterion	Weight
Organisational Capacity (Staff capacity, team composition and diversity)	10%
Mentoring and use of interns	5%
Previous experience (Evaluating innovative technology-based interventions in complex environments, Years of experience for the lead evaluator)	15%
A minimum of three references	10%
B-BBEE	10%
Price	10%
Proposal and Methodology (not exceeding 10 pages excluding CVs)	40%
Total	**100%**

ESTIMATED TIMEFRAMES

Deadline for clarification questions: 30 September 2020

Deadline for submission of proposals: 16 October 2020

Evaluation of submissions will take place by 21 October 2020

All short-listed service providers will be requested to be available to make presentations on 29 October 2020

The project will commence on 2 November 2020 and end on 28 February 2021.

RFP DISCLAIMER

1. Respondents are hereby advised that JET and merSETA are not committed to any course of action as a result of its issuance of this RFP and/or its receipt of Proposals. In particular, please note that JET/merSETA reserves the right to:

   a) modify the RFP's requirements and request Respondents to re-bid on any such changes;
   b) not necessarily accept the lowest priced Proposal;
   c) award a contract in connection with this Proposal at any time after the RFP's closing date;
   d) split the award of the contract between more than one Successful Respondent,
   e) make no award of a contract;

2. Should a contract be awarded on the strength of information furnished by the Respondent, which after conclusion of the contract, is proved to have been incorrect, JET/merSETA reserves the right to cancel the contract.

3. JET/merSETA reserves the right to undertake post-tender negotiations with selected respondents or any number of short-listed respondents.

4. Should the preferred bidder fail to sign or commence with the contract within a reasonable period after being requested to do so, JET/merSETA reserves the right to award the business to another bidder, provided that he/she is still prepared to provide the required goods or services at the quoted price.

CONTACT DETAILS

All queries should be directed to Boitumelo Manci and must be submitted via email to boitumelo@jet.org.za Responses will be provided via email.

Proposals accompanied by CVs of the proposed team members should be submitted to tenders@jet.org.za. Technical and financial proposals may be combined.