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Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority

RFQ NO: 07 - 2026/27

REQUEST FOR QUOTATIONS

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF FORENSIC INVESTIGATION FIRM TO INVESTIGATE DISCRETIONARY GRANT ADJUSTMENTS AND LIMITATION OF SCOPE

1. BACKGROUND

The Education Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA) is a public entity established in terms of Section 9(1) of the Skills Development Act, No. 97 of 1998 (as amended) to advance skills levels in accordance with the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP). The Mandate of the ETDP SETA is to promote and facilitate the development and improvement of the skills profile of the sector's workforce to benefit employers, workers and employees in the Education Training and Development sector.

The ETDP SETA identified material discrepancies relating to discretionary grant ("DG") accounting balances amounting to approximately R42 million, which resulted in a limitation of scope and audit qualification during the external audit process.

Given the seriousness of the matter, the potential financial, governance, reputational, and regulatory implications, and the need to establish accountability, the Accounting Authority resolved to appoint an independent forensic investigation service provider.

The ETDP SETA will host **Non-Compulsory** virtual briefing session for **RFQ NO: 07 - 2026/27 – Appointment of forensic investigation firm to investigate discretionary grant adjustments and limitation of scope on 02 July 2026 at 10h00 – 12h00**. Access details will be available on www.etdpseta.org.za as from **01 July 2026**. Kindly note that interested service providers may submit their questions until **03 July 2026 at 12h00**. **No further questions will be accepted after this date.** We thank you for your cooperation.

2. PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

2.1. PURPOSE OF THE INVESTIGATION

The purpose of the investigation is to gather facts and evidence required to independently determine:

1. The nature, origin, and validity of the R42 million discretionary grant adjustment;
2. Whether the balances resulted from:
 - a) legitimate system-generated accounting errors,
 - b) manual intervention,

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- c) control failures,
 - d) negligence,
 - e) financial misconduct,
 - f) fraud, corruption, maladministration or manipulation of accounting records;
- 3. Whether discretionary grant funds were properly accounted for, supported, and utilised for their intended purposes;
 - 4. The reasons supporting documentation could not be provided during the audit process;
 - 5. Whether management representations made to the auditors, governance structures and oversight bodies were accurate and supported by evidence;
 - 6. The root causes leading to the audit limitation of scope and qualification;
 - 7. Any actual or potential financial loss, irregular expenditure, fruitless and wasteful expenditure, material irregularities, fraud or misstatement;
 - 8. Appropriate corrective, disciplinary, civil recovery, governance, and criminal actions, where applicable.

2.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE INVESTIGATION

The appointed forensic investigators shall:

2.2.1. Accounting Transaction and Financial Management Investigation

Trace, Identify and Analyse all discretionary grant transactions linked to the R42 million adjustments and any other similar transactions in the previous and subsequent years;

1) Reconcile:

- a. Purchase Orders,
 - b. Invoices,
 - c. Payment Records,
 - d. Accruals,
 - e. General Ledger balances,
 - f. Supplier Statements,
 - g. Bank Records,
 - h. Grant Commitments and Related Accounting Entries;
- 2) Determine whether duplicate, unsupported, fictitious, irregular, or erroneous accounting entries were processed;
 - 3) Verify whether actual payments correspond to amounts reflected in the accounting records;
 - 4) Quantify the accurate financial exposure and determine whether balances were materially misstated.

2.2.2. System and IT Investigation

The investigators shall specifically investigate:

- 1) The alleged system-generated entries referenced by management;
- 2) The integrity and reliability of the accounting system processes;

- 3) Whether system configurations, integrations, batch processes, interfaces, or user activities caused duplicate or overstated entries;
- 4) The findings and adequacy of the Great Plains System IT investigation report;
- 5) Whether any manual overrides, unauthorised access, or manipulation occurred;
- 6) Availability and integrity of audit logs and system trails.

The investigators may utilise digital forensic techniques where necessary.

2.2.3. Audit and Governance Review

The investigation shall assess:

- 1) Why sufficient supporting documentation was unavailable during the audit processes and period;
- 2) Whether management exercised reasonable care, oversight, and financial controls;
- 3) Whether any information was withheld, omitted, misrepresented, or inadequately disclosed to auditors;
- 4) Whether prior warnings, reconciliations, audit findings, or risk indicators were ignored;
- 5) The adequacy of management's response to RFI 29 from AGSA;
- 6) Compliance with governance obligations and fiduciary responsibilities.
- 7) Any information and records have since been destroyed or erased

2.2.4. Legislative and Compliance Assessment

Assess compliance with:

- 1) The Public Finance Management Act;
- 2) National Treasury Regulations;
- 3) Applicable GRAP standards;
- 4) Supply Chain Management prescripts;
- 5) Delegations of authority;
- 6) Internal financial management policies and procedures;
- 7) Record management and document retention requirements;
- 8) Audit and risk management frameworks.

2.2.5. Fraud and Misconduct Investigation

Determine whether there is evidence of:

- 1) fraud,
- 2) corruption,
- 3) maladministration
- 4) financial misconduct,
- 5) gross negligence,
- 6) deliberate misrepresentation,
- 7) collusion,
- 8) falsification of records,
- 9) concealment of information,

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- 10) unauthorised accounting adjustments.

Identify all implicated officials, service providers, consultants, or third parties where applicable.

3. PROJECT SCOPE, REQUIREMENTS AND DELIVERABLES

The services required from Forensic Investigators are *inter alia* but not limited to the following:

3.1. SPECIFIC MATTERS TO BE INVESTIGATED

The investigation shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- 1) The origin and processing of the discretionary grant transactions giving rise to the R42 million balance for 2023/2024; 2015 to 2023 financial years;
- 2) The accounting treatment applied to discretionary grant accruals and expenditure;
- 3) The alleged duplication or overstatement of balances caused by system-generated entries;
- 4) The validity and completeness of supporting documentation;
- 5) The chronological sequence of interactions and engagements between management and auditors relating to RFI 29;
- 6) The timing and adequacy of management responses;
- 7) The role and findings of the Great Plains System investigation;
- 8) Any prior knowledge of the issue by officials or service providers;
- 9) The impact of the matter on the Entity's Annual Financial Statements and audit outcome;
- 10) Whether there was any deliberate concealment or reckless disregard of accounting irregularities.

3.2. METHODOLOGY

The service provider shall apply recognised forensic and investigative techniques and methodologies, including:

- 1) document analysis;
- 2) data analytics;
- 3) transaction tracing;
- 4) ledger reconciliations;
- 5) forensic accounting techniques;
- 6) interviews and sworn statements;
- 7) digital forensic analysis;
- 8) audit trail reconstruction;
- 9) evidence preservation and chain-of-custody procedures.

3.3. DELIVERABLES

The appointed service provider shall provide:

3.3.1. Inception Report

Within [10] working days, detailing:

- 1) investigation methodology,

- 2) scope confirmation,
- 3) resource plan,
- 4) information requirements,
- 5) timelines and risks.

3.3.2. Progress Reports

Bi-weekly or monthly reports containing:

- status and progress updates,
- preliminary findings,
- challenges encountered,
- emerging risks,
- urgent matters requiring intervention.

3.3.3. Draft, submit and present Forensic Investigation Report to the Project Leader and Governance Structures of the ETDP SETA

The draft report must include:

- 1) executive summary;
- 2) factual findings;
- 3) financial analysis;
- 4) system findings;
- 5) governance failures;
- 6) implicated parties;
- 7) legislative breaches;
- 8) root cause analysis;
- 9) quantification of losses or exposure;
- 10) recommendations.

3.3.4. Final Report

A signed final report suitable for:

- 1) disciplinary proceedings,
- 2) criminal referrals,
- 3) civil recovery,
- 4) oversight reporting,
- 5) audit committee review,
- 6) engagement with law enforcement agencies.

3.3.5. Evidentiary Bundle

A fully indexed evidence file containing:

- 1) supporting documents,

- 2) reconciliations,
- 3) interview records,
- 4) digital evidence,
- 5) system reports,
- 6) audit trails,
- 7) chain-of-custody documentation.

3.3.6. REPORTING LINES

Forensic investigators shall report directly to, as and when required:

- 1) the Accounting Authority;
- 2) and/or the Audit and Risk Committee;
- 3) and/or a Board-appointed Investigation Oversight Committee.

Officials implicated in the investigation shall not participate in oversight of the investigation.

3.4. CONFIDENTIALITY, INDEPENDENCE, AND PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE

The appointed service provider must:

- 1) maintain strict confidentiality;
- 2) declare any conflicts of interest;
- 3) Utilize the latest available technology or specialized systems to image relevant computers, interrogate ETDP SETA system, download and analyze the relevant electronic data
- 4) preserve all evidence and records;
- 5) ensure independence from implicated parties;
- 6) comply with applicable legal and professional standards.

3.5. REQUIRED EXPERIENCE

The service provider must demonstrate:

- 1) applicable forensic investigation experience within PFMA entities;
- 2) forensic accounting expertise;
- 3) public sector governance experience;
- 4) digital forensic capability;
- 5) experience involving AGSA audit findings and limitations of scope;
- 6) multidisciplinary investigative capacity.

3.6. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The investigation should enable the Entity to:

- 1) determine the true nature of the R42 million balance and other balances in terms of paragraph 3.1.1 and 4.1.1 above;
- 2) establish accountability;
- 3) address AGSA concerns;
- 4) support consequence management;
- 5) strengthen internal controls and governance;
- 6) restore confidence in the integrity of financial reporting.

- 7) post investigation, will the service provider be available to provide expert witness testimony (if required)

3.7. TIMELINES AND REPORTING MILESTONES

- 1) The forensic investigation shall commence immediately upon approval of these Terms of Reference and appointment of the investigator(s).
- 2) The investigation is expected to be completed **within 30 to 60 calendar days**, subject to the scope, complexity, and availability of evidence and relevant stakeholders.
- 3) Within ten (10) working days of commencement, the investigator shall submit an inception report outlining the investigation methodology, key activities, information requirements, and detailed project plan.
- 4) Progress reports shall be submitted to the Accounting Authority, Audit and Risk Committee, and designated oversight structures at intervals **not exceeding two (2) weeks**.
- 5) Any anticipated delays, constraints, or scope variations that may affect the completion date shall be communicated promptly, together with a revised timeline and justification.
- 6) Upon conclusion of the investigation, the investigator shall submit a draft forensic report for factual verification at least two weeks prior to final submission
- 7) Final report to be issued **within 30 to 60 calendar days** containing findings, evidence, root cause analysis, quantification of losses (where applicable), identification of responsible parties, recommendations for corrective action, disciplinary proceedings, civil recovery, criminal referral, and control enhancements.

4. COSTING MODEL (PRICING SCHEDULE)

COSTS FOR PROVISION OF FORENSIC INVESTIGATION SERVICES

THIS COSTING MODEL MUST NOT BE MODIFIED AT ALL AND IF RETYPED (FOR EACH YEAR OF SERVICE AND LEVEL OF SENIORITY FOR FORENSIC INVESTIGATORS TO BE UTILISED OR FORENSIC INVESTIGATION SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED) ALL LINE ITEMS IN ORDER AS STATED BELOW SHOULD BE INCLUDED.

SCOPE OF WORK COSTING REQUIREMENTS			
PROVINCE: HEAD OFFICE – GAUTENG			
NAME OF BIDDING ORGANISATION:			
ITEM DESCRIPTION	AVERAGE RATE PER HOUR*	AVERAGE RATE PER DAY	FLAT RATE OR RESERVED DAY FEE
Project scoping exercise			
Drafting Inception Report			
Conducting of Interviews			
Analysis of system transactions			
Analysis of manual records			
Final report and recommendations			
Presentation of report, <i>as and when required,</i> either physical or online or both			
SUB- TOTAL			
Admin Expenses (Disbursements and other incidental expenses)			
TOTAL COSTS			
ALL COSTS MUST BE INCLUSIVE OF VAT			

NAME OF BIDDER: _____

POSITION/ ROLE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

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All pricing shall be in South African Rand (ZAR).

*** EVALUATION WILL BE BASED ON THE TOTAL AVERAGE RATE PER HOUR**

5. DURATION OF THE PROJECT

The successful service provider will be required to enter a formal contract with the ETDP SETA by signing a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in line with the Government Conditions of Contract ("GCC"). The contract will become effective on the date of last signature and will be initiated through a commencement meeting between the two parties.

The duration of the contract is for a period not exceeding **six (6) months** effective from **the date of last signatory on the Service Level Agreement**.

6. METHOD OF SUBMISSION

All Documents for Stage 1 (Administrative requirements), Stage 2: Phase A (Mandatory Requirements), Stage 2: Phase B (Functionality Evaluation), and Stage 3 (Pricing & Specific Goals) must be submitted in electronic format via email to etdpsetarfq@etdpseta.org.za

There must be three folders covering the following stages:

Folder A: Stage 1: Administrative Requirements

Folder B: Stage 2: Phase A: Mandatory Requirements

: Phase B: Functionality Evaluation Requirements

Folder C: Stage 3: Price and Specific Goal

It is the responsibility of the bidder to ensure that all relevant documents are included to ensure efficient evaluation of its proposal. ETDP SETA will not take any responsibility for any missing information in the submissions.

7. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation criteria for the assessment of the proposals will be based on both qualitative and financial aspects of the proposal. Service Providers will be evaluated on functionality. The bidders that score points which equal to or exceed the minimum threshold provided on functionality will further be evaluated on price and specific goals.

The Bid documents will be evaluated individually on a score sheet, by a representative of the evaluation panel according to the evaluation criteria indicated in the Terms of Reference.

THE ETDP SETA applies the provisions of the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, ACT NO 5 OF 2000 and Preferential Procurement Regulations, 2022. The evaluation will be guided by ETDP SETA procurement policy.

7.1. STAGE 1: ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLIANCE [Folder A]

Bidders will be evaluated on the submission of the requested administrative documents. Fully completed and signed forms with witnesses' signature must be submitted and all applicable boxes be ticked.

Description	Comply/Submitted
Completion of all SBD Forms: SBD 1 - Invitation to Bid SBD 4 - Declaration of Interest	
Completion in full of the General Conditions of Contract (GCC)	
Submit a "Unique security personal identification number (PIN) issued by SARS" which the SETA will use to verify the bidder's tax matters prior to the award	

7.2. STAGE 2 – PHASE A_MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS [Folder B]

Mandatory Requirement	Method of Evaluation
7.2.1.Submission of the following documents	i. Proof of or Confirmation letter for registration with the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission ("CIPC"). ii. Proof of Key registrations required Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE), CA(SA), IT, Legal/ Company/ contract law. iii. Company Profile of Forensic Specialist Firm with Multiple disciplines.

NB: Failure to fully complete and submit any of the above-requested mandatory documents will lead to disqualification.

7.3. STAGE 2 PHASE B_FUNCTIONALITY REQUIREMENTS [Folder B]

- a. The minimum qualifying score for functionality will be **80 points** and bids that fail to achieve the minimum qualifying score will be eliminated.
- b. Only bids that achieved the minimum qualifying score/ percentage for functionality will be evaluated further in accordance with the 80/20 preference point systems prescribed in Preferential Procurement Regulations **5** and **6**.

The evaluation criteria for functionality will be as below:

NO	QUALIFYING CRITERIA FOR SHORT LISTING	Method of evaluation	POINTS
1.	Proof and experience providing forensic investigations into financial management within the public sector, and references to be provided. The maximum of three contactable references = 30 1.1. Contactable references provide signed proof on referee's company letterhead (15) 1.2. Experience in the business of providing forensic investigations into financial management in Public Sector (15) Each reference must clearly indicate: - the name of the bidder and the project - objectives of the project (nature of the project) - duration of the project and indication of satisfaction with quality of services - recommendation and confirmation of completed project(s) and - must be signed the referee NB: If any of this information is omitted/missing will lead to the reference letter(s) not allocated points.	3 Contactable references 15 2 Contactable references 10 1 Contactable reference 05 - more than 5 similar projects 15 4 similar projects 10 3 similar projects 8 2 similar projects 5 1 similar project 2	
2.	Registration and Experience of team members and CV; (Attach Qualifications and CVs of the Project Team Members) - 50 2.1. Experience of Engagement Manager or Project Manager: 5 2.2. Forensic Specialist <i>firm</i> with multi-disciplinary team of Finance, Legal, IT; 25	5 years or more = 5 - Less than 5 years = 0 - with more than 15 years of investigative experience 25 - with more than 12 years of investigative experience 20 - with more than 10 years of investigative experience 15 - with more than 8 years of investigative experience 10 - with more than 5 up to 8 years of investigative experience 5 - with less than 5 years of investigative experience 0	

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	2.3. Affiliation with the relevant professional bodies: 20 ▪ Certified CA (SA) ▪ Institute of Commercial Forensic Practitioners (ICFP) ▪ International Society of Forensic Computer Examiners or related body ▪ Legal/ Company/ contract law or related body	▪ With a team affiliated to all the above ▪ With a team not affiliated to all the above	20 0
3.	Project Plan:20 Proper plan responding to Section 3, Project Scope & Requirements	▪ Plan responding to all requirements ▪ Plan not responding to all requirements	20 0
TOTAL			100

Bidders must provide relevant documents to justify awarding the above points, and such include details of different contactable references to validate the information submitted.

Points will be awarded on a sliding scale

Please take note of the value and scoring point system of your bid.

7.4. STAGE 3 PRICING & SPECIFIC GOALS [Folder C]

PRICING SCHEDULE DOCUMENTS

- Costing Model (*Price must be final, include VAT and signed*)
- Preferential Points Claim Form in terms of the Preferential Procurement Regulations, 2022 -SBD 6.1 (*If claiming preferential points*) - *this will be used to verify points to be allocated for specific goals*

80/20 preference point system shall be applicable as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| ✓ Price | 80 |
| ✓ Allocation of specific goals | 20 |

Note:

The evaluation shall consider the top bidders with the highest total points (based on pricing and specific goals)

To facilitate a transparent selection process that allows equal opportunity to all service providers, the ETDP SETA will adhere to its policy on the appointment of service providers.

8. BID CONDITIONS

The ETDP SETA Supply Chain Management Policy will apply:

1. ETDP SETA does not bind itself to appoint a bidder with the highest points.
2. ETDP SETA reserves the right to negotiate the bidder's price.
3. ETDP SETA reserve the right to cancel the bid and not award the bid to any of the bidders.
4. Bids which are late, incomplete, unsigned **will NOT** be accepted.
5. Bidders must submit a valid certified B-BBEE Certificate from SANAS Accredited Verification Agency or issued by Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (**CIPC**) or a signed Sworn Affidavit for allocation of points for specific goals.
6. Specific goals shall not be allocated where supportive documents as stated in the bid documents are not provided as stated in the bid document.
7. Bids submitted are to hold good for a period of **90 days**.
8. Companies who bid as a joint venture must submit a **consolidated B-BBEE Verification certificate prepared for this bid only**, from **SANAS Accredited Verification Agency** to be eligible for empowerment points. Companies who form part of this joint venture **MUST** provide an accreditation certificate with relevant authority as stated in Mandatory documents.
9. Failure on the part of a bidder to submit proof of B-BBEE Status level of contributor, affidavit or a B-BBEE Certificate, together with the bid, will be interpreted to mean that points for specific goals for B-BBEE status level of contribution are not claimed.
10. Deregistered and blacklisted companies including directors/owners/individuals linked to the company will not be considered. Due diligence will be conducted with successful bidders to validate submitted information.
11. All suppliers must be registered on the Central Supplier Database. No bid shall be awarded to any supplier that is not registered on the Central Supplier Database.
12. Companies that are in the process of de-registration in the CIPC will not be considered.
13. The ETDP SETA remains the sole owner and custodian of all content, material, or any other form of development. No information of or on behalf of the ETDP SETA may be shared, during the duration or after the closing period of the project. It remains the responsibility of the appointed service provider to hand over all material to the ETDP SETA. Should a service provider wish to have the ETDP SETA as a referral, permission for this must be sought.

9. DISCLAIMER

Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (POPIA) and Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 (PAIA) Disclaimer

1. *By submitting your proposal, you grant the necessary consent as you acknowledge that:*
 - *ETDP SETA treats data it gathers and personal information it collects, holds and/or processes as private.*
2. *Therefore:*
Your right to privacy and security is very important to us. The ETDP SETA as a responsible party treats personal information of data subjects as private and confidential. To that end, we collect personal

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information for the purposes set out in this document or otherwise the specific purpose(s) communicated to you.

3. We may also use your information for a number of different purposes, for example to fulfil our legal and regulatory obligations of the SETA.
4. For more detailed information on how and why we may use your information, including the rights in relation to your personal data, and our legal grounds for collection, processing and using it, please view the ETDP SETA Protection of Personal Information Policy and Promotion of Access to Information Manual on our website: www.etdpseta.org.za "ETDP SETA PAIA Manual and POPIA Manual"

10. BID DOCUMENTS/ PROPOSAL PACKS

Bid documents for participation will be available on national treasury e-portal and our website. Documents **must** be downloaded from the ETDP SETA website: www.etdpseta.org.za , Main Menu > Supply Chain Management > Open RFQs as from **12h00** on **25 June 2026**.

All Proposals **must be Sent via email to** etdpsetarfq@etdpseta.org.za

Submissions must be sent **BEFORE** the closing date and time of **11h00** on **10 July 2026**.

No late submission will be accepted!

11. CLOSING DATE

All Proposals should reach the ETDP SETA Offices on or before **11h00** on **10 July 2026**.

12. CONTACT PERSON

NO telephonic or any other form of communication relating to this bid will be permitted with any other ETDPSETA member of staff either by Bidders (as collective bidding team or individual of the bidding team), representative of Bidders, associates of Bidders, shareholders of Bidders, other than with the named individual stated below. **ANY MEANS OF ATTEMPTING TO INFLUENCE THE ADJUDICATION PROCESS OR OUTCOMES OF THE ADJUDICATION PROCESS WILL RESULT IN IMMEDIATE DISQUALIFICATION OF THE ENTIRE BID.** All enquiries regarding this bid must be in writing only and be directed to:

Supply Chain Management: Email: Tenderers@etdpseta.org.za

Note: Struck off Legal Practitioners or Legal Practitioners not Registered on the Roll of the LPC, as well as Blacklisted companies appearing on the National Treasury database and prohibited from conducting business with public entities, will be disqualified.