DISCRETIONARY GRANTS ADVERT: CALL FOR APPLICATIONS TO PRIVATE RESEARCH ENTITIES AND PUBLIC HIGER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The Services Sector Education and Training Authority (Services SETA) invites researchers, public and private research providers, institutions, employer associations and professional bodies to partner with the Services SETA in delivering skills development research projects linked to its approved 2023/24 Research Agenda.

The application window will open on **27 November 2023** at 8:00 AM and will close on **12 January 2024** at 4:00 PM.

For detailed information please refer to our website www.servicesseta.org.za

Introduction

The Services Sector Education and Training Authority (Services SETA) invites suitably experienced private research providers, public higher education institutions and or consortia of private providers and public higher institutions, including member companies, to apply for discretionary grant funding linked to our Research Agenda.

The purpose of these grants is to fulfil the research requirements of the Services SETA, which are based on the National Development Plan (NSDP 2030), the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, and the Strategy & Planning Department's research agenda. Topic emanating from the Research Agenda earmarked for this DG Window include:

1. Services SETA Impact Evaluation Approaches and Outcomes: To Evaluate Strategies adopted by SETAs to reflect on their performance.
2. SETAs approaches to create value for, attract and retain employer members and critical stakeholders: To develop a framework for SETA to effectively and meaningfully engage employers and other key stakeholders.
3. Alignment of SSP Frameworks with the industry's future skills needs in preparation for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR): To investigate the extent to which the framework assists alignment of SSP to industry skills needs and the impact measurement.
4. The size and economic contribution of cleaning, hiring and personal care informal sector and skills development interventions pertinent to the sector: To understand the size and economic contribution of cleaning, hiring and personal care subsectors.

For the 2023/24 period, topics were identified through stakeholder engagements with chamber committees representing industry, labour, government and the non-profit sector as well as the Accounting Authority and Executive Management of the Services SETA. This window prioritises research projects covering five topics of interest outlined in the table below.

A brief outline of each research topic is provided below. Specifications for each project are in the scope of the work document under each topic. In addition, please refer to Annexures 1- 4 obtainable on this website address website www.servicesseta.org.za

NO.	Proposed Research Topic/Area	Background	High-Level Aim/Objectives	Detailed Specifications
1.	Services SETA Impact Evaluation Approaches and Outcomes	Evaluating learning programmes by SETAs is a critical function that ensures the quality and relevance of skills development in South Africa. The evaluation approaches, and outcomes vary depending on the type of learning programme and the scope. The evaluation outcomes provide feedback and evidence for improving the quality and effectiveness of learning programmes and informing policy and planning decisions for skills development. SETAs must develop appropriate and customized approaches to monitoring and evaluating skills development interventions in line their strategic, NSDP2030 and NDP203 outcomes.	• To identify and suggest strategies and approaches to evaluate impact. • To evaluate strategies adopted by SETAs to reflect on their performance. • To identify areas that require improvements. • Recommend appropriate and customized monitoring and evaluation approaches.	• **Specifications 1**
2.	SETAs approaches to create value for, attract and retain employer members and critical stakeholders.	One of the main challenges for SETAs is ensuring they have a solid and diverse membership base that reflects the needs and interests of the sectors they represent. To achieve this, SETAs must adopt effective strategies for attracting and retaining employer members and key stakeholders, such as industry associations, trade unions, government agencies, and education providers.	• To identify and recommend strategies to create stakeholder value. • To evaluate strategies SETA, apply to attract and retain stakeholders. • To determine suitable strategies for SETA to attract and retain stakeholders. • Compile a comprehensive stakeholder mapping for the Services SETA • To develop a framework for SETA to effectively and meaningfully engage employers	• **Specifications 2**

NO.	Proposed Research Topic/Area	Background	High-Level Aim/Objectives	Detailed Specifications
3.	Alignment of SSP Frameworks with the industry's future skills needs in preparation for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)	The SSP Frameworks are designed to align with various industries' current and future needs. Therefore, re-aligning the current SSP framework to industry needs in response to changes in the country and the economy is essential to ensure the continued effectiveness of the SSP framework in response to industry needs.	• To investigate the extent to which the framework assists alignment of SSP to industry skills needs and the impact measurement. • Determine the current alignment of the SSP framework to industry needs. • Recommend areas of improvement to strengthen alignment	• **Specifications 3**
4.	The size and economic contribution of cleaning, hiring and personal care informal sector and skills development interventions pertinent to the sector.	The cleaning, hiring and personal care services sub-sectors are generally small in size and requires dedicated focus to help grow and create sustainable jobs. These subsectors rely heavily on informal workers who provide low-cost and flexible labour. The precarious nature of jobs in these sectors exposure workers to poor working conditions, low productivity, and lack of social protection. Therefore, it is essential to understand the dynamics of the informal sector and its implications for the subsectors in the cleaning, hiring, and personal care services chambers to support both employers and employees.	• To understand the size and economic contribution of cleaning, hiring and personal care subsectors • Investigate working conditions of employers in these subsectors • Recommend suitable interventions to support employers and employees to grow the SME sector in these industries • Recommend appropriate skills development interventions to upskills low-level workers	• **Specifications 4**

Who can apply?

All private research providers and public HEIs with the requisite capacity and good standing legally may therefore apply for this discretionary grant funding.

Requirements

A proposal that includes the following minimum elements. Failure to comply may lead to disqualification:

a) Understanding of the research and the specifications (background to the research, rationale, purpose, objectives).
b) Approach, design and methodology for the research (e.g., literature and documentation review, data collection tools, sample, suggestions for elaboration or changes to scope and methodology as outlined in the project specifications, examples of research questions suggested, process elements).
c) Activity-based plan (including the number of person days per activity and time frame linked to activities).
d) Activity-based budget (in South African Rand, including VAT).
e) Competence (include a list of related projects undertaken of main contractor and subcontractors, making clear who did what, and contact people for references);
f) Team (team members, roles and level of effort of each person involved in the project).
g) Quality assurance plan (to ensure that the process and products are of good quality).
h) Research policy nexus (indicate how the research findings can be engaged with to promote utilisation.
i) Risk and quality assurance plan for the research study (to ensure that the process and products of this study are of good quality).

Application process

In order to be considered for this Discretionary Grant, the following mandatory supporting documents need to be submitted on the online portal. Failure to do so may lead to immediate disqualification.

- Valid Tax Clearance or Exemption Certificate
- Company Registration Documents
- Declaration of Interest (Form 1a)
- Declaration of Authorised Person (Form 1b)
- POPIA Declaration Form (Form 2)
- Detailed Proposal/s with budget
- BBBEE Certificate
- References for related research undertaken by the service providers
- CVs of key personnel

Evaluation criteria

The evaluation of the applications will follow the following process:

- Stage 1- Submission through a dedicated email address below.
- Stage 2 – Compliance and evaluation – evaluation of mandatory documentation submitted through a dedicated email address below.
- Stage 3 – Due diligence – Applicants that go through to this stage may be requested to present the submitted proposal to a Service SETA evaluation committee.

Submissions

Applications must be submitted through this email address: research2023@serviceseta.org.za

Queries and challenges

Queries to be directed to:

Manager Research and Impact Assessment: Ms Lizzie Mabotja

Helpdesk email to: research2023@serviceseta.org.za

Telephone: 011 276 9747