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Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**Request for proposals for an Impact Study of the
Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI) in the
Basic Education Sector: Basic Education Employment
Initiative (BEEI)**

**Issued by:
Department of Basic Education (DBE)**

Date: 16 April 2021

Re-issued: 17 June 2021

Submission deadline: 10 July 2021



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1. Introduction

Government is implementing an Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP), part of which involves an employment stimulus to create jobs and support livelihoods. The recovery and reconstruction strategy thus places jobs at its centre. Through a largescale employment stimulus, the plan aims to respond to the immediate economic impact of COVID-19, **propelling job creation and expanding support for vulnerable households**. The Presidential Employment Stimulus (PES) is one of eight priority interventions for economic recovery, outlined in the ERRP. It targets creating and supporting over 800 000 employment opportunities through public and social employment, to respond to job losses in the aftermath of COVID-19¹.

In response to the crisis of high levels of youth unemployment, exacerbated by COVID-19, the Department of Basic Education, in collaboration with Provincial Education Departments, implemented the Basic Education Employment Initiative (BEEI). The PYEI-BEEI is a flagship initiative, which gives effect to a component of the PES that targets creating and supporting over 800 000 employment opportunities. Through the PYEI-BEEI, more than 300 000 employment opportunities were created for youth in South Africa, between 1 December 2020 and 31 March 2021. The initiative was extended for a period of a month, until 30 April 2021. The youth are placed in public schools across all the nine provinces.

As part of measures to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa, Government enforced a national lockdown effective from the end of March 2020. As part of the lockdown, on 23 March 2020 schools were closed. The initial three-week period was eventually extended to 15 September 2020, with different 'levels' of lockdown regulating the kinds of restrictions placed on people's movement and activity². Subsequently, due to the resurgence of infections (2nd Wave) in December 2020, the reopening of schools for the 2021 academic year was delayed to 15 February 2021. This has led to a significant loss of learning and teaching time. According to a report by Nic Spaull and Servaas van der Berg, depending on the grade of a child, by the end of Term 2 (7th of August 2020), South African children will have lost between 25% and 57% of the 'normal' school days scheduled up to that point as a result of COVID-19 school closures³.

¹ Building a new economy: Highlights of the Reconstruction and Recovery Plan. The Presidency, 2020

² Ursula Hoadley, Schools in the Time of COVID-19: Impacts of the Pandemic on Curriculum. Research on Socio Economic Policy, 2020.

³ Counting the Cost: COVID-19 school closures in South Africa & its impact on children. Spaull and van der Berg, June 2020



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In addition to providing employment opportunities for youth in South Africa, the PYEI-BEEI sought to address some of the lingering systemic challenges, which were noticeable pre-COVID. In this context, the objectives of the Initiative, are to achieve the following:

- a. To provide capacity to schools to manage the impact of COVID-19 on schooling, whilst supporting the Basic Education Sector as it repositions and re-imagines the future beyond COVID-19;
- b. To ensure that school infrastructure is maintained through the provision of General School Assistants (GSAs); and
- c. To support the saving of School Governing Body (SGB) funded posts at fee-paying schools and posts at Government subsidised independent schools.

To enhance the implementation of the PYEI-BEEI, an inventory of training programmes was designed to guide the roll-out of training in five key areas:

- a. Curriculum
- b. Psychosocial support (Child and Youth Care Workers – CYCW)
- c. Reading Champions
- d. ICT (eCadres)
- e. Infrastructure Brigades (Handymen)

The implementation of the PYEI-BEEI provides an opportunity for the Basic Education Sector to make an assessment of the possibility of introducing paraprofessionals in South African schools to support teaching and learning processes, and to consider the impact of such an undertaking. This speaks particularly to Education Assistants (EAs), whose roles included to:

- a. support the teacher with technical preparation of the classroom for teaching and learning and ensure that teaching materials are available and ready for use.
- b. oversee learners to ensure social distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in and out of the classroom settings such as in the library, laboratory, and school events and during lunch breaks.
- c. provide after school support to learners, such as homework classes, sports events, cultural activities and school trips.

EAs also assisted the teachers in maintaining order and discipline in the classroom as well as supporting learners during lessons. They also assisted teachers with administrative tasks, thus allowing teachers to focus most of their attention on teaching and learning.

The South African Council for Educators (SACE), in collaboration with the Department of Basic Education (DBE), wishes to appoint a service provider to undertake an impact study of the PYEI-BEEI. The impact study should focus on the value derived at the school level, by learners; teachers and principals and at the community level. With the PYEI-BEEI being part of the ERRP, the study should also have a focus on the impact of the initiative on the Assistants (EAs and GSAs), including at a



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personal level, in their households and community. This Request for Proposals (RFP) describes the scope and basic requirements of the study.

2. Background: PYEI-BEEI Design

The PYEI-BEEI was implemented from 1 December 2020 to 30 April 2021 in public schools across the nine (9) provinces. An implementation framework (Annexure A) was developed to guide implementation by provinces and ensure uniformity. An inventory of training programmes (Annexure B) was also developed to ensure that there was skills transfer for the assistants. This also provided a list of priority training programmes, linked to certain sector priorities. In addition to the five training initiatives, schools were required to ensure that all assistants received orientation and were trained in the National School Safety Framework (NSSF) and the Standard Operating Procedures for COVID-19. Implementation of the orientation programme, Curriculum and Reading Champions Programmes involved a cascading training model, where officials at provincial, district, circuit and school levels were trained.

3. Purpose and Objectives

The objectives of this impact study is to:

- 3.1 to gather data through an independent study of the changes that can be attributed to the PYEI-BEEI initiative;
- 3.2 understand whether the PYEI-BEEI contributed meaningfully to achieve the intended outcomes; and
- 3.3 to inform future programmes in order to make impact on these outcomes more likely.

The purpose of the impact study is to:

- a) Document the theory of change underlying the PYEI-BEEI and make an assessment of how strong this theory of change is;
- b) Provide an indication of whether or not the PYEI-BEEI was able to achieve the intended **intermediate outcomes**, for example:
 - (i) reducing administrative burden on teachers, create grounds to introduce paraprofessionals in schools;
 - (ii) Intermediate outcomes related to each of the main areas of the PYEI-BEEI should be considered: classroom management, lesson preparation, reading, infrastructure maintenance, learner attendance among the vulnerable groups and ICT integration in the classroom);
 - (iii) improve implementation of school infrastructure maintenance; clean, safe environment; adherence to COVID-19 protocols;
 - (iv) ignite a reading culture in schools;



- (v) provide administrative support to schools; improved use of ICT infrastructure and resources; and
 - (vi) improve attendance among the vulnerable learners through the provisioning of psychosocial support – limit the risk of drop out.
- c) Make recommendations about how future similar initiatives can be used to improve future similar initiatives.
 - d) Provide an understanding of how the interventions affected the assistants (EAs and GSAs), schools, principals, teachers, classrooms, learners, and community;
 - e) To make an evaluation of how the experiences of appointing Education Assistants could inform the deployment of paraprofessionals in the schooling system and the kind of training that would be appropriate for the paraprofessionals;
 - f) To provide a qualitative analysis of the data collected throughout the project; that is placement data, and data collected through various monitoring and support exercises; and
 - g) Make recommendations about how project implementation can be improved in future support programmes so as to be more likely to positively impact on the intended outcomes.

4. Evaluation questions

Below are a proposed set of questions to guide the impact study processes. The appointed service provider may further interrogate these questions and others may be included if agreed on by both parties.

The following set of questions are proposed to be answered:

- 4.1 Is the PYEI-BEEI theory of change likely to lead to the anticipated results?
 - a. Is there a coherent theory of change underpinning the PYEI-BEEI project as a whole?
 - b. To what extent did key stakeholders in the project have a shared understanding of the programme purpose and theory of change?
 - c. What are the different elements in the interventions which are influencing change?
 - d. How is each of these elements expected to change and improve classroom practice?
 - e. How different are the shifts in these elements compared to current practice?
 - f. What are the main cost drivers in the PYEI-BEEI design?
 - g. Were sufficient resources allocated to implement the PYEI-BEEI?
 - h. What are the key impediments to achieving the intended outcomes of the PYEI-BEEI?
- 4.2 How relevant, effective and efficient were the PYEI-BEEI interventions?
 - a. How effectively have the PYEI-BEEI interventions managed to support teaching and learning?
 - b. How effectively have the PYEI-BEEI interventions managed to support the maintenance of an environment conducive to teaching and learning?



- c. What evidence is there of learners benefitting from the presence of EAs, and what are the attitudes and experiences of the learners regarding the EAs?
- d. What evidence is there of teachers benefitting from the presence of EAs, and what are the attitudes and experiences regarding the EAs?
- e. What evidence is there of schools benefitting from the presence of GSAs, and what are the attitudes and experiences regarding the GSAs?
- f. What are the attitudes and experiences of the Assistants (EAs and GSAs) regarding the quality of their work experiences (Paid on time? Mentored? Respected? Clear tasks? Feedback on tasks? Ability to grow?)
- g. What are the attitudes and experiences of the Assistants (EAs and GSAs) regarding the induction, mentoring, and training provided to them as part of the PYEI-BEEI?
- h. What changes has the PYEI-BEEI brought in the lives of the Assistants (EAs and GSAs)? (mental wellness, self-esteem, respect in household and community, soft skills, Engagement in community activity /volunteering before and after
- i. Which teaching practices have changed because of the PYEI-BEEI, and to what degree have these changed – specific to the deployment of eCadres?
- j. What were the actual costs of the PYEI-BEEI project, disaggregated into the main elements? How did this compare to what was planned?
- k. Did the PYEI-BEEI project achieve good value for money?
- l. Were there any changes in the community, what was the community impact if any?
- m. How was the process managed at Special Schools?
- n. Was the communication and advocacy strategy effective at all levels?
- o. Did any of the EAs feel interested in pursuing a career in teaching after being involved in the programme?
- p. Did all EAs and GSAs receive training and was the training adequate?
- q. Did they feel adequately trained and confident to go about their duties?
- r. Did the DBE, PED, District School provide adequate support?
- s. Would they participate in a similar programme in future and why?

5. Methodology

The appointed service provider is requested to propose a robust and detailed study design and methodology for a qualitative impact study. The service provider must clearly indicate a suitable method on how the evaluation study will be done.

5.1 The service provider must provide sufficient details on:

- 5.1.1 **Desk Review** – The service provider will undertake a comprehensive desk review of all design and implementation documents as well as the involvement of a panel of experts



and PYEI-BEEI stakeholders to establish the underlying theory of change and critical assumptions, and provide an assessment of the degree to which the design is likely to lead to the anticipated results.

- 5.1.2 **An expert material review** to assess the relevance, appropriateness and quality of materials provided through PYEI-BEEI.
- 5.1.3 **Analysis of monitoring data generated by the DBE.** The appointed service provider will be invited to make recommendations about exactly what monitoring information the DBE should submit. The service provider should conduct analysis of such data and integrate this into the final report, after completion of subsequent phases of the PYEI-BEEI initiative.
- 5.1.4 **Field visits and case studies:** The service provider should undertake field visits to a sufficient number of schools (at least 1 per Quintile and at least one special school) in Limpopo and Gauteng provinces. At least five case studies, limited to one per province, should be undertaken.

The field visit and case study will be critical for both collecting data and to build good understanding of the PYEI-BEEI beneficiaries, geographical coverage disparities and risks related to implementation in an authentic setting.

- 5.1.5 **Interviews:** The service provider should interview principals, teachers, SGB members and Education and General School Assistants in the schools identified in 5.1.4. The interviews will enhance understanding from the perspective of those involved and how they have benefited from the PYEI-BEEI initiative.

6. Project plan

The appointed service provider should be able to articulate the impact study plan from inception to close-out. Various phases of the study should be indicated in the proposal and timelines must be attached to each phase.

7. Deliverables - with timelines

All deliverables submitted will be subject to scrutiny by the Project Management Team and approval will only be granted if the deliverables are of the requisite quality. Thus, the finalisation of deliverables may entail several revisions based on feedback provided. Feedback on the submitted deliverables will be completed within 10 working days after receipt, except for the final report. The feedback may either be the approval of deliverables or a revision request.



No.	Deliverable	Timeframe	Payment proportion
1.	Inception report (essentially a revised proposal based on updates and discussions with Project Management Team)	15 working days after appointment	20%
2.	Workshop on Theory of Change	30 working days after appointment	20%
3.	Updated Theory of Change for PYEI-BEEI, Draft instruments for interviews and case studies, draft impact study presentation and Progress report on fieldwork, interviews and other activities	18 August 2021	20%
4.	Draft impact study report	9 September 2021	20%
5.	Final impact study report	30 September 2021	20%
TOTAL			100%

8. Experience and expertise required

8.1 Mandatory requirements:

- (i) The prospective service provider should have the capacity and resources to implement the impact study.

8.2 The prospective service provider should have expert (or demonstrable working) knowledge of the following:

- (i) Expertise and experience in conducting evaluations, preferably focused on the education sector;
- (ii) Knowledge of impact evaluations will be considered an added advantage;
- (iii) Knowledge of teaching and learning in public schools;
- (iv) MS Office suite with a demonstrated ability to work in and with digital files.
- (v) Experience in developing instruments for data collection, preferably applied to the education sector;
- (vi) Preference will be given to experienced researchers at the advanced PhD /post-PhD level with a proven record of conducting independent qualitative research in schools.

Full team member CVs of the core team are to be attached.



9. Roles and responsibilities

The DBE, has implemented the PYEI-BEEI, in collaboration with Provincial Education Departments. Implementation of the PYEI-BEEI is at the school level, i.e. assistants are employed by schools.

The contract will be signed between the **SACE** and the appointed service provider, with payments made by SACE upon the approval of deliverables by the Project Management Team.

The PYEI-BEEI M&E Task Team will act as the **Project Management Team** to oversee and manage the work of the service provider. The Project Management Team will be responsible for on-going feedback to the service provider, quality assurance, and managing and approving deliverables.

10. Cost – price cap

Bidders are requested to submit a detailed budget for the impact study of the PYEI-BEEI.

11. Contract award criteria

The suitability of proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria:

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<p><u>Evaluation and research competencies</u></p> <p>Evaluation methods (20)</p> <p>1. Description or documentary evidence of designing and conducting evaluations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No evidence is provided (0) – Some evidence is provided, such as a report or reference letter from a previous evaluation. However, there are gaps or limitations in the team’s experience in evaluation: Examples of such gaps include the lack of evaluation experience in the education sector, or evidence submitted indicates low quality of work done (10) – A high level of knowledge and experience is demonstrated by a clear understanding of the evaluation methodologies and issues as they pertain to this project and by providing evidence of in-depth previous experience; There is at least some evaluation experience specific to the education sector. (20) <p>Instrument design (10)</p> <p>2. Description or documentary evidence of designing questionnaires or other data collection instruments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No evidence is provided (0) – Some evidence is provided, such as previously used questionnaires that were designed by team members or a description of the questionnaires and the project in which they were used. However, there are gaps or limitations in the team’s experience in questionnaire design: Examples of such gaps include the lack of questionnaire design experience in the education sector, or evidence submitted indicates low quality of work done (e.g. errors or poorly designed questionnaire format) (5) – A high level of knowledge and experience is demonstrated by a clear understanding of the relevant questionnaire design issues as they pertain to this project and by providing



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<p>evidence of in-depth previous experience; There is at least some experience specific to the education sector. (10)</p> <p><u>Expertise on teaching and learning in public schools (20)</u></p> <p>3. Documentary evidence of knowledge of teaching and learning in South African public schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No documentary evidence is provided to demonstrate experience or expertise of the team members regarding teaching and learning in South African public schools (0) – Some evidence is provided to demonstrate experience of the team members regarding teaching and learning in South African public schools. However, there are gaps or limitations in the team’s experience. Examples of such gaps include no team members with more than 5 years of experience in the education sector, or a narrow focus on only certain aspects of schooling, or evidence submitted indicates low quality of work done (10) – Evidence is provided to indicate substantial experience of the team members regarding teaching and learning in South African public schools (examples provided of work done by team members such as reports or published articles demonstrate high quality of work. (20)
<p>Project Plan (20)</p> <p>4. A project plan must detail how all activities, timeframes and deliverables will be completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No project plan is submitted (0) – A project plan is provided and may have sub-activities listed, but important details are lacking or the plan is not realistic. Deliverables and successful indicators, risks and contingencies as well as timeframes are not clearly documented. (10) – A comprehensive and innovative project plan is provided, which indicates the relationships between relevant activities, timeframes and deliverables at an appropriate level of detail – the project plan should also be plausible (realistic and effective to achieve the project’s aims at a sufficient quality). All activities are suitably sequenced with detailed sub-activities listed, deliverables and successful indicators, risks and contingencies as well as realistic timeframes for all phases are clearly documented. (20) <p>Personnel (20)</p> <p>5. Curriculum Vitaes of the lead project personnel. At the minimum this should include project manager(s), fieldwork manager(s), evaluation expert(s) and education expert(s). It is possible for team members to fulfil more than one function, or for a slightly different division of tasks or naming of project positions, but this should be explained so that it is clear that the various functions referred to here are covered. The CVs must specify qualifications and experience. Two contactable references are required for each lead project personnel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No Curriculum Vitaes or contactable references of the lead project personnel are provided (0) – Curriculum Vitaes of some of the lead project personnel are provided, but there are significant gaps, e.g. key project roles have not been allocated, contactable references



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<p>have not been provided, or the Curriculum Vitae indicate that proposed personnel are severely lacking in the appropriate expertise to fulfil the roles assigned to them (8)</p> <p>– Curriculum Vitae of all the lead project personnel are provided, all relevant details have been provided, and the Curriculum Vitae indicate that proposed personnel are adequately equipped with the appropriate expertise to fulfil the roles assigned to them. (15)</p> <p>- Curriculum Vitae of all the lead project personnel are provided, all relevant details have been provided, and the Curriculum Vitae indicate that proposed personnel are highly equipped with the appropriate expertise to fulfil the roles assigned to them. Note that the lead evaluation expert(s) and lead education expert(s) should have a minimum of a Masters Degree in a relevant discipline (Education or other Social Science), and to score a maximum score should have at least 5 years of relevant experience. (20)</p>
<p>Quality control and risk mitigation (10)</p> <p>6. Quality control plan</p> <p>– No quality control plan is submitted (0)</p> <p>– A quality control plan is provided, but important details are lacking or the plan is not realistic (5)</p> <p>– A comprehensive quality control plan is provided, which shows familiarity with the various processes involved in the project, such as data collection, analysis and report writing, and how to assure quality in each process (10)</p>
<p>TOTAL: 100</p>

12. Bid closing date

All proposals should be sent electronically to Maje.L@dbe.gov.za and Maponya.T@dbe.gov.za at DBE by **10 July 2021**.

13. Enquiries

Enquiries should be directed to Maje.L@dbe.gov.za and Maponya.T@dbe.gov.za at DBE.