EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Appointment of a Panel of Experts to Support Water and Sanitation Research, Development and Innovation Projects

Background

The Water Research Commission (WRC) is a national entity established in terms of the Water Research Act (Act No 34 of 1971), to coordinate and fund water research in South Africa. The WRC, pursues these functions through its Research, Development and Innovation key strategic focus areas, sector advisory programmes, and accelerator programmes like SASTEP and WADER, that provide technical and commercialization support to transitioning water and sanitation innovations to the market. The appointed panel of experts will provide specialist advisory, technical, and implementation support for specialized water and sanitation initiatives of the WRC, as and when required. This is to enable the timely execution of priority interventions and rapid response to emerging and urgent water sector challenges. The WRC's accelerator programmes provide funding to innovators and technology partners to conduct the demonstration and field-testing of their innovations/technologies as well as facilitating access to appropriate testbed sites in municipalities, water boards and other relevant site. The experts will play a key role in supporting these programmes, by providing specialist expertise in technology assessment, product development, field-testing, demonstration and validation, regulatory compliance, commercialisation, business development, and stakeholder engagement to accelerate the transition of water and sanitation innovations from research to sustainable market adoption. The purpose of the field-testing and demonstration is to evaluate and validate the functionality, performance, and user acceptance of the innovation. To ensure the accuracy and veracity of the outcomes, independent technology evaluators are required to assess these criteria during the field-testing and demonstration period.

The WRC, through these programmes and various key strategic focus areas, also deal with barriers that may hinder uptake post successful demonstration by providing support which includes initiating research studies to identify and address policy, regulatory, economic, governance, capacity, financial, institutional, social and political barriers that may undermine or prejudice the adoption of successfully demonstrated innovations in the water and sanitation sector. Other support includes assisting innovators with developing and refining bankable business plans, creating business and revenue models and other commercialization and industrialization support as well as social development studies (user surveys, etc..). These activities often require reliable and relevant data, which are not freely available or open source, hence there is a need to establish a panel of experts who can be agile in conducting research, data analysis and offer necessary support and advisory to enable successfully demonstrated innovations to be taken up by the sector. We are seeking water and sanitation experts and RDI experts to provide advisory and support on strategic and emergency matters.

To enhance the WRC's organisational agility in responding to emerging water and sanitation challenges and opportunities, and facilitate water and sanitation innovation demonstration evaluations as well as support post successful demonstration, the WRC is inviting applications from suitable candidates to be included in a panel of experts for a 3-year period to provide a range of support functions, including technical and regulatory/policy evaluations, market and economic research/studies, business support, social development studies, capacity development and knowledge transfer, monitoring and evaluation, water governance and water economics.

Disciplines and Areas of Expertise

The panel of experts may consist of, but is not limited to, specialists in the following disciplines:

- Engineering
- Environmental Science
- Water Resources and Hydrology
- Aquatic Science and Ecology
- Economics, Business Development, Commercialisation and Innovation Management
- Social Sciences
- Public Health
- Water Quality
- Ecotoxicology
- Political Science
- Policy sciences (policy analysis, policy implementation research, and monitoring and evaluation)
- Water and Environmental Law
- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Civil Society Organisations and Community Facilitation practitioners
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Digital Water Technologies, Data Science and Artificial Intelligence

The panel of experts will support water and sanitation projects in the following areas:

- Sanitation technology and services delivery
- Membrane technologies and advanced water treatment
- Water conservation and demand management
- Drinking water supply, treatment and water quality management
- Water and wastewater management (including water reuse and resource recovery, sludge management, mining-influenced & industrial water management)
- Water resources and water quality management
- Wetland management and restoration
- Agricultural water management
- Integrated resource management (water-energy-food (WEF) nexus)
- Ecological infrastructure and nature based solutions
- Engineered water infrastructure (such as dams and reservoirs, treatment plants, pipelines and distribution networks, sewer systems, pump stations, stormwater drainage systems, etc) and asset management
- Digital water technologies, smart water systems, Water ICT Applications, artificial intelligence and decision-support systems
- Climate resilience, water security and adaptation initiatives
- Social innovations
- Groundwater systems
- Water Services Innovations
- Water remediation
- Greywater and Rainwater technologies
- Storm water technologies
- Water projects implemented in schools and communities
- Water governance
- Water economics

Panel Composition and Scope of Services

A minimum of three (3) experts will be included in the pool for each category listed above and applicants are welcome to indicate multiple areas of expertise. Applicants should also indicate the services they are qualified to provide within each category. The services may include one or more of the following:

- Technical and scientific evaluations
- Regulatory and policy evaluations
- Market and economic research
- Business development, commercialisation, investment readiness, and innovation support
- Social development studies, stakeholder engagement and community participation
- Water governance and institutional development
- Capacity development, knowledge transfer, and technical training
- Monitoring, evaluation, and impact assessments

Universities with postdoctoral students are encouraged to apply but please note that these projects have a short turnaround time of 6 to 12 months generally. There will be a budget cap of R500 000 for projects/studies with duration of 0-6 months and the budget cap can be up to 1million for projects/studies with duration of 6-12 months.

Submission

All applicants are requested to provide the following for consideration:

1. Complete the attached form

2. Submit the following:

   i. Proof of Supplier Registration on National Treasury Central Supplier Database (CSD). NB: Suppliers need to be registered with CSD to be considered further, if not registered, please visit the National Treasury website to register, https://secure.csd.gov.za/.

   ii. Valid B-BBEE status level verification certificate or BEE Sworn Affidavit.

   ii. SARS Tax Compliance verification letter with PIN.

   iii. Company Registration Certificate.

Evaluation of proposals received

PHASE 1: FUNCTIONAL / TECHNICAL EVALUATION

Received proposals shall be evaluated using the below technical / functional evaluation criteria. Bidders must achieve 75% per the criteria below to be considered for the next phase of the evaluation. Bidders who fail to comply with the set minimum threshold of 75% per the requirements below **WILL** be eliminated and bidders who comply with the below will progress to the next stage of evaluation.

Bidders must obtain a minimum score of **75/100 (75%)** to proceed to Phase 2.

Evaluation Criteria	Weight	Evidence Required
1. Technical Ability: Methodology and Report Template	40	Detailed methodology and sample report template/table of contents
2. Previous Water and Sanitation RDI Experience	30	Project references, appointment letters, completion certificates, client reference letters, project summaries
3. Experience and Qualifications of Key Personnel	30	CVs of key personnel and qualifications
Total	**100**	

1. Technical Ability Based on Methodology and Report Template (40 Points)

Evidence Required

- Detailed methodology for each service offering.
- Sample report template or detailed table of contents.
- Description of approach, tools, quality assurance and deliverables.

Rating	Criteria	Points
Excellent = 5	Methodology is comprehensive, demonstrates clear understanding of water and sanitation RDI environment, includes data collection methods, stakeholder engagement, evaluation framework, quality assurance and detailed report structure.	31-40
Good = 4	Methodology addresses most requirements with a logical approach and adequate report structure.	26-30
Satisfactory = 3	Methodology addresses requirements but lacks detail in some critical areas.	16-25
Poor = 2	Methodology is generic, lacks clear approach and report framework.	1-15
Non-responsive = 1	No methodology or report template submitted.	0

Sub-Criteria Allocation

Sub-Criteria	Points
Understanding of assignment and objectives	10
Methodological approach and implementation plan	10

RDI evaluation approach and quality assurance measures	15
Report structure/template suitability	5
Total	40

2. Previous Water and Sanitation RDI Experience (30 Points)

Evidence Required

- Company profile.
- Relevant project experience lists.
- Reference letters (at least 2 or more).
- Appointment/contract letters.
- Completion certificates or reports.

Only projects completed within the last **10 years** will be considered.

Relevant Water and Sanitation RDI Experience	**Points**
10 or more relevant projects	25
7 - 9 relevant projects	20
4 - 6 relevant projects	15
2 - 3 relevant projects	10
1 relevant project	5
No relevant experience provided	0

Definition of Relevant Experience

Projects involving:

- Sanitation technology and services delivery
- Membrane technologies and advanced water treatment
- Water conservation and demand management
- Drinking water supply, treatment and water quality management
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3. Experience and Qualifications of Key Personnel (30 Points)

Evidence Required

- Detailed CVs.
- Qualifications.
- Professional registrations (where applicable).
- Description of role within proposed services.

Key Personnel Qualification (10 Points)

Highest Relevant Qualification	**Points**
PhD/Doctorate relevant to proposed discipline	10
Master's Degree relevant to proposed discipline	8
Honours/Postgraduate Diploma	5
Bachelor's Degree	3
Lower qualification	0

Relevant Professional Experience (20 Points)

Experience in Water, Sanitation and RDI Projects	**Points**
More than 15 years	20
10 - 15 years	15
5 - 9 years	10
3 - 4 years	5

Less than 3 years	2
No relevant experience	0

PHASE 2: PRICE AND SPECIFIC GOALS (20 POINTS)

Only bidders meeting the minimum functional threshold proceed to this phase.

Criteria	**Points**
Price	80
Specific Goals	20
Total	100

PRICING SCHEDULE

1. Schedule of Cost

Bidders are required to submit a schedule of rates applicable to the services they intend to provide under this panel arrangement.

The rates submitted will be used for evaluation purposes and may be applied when requesting quotations for specific assignments during the tenure of the panel. The WRC reserves the right to negotiate rates prior to the award of any assignment.

All rates must be quoted in South African Rand (ZAR) and must be inclusive of all applicable costs..

Table 1: Professional Personnel Rates - Indicative Average Hourly Rate for Evaluation Purposes

For price evaluation purposes, bidders are required to calculate an average hourly rate based on the personnel categories proposed.

Personnel Category	**Hourly Rate (Incl. VAT – All inclusive)**
Principal Expert / Team Leader	
Senior Specialist	
Specialist / Consultant	
Research Associate	
Junior Researcher / Analyst	
Technical Assistant / Field Technician	
Other	

AVERAGE HOURLY RATE (TO BE USED FOR EVALUATION)	

Table 2: Other Direct Costs

Where applicable, bidders should indicate the rates applicable to other costs that may form part of an assignment.

Other Direct Costs	**Cost (Incl. VAT – All inclusive)**

2. Pricing Assumptions

Bidders shall clearly indicate:

1. Any assumptions upon which the rates are based.
2. Escalation rates applicable over the three-year panel period.
3. Any discounts applicable for long-term or recurring assignments.
4. Any minimum charge-out hours per assignment.
5. Costs that are included in the hourly rates.
6. Costs that will be treated as reimbursable expenses.

3. Declaration

The rates provided shall remain valid for a period of at least 120 days from the closing date of this Request for Proposal and shall be subject to negotiation prior to the award of any specific assignment.

4. Evaluation Approach for Price

Price will be evaluated using the weighted average hourly rate submitted in Table 1. The average hourly rate will be calculated by summing all proposed personnel hourly rates and dividing by the number of personnel categories priced.

SPECIFIC GOALS (20 POINTS)

Category	**Points**
30% or more ownership by Women	8
30% or more ownership by Youth	6

30% or more ownership by Persons with Disabilities	6
Total	20

Required Evidence

- Valid B-BBEE Certificate or Sworn Affidavit.
- CIPC documents.
- Identity documents where applicable.
- Supporting ownership verification documents.

FORMATION OF PANEL OF EXPERTS

Bidders that achieve the minimum technical threshold and comply with mandatory requirements may be appointed to the Panel of Experts. Appointment to the panel does not guarantee any work. Assignments will be allocated on an as-and-when-required basis, taking into account the bidder's area of expertise **(all experts assigned to a specific category of expertise will be invited to submit a proposal with costing when a Terms of Reference (ToR) for a project in that specific field is released for the purpose of identifying the best suited panel expert to be appointed for the project intended)**, availability, performance, and agreed rates.

To create fair opportunities within their specific categories, the WRC reserves the right not to invite the last appointed expert with the purpose of affording equal opportunities for all experts appointed to the panel.

Closing Date

All applications must be submitted electronically on Monday, 30 November 2026, closing time: 23:59 to Mr Alpheus Sebolaaneng - alpheuss@wrc.org.za

Any technical queries should be directed to WADER Programme Manager, Dr Manjusha Sunil at manjushas@wrc.org.za