



CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

FOR A PROJECT EXECUTANT TO

SET UP PILOTS FOR WORKPLACE BASED UPSKILLING IN THE BIODIVERSITY SECTOR

CLOSING DATE: 31 AUGUST 2011

1. BIODIVERSITY HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY BACKGROUND

The need to strategically and comprehensively strengthen and diversify South Africa's biodiversity human capital is indicated in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP 2005) and the National Biodiversity Framework (NBF 2007). According to the NBF, South Africa's biodiversity sector is far from representative of the South African population due to past inequalities. Another challenge highlighted in the framework is the shortage of skilled conservation managers and professionals - an issue that is holding the sector back.

Our biodiversity, albeit being globally unique, provides an important basis for economic growth and development, particularly for the poor and marginalised.

There are major pressures on South Africa's biodiversity directly and indirectly through higher level skills shortages. It is for this reason The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and the Lewis Foundation have taken the ambitious decision to co-lead a process to achieve this in conjunction with the sector. The programme's strategy development was initiated in 2008, and its project and activity implementation kicked off in 2010.

The [Biodiversity Human Capital Development Strategy](#) (BHCDs) works towards a sector that is socially equitable¹ and has a suitably skilled workforce of biodiversity leaders, professionals and technicians to optimally implement the sector's expanding, dynamic and increasingly complex mandate. Its focus is on higher level skills in biodiversity research, management and conservation.

The strategy has four inter-related strategic goals which are:

- **Strategic Goal 1: Attraction & Access**
Promote biodiversity skills primarily but not exclusively among black youth in South Africa.

¹ In this strategic vision a socially equitable workforce is one in which discrimination on the base of the social classifications of gender and race has been eradicated, so that the workforce is representative of society at large.

- **Strategic Goal 2: Skilling and Upskilling**
Improve the quality and relevance of skills produced for the sector.
Focus: Employees, training providers, higher education learners
- **Strategic Goal 3: Retention**
Improve the retention and effective deployment of skilled individuals in the sector.
- **Strategic Goal 4: Enabling conditions**
Create enabling conditions for biodiversity skills planning, development and evaluation.

3. PROJECT PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

The project's purpose is to address a two-fold need for improving the skills of technicians and professionals currently employed in biodiversity organisations, and improving organisations' ability to provide relevant and effective training to employees. It supports strategic goal two of the BHCDS which focuses on improving the quality and relevance of skills produced for the sector. This need arises from the following findings and sector positions:

- "The sector is experiencing a decline in qualification levels. In 2000, 40% of biodiversity professionals had a post-graduate qualification. By 2007 the portion of professional staff with a post-graduate qualification had reduced to only 34%. Although employers indicate a preference for graduates (e.g. B.Tech. and B.Sc.) and post-graduates, the dominant qualification in the sector is a national diploma. Increasingly, staff are being employed with no post-matric qualification; this group more than doubled from 2000-2007, and includes 10% of managers. **Based on an analysis of qualifications at various occupational levels, it is estimated that more than 30% of people working in the biodiversity sector are not qualified to take on the responsibilities for which they have been appointed**"²;
- Once biodiversity professionals are employed, training can and must continue, given the need to develop an understanding of workplace specific institutional and governance issues. as well as of geographical and ecosystem specific issues (where applicable) and of ongoing developments in the field, which is currently very dynamic. The HSRC³ reports that each occupation requires a particular skill level that is measurable, including:
 - A certain level or amount of formal education and/or training (for instance a M.Sc at entry level)
 - An amount of previous experience in a related occupation; and
 - An amount of on-the-job training.
- The lack of skills in existing staff in the biodiversity sector often refer more to **within-occupation critical skill⁴ deficits rather than entire occupations**. For example, one of the key challenges raised during the HSRC's fieldwork related to the lack of project management

² Vass J, Roodt J, Wildschut A, Bantwini B and Reddy V. 2009. *Guidelines towards a Human Capital Development Strategy for Biodiversity Conservation Sector*. HSRC, Pretoria.

³ Based on the Department of Labour's *Draft Framework for Identifying and Monitoring Scarce and Critical Skills (2007)*.

⁴ Critical skills include key or generic skills (e.g. writing) or top-up skills that are specific to an occupation that may be new to an occupation flowing from recent changes or requirements (as cited in Department of Labour's *Draft Framework for Identifying and Monitoring Scarce and Critical Skills (2007)*).

and financial skills among conservation managers. Interventions to deal with critical or within-occupational skills gap may include long-term developmental programmes as well as in-house or sector-based short skills upgrading courses to deal with specific skills gaps. These courses may be developed and offered from within the sector or by partner training providers². The HSRC further reports that the culture of in-house training has by and large been eroded in many organisations in recent years.

- Organisations in the environmental sector broadly spend a considerable amount of funding on employee training per annum, however the training provided/offered is often ineffective in better equipping staff to carry out their responsibilities. Staff reported that training tends to be 'menu driven', rather than needs driven; that training offered is most often in generic skills, even when specific environmental skills needs have been identified; and when courses are relevant, the quality of training provided may be inadequate. Another significant issue is the time staff have available for training, given that many organisations are under-staffed⁵.

Given the above, the BHCD Programme has prioritized the need for a project to pilot examples or models of job-related upskilling that would be realistic, relevant and effective in addressing skills needs among current employees in the biodiversity sector. Lessons learnt can then be shared with other organisations, and if deemed necessary, built into a larger-scale workplace-based upskilling initiative in one or more organisations in the sector.

This project is closely aligned to strategic goal three of the BHCDS which focuses on improving the retention and effective deployment of suitable individuals in the sector. An Organisational Development (OD) and Human Resources Development (HRD) Network was constituted to strengthen institutions' capacity to better support its staff and create the organisational conditions in which they are willing and able to apply their skills. This Network can provide a valuable context and contacts for conceptualizing and implementing this project. For more information see <http://www.skillsforbiodiversity.org.za/projects/human-resources-and-organisation-development-network/environmental-network-for-organisational-and-human-resource-development>.

4. PROJECT TERMS OF REFERENCE

The specific tasks for this Call for Expressions of Interest relate to Phase 1 of the overall project. The terms of reference for Phase 1 are to:

- Explore the concept and models/approaches of workplace based upskilling;⁶
- Engage with organizations in the biodiversity sector to identify workplace skills needs and to obtain their commitment for piloting and/or implementing such initiatives in the future; and
- Conceptualise and plan the piloting of workplace based upskilling for at least three organizations in the biodiversity sector.

Phase 2 of the project will be managed separately. It is envisaged to include:

- Implementing the pilots of workplace based upskilling;

⁵ Environmental Sector Skills Plan (2010)- <http://www.skillsforbiodiversity.org.za/resources-1/strategies-1/environmental-sector-skills-plan-and-hcd-strategy>

⁶ Within and outside of biodiversity sector examples can be sourced.

- Refining or revising concepts and implementation plans based on insights gained from pilots; and
- Rolling out workplace based upskilling in the broader biodiversity sector.

5. PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND MILESTONES FOR PHASE 1

- Suggested description(s) of workplace based upskilling
- Examples and review of various models/approaches for workplace based upskilling
- A list of organizations⁷ who have agreed to participate in this workplace-based up-skilling initiative
- A list of workplace skills needs in these organisations with justifications
- Concept document, programme plan and funding proposal for at least three upskilling pilots, developed in partnership with BHCD programme staff and organisational partners.

6. PROJECT MANAGEMENT FOR PHASE 1

- An initial meeting with the Biodiversity HCD team by end September 2011, to finalise the project plan and timeframes
- Progress reports after each milestone submitted to the BHCD Programme Director
- Expenditure reports submitted to the BHCD Programme Director (submission schedule to be negotiated)
- Regular meetings (via remote communication modes) with the BHCD Programme Director throughout project implementation
- Close liaison with the OD and HRD Network Project Executant throughout project implementation
- Draft report submitted two weeks prior to project completion and final report submitted at project completion to the BHCD Programme Director

7. REFERENCES AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION (available on request from the BHCD Programme Director)

- The Biodiversity HCD Strategy
- Guidelines for a Human Capital Development Strategy in the Biodiversity Conservation Sector, Vass *et al*, 2009, HSRC
- Environmental Sector Skills Plan, 2010
- Vocational /Further Education and Training for the Workplace. Quality Considerations for the Workplace. Rosenberg and Burt, 2009
- C.A.P.E. Capacity Development Completion Report, Raven (in draft)

8. EXPRESSION OF INTERESTS: SUBMISSION ELIGIBILITY AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The project executant must be based in South Africa. She/he must have:

- An understanding of workplace based upskilling;
- Experience with the biodiversity-related work of the organisations in the sector; and

⁷ With contact details

- Contacts and familiarity with the sector in order to attract participation from organisations.

The following selection criteria shall apply:

CRITERIA	WEIGHTING
Relevant experience and expertise of the project executants	15%
Proposed approach and methodology employed in conducting the project	30 %
Feasibility and appropriateness of project plan	30%
Appropriateness of proposed budget	15%
Equity status of project executants	10 %

9. EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST: SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Interested parties are invited to submit proposals (not exceeding five pages of substantive content and three pages of biographic data) by e-mail to Ms Renee Le Roux (r.leroux@sanbi.org.za) by **31 AUGUST 2011**. Submissions should include the following:

- *Curriculum vitae* of the project executant (not more than three pages);
- Outline of project proposal not exceeding five pages including
 - approach and methodology to be used
 - itemised budget with justification for amounts requested (see *Budget and Timelines*)
 - project plan and timeframes for the various project stages until delivery of the final report on the mutually agreed date; and
- Letter of endorsement by the delegated authority of the project executant's organization should he/she be employed.

10. PROJECT BUDGET AND TIMELINES FOR PHASE 1

- Interested parties are invited to propose a budget to include the following expenses:
 - Project executant's time; and
 - Operational costs (costs for IT hardware equipment purchase shall not be allowed).
- The project duration shall not extend beyond 31 January 2012
- Start date: As soon as possible but not later than end September 2011

11. PROJECT CONTRACTUAL DETAILS FOR PHASE 1

The Lewis Foundation will enter into a contract with the successful project executant or her/his employing institution. The following conditions shall apply:

- Invoices will be paid for deliverables received. No upfront payments will be made;
- The Lewis Foundation will pay for the satisfactory completion of work within 30 days of submission of invoices; and
- Intellectual property and copyright will be negotiated.

12. RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

The Lewis Foundation reserves the right not to award the project to any of the submissions as well as to renegotiate the project award with the preferred applicant.

13. ENQUIRIES

Enquiries can be directed to:

Ms Renee Le Roux

Programme Director: Human Capital Development for the Biodiversity Sector

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