

Terms of Reference: Appointment of Registered Credit Bureau Services for SASSA Income Testing for a period of five (5) years

*[paying the right social grant, to the right person,
at the right time and place. NJALO!]*

#SASSACARES

Toll free: 0800 60 10 11
www.sassa.gov.za

 SASSA News  @OfficialSASSA



CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	3
2. OBJECTIVES OF THE BID	3
3. ENVISAGED CONTRACT DURATION	3
4. SCOPE OF SERVICES AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS.....	4
5. DELIVERABLES SCHEDULE.....	6
6. KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS.....	9
7. PRICING.....	9
8. BID EVALUATION CRITERIA.....	9
9. STAGE TWO: PHASE 1 - PRICE & SPECIFIC GOALS	13
10. BID ENQUIRIES AND NON-COMPULSORY BRIEFING SESSION.....	14
11. BID SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS.....	14
12. BID CONDITIONS.....	15

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) is mandated to provide effective social security services to eligible beneficiaries, including the administration and payment of social grants to children, older persons, and people with disabilities. In fulfilling this constitutional mandate, SASSA is required to verify the financial circumstances of grant applicants and existing beneficiaries to ensure that social grants are paid to the right individuals who meet the eligibility criteria as prescribed by legislation. Paying a client who has income is a risk to SASSA on its own.

The verification of financial circumstances is a critical component of SASSA's grant administration process, enabling the Agency to make informed decisions regarding grant eligibility, prevent fraudulent applications, and ensure the efficient allocation of public resources. To achieve this objective, SASSA requires the services of registered credit bureaux that can provide comprehensive, accurate, and timely credit information in compliance with the National Credit Act 34 of 2005 (NCA), the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (POPIA), and associated regulations.

This Terms of Reference document sets out the requirements for the appointment of credit bureau service provider(s) for a period of Five years, with services to be rendered in accordance with applicable legislative and regulatory frameworks governing the credit industry in South Africa.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE BID

The primary objective of this bid is to appoint one or more Credit bureau registered with the National Credit Regulator (NCR) to provide credit information services for the verification of beneficiaries' financial circumstances in support of SASSA's grant eligibility verification and determination processes. The successful bidder must deliver comprehensive credit bureau services through two distinct operational modalities.

- First, API-based real-time verification services must be provided to support day-to-day new client onboarding processes, enabling immediate credit information retrieval during application processing. The service provider(s) must have the technical capacity and infrastructure to handle substantial transaction volumes, with an estimated monthly volume of 250,000 transactional tests and this volume may increase on a month-to-month basis subject to social grants service demands or regulatory changes.
- Second, batch processing capabilities must be available for once-off assessments of the identified population to be re-tested, facilitating periodic verification exercises across SASSA's prioritized transactions. The frequency of this batch processing shall be determined by SASSA and communicated to the successful bidder(s) minimum will be two tests in a year. The volumes associated with this batch shall not be less than 3 million a year, and the volumes could increase but such increase is not guaranteed.

3. ENVISAGED CONTRACT DURATION

The contract shall be for a period of five (5) years from the date of appointment. Throughout the contract period, the successful bidder(s) shall render services in full and continuous compliance with all applicable legislative and regulatory requirements, including but not limited to the following:

- The National Credit Act, 34 of 2005, as amended;
- Regulation 19(13) issued by the National Credit Regulator

- The Protection of Personal Information Act, 4 of 2013 (POPIA) and its associated regulations.

The service provider(s) must:

- Maintain ongoing compliance with all statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements for the duration of the contract; and
- Demonstrate the capacity to adapt to and implement any legislative, regulatory, or policy amendments introduced during the contract period, without disruption to their service obligations in terms of this bid.

4. SCOPE OF SERVICES AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The successful bidder(s) shall provide comprehensive, secure, and scalable credit-bureau services to assist SASSA in verifying the financial circumstances of social grant applicants and existing beneficiaries across all SASSA access channels. The services must be delivered in full compliance with applicable legislative, regulatory, and policy frameworks.

The scope of services shall include, but shall not be limited to, the verification and assessment of income and financial means through multi-source data analysis. At a minimum but not limited to credit information, asset ownership, financing arrangements, business and commercial interests, lifestyle and expenditure indicators, and employment-related signals. The services must enable SASSA to identify potential non-disclosure, misrepresentation, or material changes in financial circumstances that may affect the continued eligibility for the identified population.

Bidder(s) must demonstrate the ability to deliver services through two primary service-delivery modes, namely:

- Secure, API-based real-time verification services to support day-to-day decision making by SASSA;
- Batch-processing services to support once-off batch assessments of large-scale verification of population determined by SASSA – this shall occur at minimum bi-annual.

Real-Time API Verification - Secure API integration with industry-standard response times, scalable support for concurrent requests, and full audit logging and traceability, to be further defined in the SLA.		
Service Component	Description	Technical / Functional Requirement
Income and Credit Verification	Test and detect formal and informal income streams, credit exposure, repayment behavior, and potential indicators of undisclosed income sources.	Use of authorised credit data sources; compliance with NCR data standards; data quality controls.
Asset and Financing Verification	Verification of active vehicle finance, home-loan and property financing, and other asset-related financial obligations.	Integration with relevant credit and finance datasets; consistent data matching and validation rules.

ToR: Appointment of Registered Credit Bureau Services for SASSA Income Testing for a period of five (5) years

Business and Commercial Interests	Identification of registered businesses, directorships, shareholding, and indicators of active commercial activity.	Linkage to business and commercial data sources.
Lifestyle and Expenditure Analysis	Analysis of expenditure and lifestyle indicators that may suggest undisclosed income levels. For example, but not limited to Schools attendance of the kids, home steads or rentals etc.	Analytical models and trend analysis; clear interpretation notes for operational use.
Reporting and Outputs	Provision of structured and data-driven analytical reports to enable effective decision-making, facilitate referrals, and support audit and investigative functions.	Standardized, audit-ready reports; secure delivery; reconciliation summaries.
Batch Processing Services (Bi-Annual) - Secure bulk-data ingestion and processing; encryption in transit and at rest; reconciliation and exception reporting. Large-scale verification of the existing grant beneficiary population for periodic compliance, risk, or review exercises.		
Income and Credit Verification	Test and detect formal and informal income streams, credit exposure, repayment behavior, and potential indicators of undisclosed income sources.	Use of authorised credit data sources; compliance with NCR data standards; data quality controls.
Asset and Financing Verification	Verification of active vehicle finance, home-loan and property financing, and other asset-related financial obligations.	Integration with relevant credit and finance datasets; consistent data matching and validation rules.
Business and Commercial Interests	Identification of registered businesses, directorships, shareholding, and indicators of active commercial activity.	Linkage to business and commercial data sources.
Lifestyle and Expenditure Analysis	Analysis of expenditure and lifestyle indicators that may suggest undisclosed income levels. For example, but not limited to Schools attendance of the kids, home steads or rentals etc.	Analytical models and trend analysis; clear interpretation notes for operational use.
Reporting and Outputs	Provision of structured and data-driven analytical reports to enable effective decision-making, facilitate referrals, and support audit and investigative functions.	Standardized, audit-ready reports; secure delivery; reconciliation summaries.
NB: All the above service components should have a depiction of the source of income and the related values where such is applicable depending on the service component.		

5. DELIVERABLES SCHEDULE

Deliverable	Description	Operational Service Requirements and specification	Service elements
Real-Time API Verification	Active API configurations shall be implemented in line with the agreed standards between the Parties, utilizing either SOAP (Simple Object Access Protocol) or REST (Representational State Transfer) frameworks, as mutually determined. Processing must be secured through encryption in transit and at rest, supported by audit logs, reconciliation procedures and exception reporting to ensure integrity and accountability.	- Receive a data string from SASSA in real time and provide an immediate response in line with the defined service elements. - Provide an illustrative user interface where real-time API responses include on-screen, clickable indicators, enabling selected staff to drill down into material financial risks within the transaction context through single or multiple record searches.	Service elements shall be delivered in real time through income and credit verification, asset and financing validation, business and commercial interest assessment, lifestyle and expenditure analysis, and associated testing.
Batch Processing verification	Batch transfers shall be executed in accordance with the agreed standards between the Parties, using SFTP. All bulk-data ingestion and processing must be secured through encryption in transit and at rest, supported by audit logs, reconciliation procedures and exception reporting to ensure integrity and accountability.	- Batch Transfer Protocol – All batch transfers must be executed via SFTP in line with agreed standards. - Data Security – Bulk data ingestion and processing must use encryption both in transit and at rest. Audit & Monitoring – Comprehensive audit logs must be maintained to track all activities. - Integrity Controls – Reconciliation procedures and exception reporting must be implemented to ensure accountability.	Service elements shall be delivered in real time through income and credit verification, asset and financing validation, business and commercial interest assessment, lifestyle and expenditure analysis, and associated testing

ToR: Appointment of Registered Credit Bureau Services for SASSA Income Testing for a period of five (5) years

Detailed Reports and outputs	Detailed reports and outputs to support agency decision-making, inclusive of source of income and related values where applicable to service components.	Provide consolidated outputs covering income, assets, business interests, and lifestyle risk indicators.	Detailed reports and outputs to support agency decision-making, inclusive of source of income and related values where applicable to service components.
User Interface (UI)	The service must provide a secure, intuitive, and accessible interface exclusively for designated staff to validate financial information. It should incorporate structured checks, clear navigation, and support tools to minimize errors, while ensuring full audit trail visibility to strengthen compliance, accountability, and integrity in income testing processes. Additionally, the interface must enable identified staff to print or download the validation outcomes when required.	- Secure Staff Interface – Provide an intuitive, accessible platform exclusively for designated staff to validate financial, spending, and lifestyle information. - Error Control & Compliance – Incorporate structured checks, clear navigation, support tools, and full audit trail visibility to ensure accuracy, accountability, and integrity. - Outcome Management – Enable identified staff to print or download assessment outcomes as required for operational efficiency and reliable record-keeping.	The service will deliver a secure, role-based interface for designated staff to assess income, spending, and lifestyle information. It will feature structured checks, clear navigation, and support tools to reduce errors, while maintaining full audit trail visibility, reconciliation logs, and exception reporting to ensure compliance and accountability. Staff will also be able to generate, print, or download assessment outcomes, supporting efficient operations, reliable record-keeping, and integrity in the income testing process.
System reliability and contingency plan	Provide a System Reliability and Contingency Plan demonstrating how the solution will maintain stable and continuous operation under normal operating conditions and minor disruptions. The plan must include: - Measures to ensure high availability and system stability - Failover mechanisms, redundancy, and load balancing	The solution must ensure stable and continuous operation under normal conditions and minor disruptions by implementing measures for high availability and system stability. It must include failover mechanisms, redundancy, and load balancing to maintain performance, as well as procedures for handling partial failures or component-level outages. The system should provide clear processes for maintaining service	Robust access to redundant infrastructure, automated failover protocols, and load balancing across critical components to prevent downtime. Continuous monitoring tools with real-time alerts to detect anomalies early.

	• Handling of partial failures or component-level outages • Procedures for maintaining service continuity during system degradation • Monitoring and alerting mechanisms for early detection of issues.	continuity during degradation and incorporate monitoring and alerting mechanisms for early detection and resolution of issues.	
Business continuity and Disaster Recovery plan	Demonstrate the existence of a formally documented and tested Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and Disaster Recovery (DR) capability to ensure service restoration in the event of major disruption or catastrophic system failure. The submission must include: a. Documented Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and Disaster Recovery procedures b. Defined Recovery Time Objectives (RTO) and Recovery Point Objectives (RPO) c. Evidence of periodic testing and validation of recovery processes d. Capability to restore services following: ✓ Infrastructure failure ✓ Cyber incidents ✓ Data loss or corruption e. Designated recovery sites or environments.	The solution must provide a formally documented high level Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and Disaster Recovery (DR) capability to restore services during major disruptions or catastrophic failures. It must define Recovery Time Objectives (RTO) and Recovery Point Objectives (RPO), include evidence of regular testing, and ensure the ability to recover from infrastructure failures, cyber incidents, or data loss/corruption.	Key service elements will include accessible BCP and DR documentation, clearly defined RTO and RPO targets, and periodic testing to validate recovery readiness. The solution must provide mechanisms to restore services after infrastructure breakdowns, cyber threats, or data corruption, supported by recovery sites or environments.
Integration risk management plan	Submit a detailed Integration Risk Management Plan outlining how risks associated with system integration and API-based connectivity will	Define risk assessment, mitigation, and escalation procedures, while ensuring integration activities do not compromise stability, security, or performance. A documented plan to	The plan must ensure risks in system integration and API connectivity are proactively identified and managed through clear mitigation and resolution protocols. It should include ongoing

	be proactively identified, managed, and resolved.	proactively identify, manage, and resolve risks tied to system integration and API connectivity.	monitoring for early issue detection, periodic validation of processes, and well-defined escalation paths.
--	---	--	--

6. KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

The bidder must:

- 6.1 Have at least a minimum of four (4) years' experience in rendering services similar to those outlined in this bid.
- 6.2 Submit contactable reference letters as proof of previously completed work and relevant organisational experience.
- 6.2.1 SASSA will contact clients previously serviced by the bidder(s) in past projects to verify the scope and quality of services rendered, as well as any related details. Accordingly, bidders must ensure that their consent letters explicitly include authorization for such client verification.

7. PRICING

- 7.1. Bidders are required to confirm the basis and context of their pricing proposals by clearly specifying and costing all applicable components as set out in **ANNEXURE A** of the Terms of Reference attached.
- 7.2. Bidders must submit pricing based on a transparent, pay-as-you-use (per transaction) model, structured on a tiered (sliding scale) basis, whereby the unit cost per transaction decreases as transaction volumes increase.

8. BID EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 8.1. The evaluation process will be carried out in terms of the two (2) stages below.
- 8.2. The bid proposals shall be evaluated in accordance with the 80/20 principle. The evaluation shall be conducted as follows:

STAGE ONE: Mandatory Requirements, Administrative Compliance & Functionality Evaluation

- ✓ **Phase One: Mandatory Requirements**
- ✓ **Phase Two: Administrative Compliance**
- ✓ **Phase Three: Functionality Evaluation**
- ✓ **NB: Only service providers who make it to Phase three (3) will be allowed to Demo their proposed solutions**

8.3. Phase One: Mandatory Requirements

- The bidder must be duly registered as a credit bureau with the National Credit Regulator (NCR) in terms of Section 43 of the National Credit Act, 2005 (Act No. 34 of 2005). Proof of registration, in the form of a valid certificate to be submitted with the bid.

NB: SASSA will verify the information provided and failure to meet the above mandatory requirement will invalidate the bid.

8.4. Phase Two - Administrative Compliance

The bidder to submit the following:

- ✓ Valid Tax Compliance Status Pin (SARS).
- ✓ Proof of registration with Central Supplier Database (CSD)
- ✓ Fully completed and signed Standard Bidding Documents (SBD's).
- ✓ A consent letter authorising SASSA to verify all information provided in this bid.

NB: Failure to submit the above-required documentation may result in your proposal being disqualified.

8.5. Phase Three: Functionality Evaluation

An assessment of Functionality will be based on the evaluation criteria noted in the table below. Each of the evaluation criteria will carry a weighting as indicated, and the bidder will be required to score a minimum of 70 points out of the 100 points for Functionality to qualify and proceed to the next stage of the evaluation process.

- Bidders shall be required, as part of the evaluation process, to present and demonstrate their proposed solutions to enable the Agency to assess their capability to deliver in accordance with the specified scope of work and deliverables.
- The demonstration must be supported by verifiable case studies or references of similar implementations, particularly those involving the use of the South African 13-digit identity number as a unique identifier. The Agency reserves the right to validate such implementations through further technical assessment or reference checks.

The criteria below will be evaluated according to the following values.

Values: 1= Poor; 2=Average; 3= Good; 4 = Very good; 5= Excellent

Evaluation Criteria	Scoring	Weighted Score
SCOPE OF WORK / SERVICE CAPABILITY REQUIREMENTS		
Bidders must submit a concise proposal demonstrating their capability to conduct the following testing and verification: - Income and Credit Verification - Asset and Financing Verification - Business and Commercial Interests Verification - Lifestyle and Expenditure Analysis - Reporting and Outputs	Ability to render all the service elements = 5 Ability to render four of the service elements = 4 Ability to render three of the service elements = 3 Ability to render two of the service elements = 2 Ability to render one or nothing of the service elements = 1	20
DELIVERABLES		
The proposed solution must support the following delivery mechanisms: - Real-time API configuration - Batch processing for testing and verification - User Interface (UI); - Reporting and outputs as described - Risk Management Plan, Business Continuity and disaster recovery plan and System Reliability Contingency plan	Real-Time API Configuration AND Batch processing for testing and verification AND User Interface (UI) AND Reporting and outputs AND Risk Management Plan, Business Continuity & disaster recovery plan and System Reliability Contingency plan = 5 Real-Time API Configuration AND Batch processing for testing and verification AND User Interface (UI) AND Reporting and outputs OR Risk Management Plan, Business Continuity & disaster recovery plan and System Reliability Contingency plan = 4 Real-Time API Configuration AND Batch processing for testing AND verification AND User Interface (UI) = 3 Real-Time API Configuration AND Batch processing for testing and verification OR Reporting and outputs OR (UI) OR Risk Management Plan, Business Continuity & disaster recovery plan and System Reliability Contingency plan = 2	40

Evaluation Criteria	Scoring	Weighted Score
	No Services = 1	
BIDDERS EXPERIENCE		
Bidders must submit contactable reference letters in line with Annexure B attached as proof of previously completed work and relevant organisational experience. - Must be not older than four (4) years from the bid closing date - Must be issued on the official letterhead of the client for whom the services were rendered - Must clearly indicate; the name of the client, A description of the services rendered. The period during which the services were rendered and/or the completion date and the name, designation, and contact details of a contactable reference person. - Must be signed by an authorised representative of the client	More than 4 valid contactable reference letters attached = 5 Four valid contactable reference letters attached = 4 Three valid contactable reference letters attached = 3 One to two valid contactable reference letters attached = 2 No contactable reference letters attached = 1	20
SOLUTION DEMONSTRATION		
Bidders shall be required, as part of the evaluation process, to present and demonstrate their proposed solutions to enable the Agency to assess their capability to deliver in accordance with the specified scope of work and deliverables. a. API capability and response structure - Bidder demonstrates a working real-time API, with responses that are clear, structured, and suitable for system integration b. User interface and API-only operation - Solution supports both UI-based access (where applicable) and API-only service delivery without reliance on a user interface c. Ease of integration - Bidder clearly demonstrates how the solution can be integrated into Agency systems, including data flow and consumption d. Logging and traceability - Solution provides transaction tracking, logging, and audit trails to support monitoring and accountability	Demonstration covered all elements = 5 Demonstration covered four elements = 4 Demonstration covered Three elements = 3 Demonstration covered two elements = 2 Demonstration covered one element or no demonstration provided = 1	20

Evaluation Criteria	Scoring	Weighted Score
e. Production readiness and maturity - The delivery model appears stable, scalable, and ready for implementation in an operational environment		
TOTAL POINTS		100

9. STAGE TWO: PHASE 1 - PRICE & SPECIFIC GOALS

EVALUATION CRITERIA ON PRICE AND SPECIFIC GOALS

Price and Preference	100
Price	80
Specific Goals	20

80 points will be for price, and the 20 points will be for specific goals.

Price

$$P_s = 80 \left(1 - \frac{P_t - P_{min}}{P_{min}} \right)$$

Where

Ps = Points scored for price of tender under consideration

Pt = Price of tender under consideration

Pmin = Price of lowest acceptable tender

Specific Goals

Preference points will be awarded to a bidder for attaining the specific goals in accordance with the table below:

Specific Goals	Number of points (80/20)
B-BBEE Status Level 1 - 2 contributor with at least 51% black women ownership	20
B-BBEE Status Level 3 - 4 contributor with at least 51% women ownership	18
B-BBEE Status Level 1 - 2 contributor with at least 51% black youth or disabled ownership	16
B-BBEE Status Level 1 - 2 contributor	14

ToR: Appointment of Registered Credit Bureau Services for SASSA Income Testing for a period of five (5) years

B-BBEE Status Level 3 - 8 contributor with at least 51% youth or disabled ownership	12
B-BBEE Status Level 3 - 4 contributor	8
B-BBEE Status Level 5 - 8 contributor	4
Others (non-compliant)	0
NB: In the event of a bidder claiming more than one specific goal category, SASSA will allocate points based on specific goal with the highest points.	

- Bidders must submit a B-BBEE verification certificate from a verification agency accredited by the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) or certified copies thereof and/or a CSD MAAA number and/or a sworn affidavit indicating the percentage of ownership of all shareholders and/or owners and signed by the commissioner of oaths. A sworn affidavit should be submitted over and above the SANAS or CSD MAAA number to claim for the below contributor level points:
- Failure to submit the required documents shall be interpreted to mean that preference points for specific goals are not claimed.

10. BID ENQUIRIES & NON-COMPULSORY BRIEFING SESSION

- 10.1. There will be a non-compulsory virtual briefing session to be held as per the date and time specified in the invitation to bid.
- 10.2. All enquiries, questions and requests for clarification that may arise in relation to this bid must be directed to the IncomeTesting@sassa.gov.za email address.
- 10.3. Bidders must register details of their representatives for the briefing session at the
- 10.4. IncomeTesting@sassa.gov.za email address.
- 10.5. All questions and/or enquiries must be raised within 3 working days from date of the briefing session. No questions and/or enquiries will be considered beyond that period.
- 10.6. Responses will be provided within 5 working days from date of the briefing session.

11. BID SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- 11.1 Bidders must submit a physical document through the Tender Box at the stipulated address and are encouraged to submit an electronic duplicate via the e-Tender Portal. The content of both the physical and electronic proposals submitted by the bidders must be the same and any discrepancies will lead to disqualification. No cloud-based links, email submissions or externally hosted documents will be accepted.

12. BID CONDITIONS

Bids to comply with the following conditions:

- 12.1 The successful bidder must ensure that the information provided by SASSA during and after the contract period is not transferred/copied/corrupted/amended in whole or in part by or on behalf of another party.
- 12.2 The registration of the bidder with the NCR must be valid at the point of submission of a bid proposal.
- 12.3 The successful bidder will be required to sign a declaration of secrecy with SASSA.
- 12.4 The successful bidder will be required to sign a Contract and Service Standards with SASSA prior the commencement of the contract.
- 12.5 SASSA reserves the right to negotiate with the preferred bidder.
- 12.6 The successful bidder shall be subject to a mandatory security screening process as a condition of award. SASSA reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to withdraw the award or to terminate the contract in whole should the bidder fail to obtain or maintain the required security clearance. Any such withdrawal or termination shall be effected in accordance with the terms of the contract, applicable contractual and relevant regulatory frameworks, and shall not give rise to any claim, loss, or liability against SASSA.