

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS & COMMUNICATIONS FOR THE THRIVE BY FIVE INDEX

1. OVERVIEW

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is for Public Relations and Communications services to build awareness and trust of the Thrive by Five Index, communicate its findings in appropriate formats, and engage key stakeholder groups towards and after the launch of the 2024 Index.

RFP issued: 24 April 2025

Proposals due: 9 May 2025, send to info@thrivebyfive.co.za

Estimated budget: ±R400,000 ex VAT

Contract period: June 2025 - February 2026

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The [Thrive by Five Index](#) is the most comprehensive nationally representative assessment of preschool-aged children in South Africa, and the only study of its kind in Africa. It is designed to track preschool child outcomes over time, examine socio-economic disparities in early learning, physical growth, and social-emotional functioning, and investigate key determinants of developmental outcomes.

First done in 2021 in partnership with the Department of Basic Education, the Thrive by Five Index supports collective efforts to ensure that all young children in South Africa receive the nurturing care and services they need to thrive. Thrive by Five Index data collection is repeated every three years. The results of the 2024 Index will be launched to the public in August 2025.

The objectives of the Thrive by Five Index are:

1. To determine the proportion of young children who are On Track for their age in key areas of development.
2. To monitor trends in performance gaps and gains over time and across socio-economic groups.
3. To explore a range of potential predictors of child outcomes.
4. To track progress in the attainment of local and global development goals.
5. To inform key decision-making and actions at multiple levels.

The Thrive by Five Index 2024 will present data on the proportion of 4-year-old children who are On Track for their age in the following key areas of development:

1. Learning - this is a direct assessment of a young child:
 - a. Gross Motor Development
 - b. Fine Motor Coordination and Visual Motor Integration
 - c. Emergent Numeracy and Mathematics
 - d. Cognition and Executive Functioning
 - e. Emergent Literacy and Language
2. Social and Emotional Functioning - this involves an interview with the child's teacher or parent
3. Physical growth (height for age)

Children are assessed using the Early Learning Outcomes Measure (ELOM) 4&5 Years Assessment Tool and the ELOM Social-Emotional Functioning Rating Scale. These locally developed, standardised tools have been rigorously tested to ensure validity, reliability, and fairness. Further information on the ELOM tools is available [here](#).

The Thrive by Five Index is a multi-sectoral partnership, Led by the Department of Basic Education and coordinated by [DataDrive2030](#), with the support of the FirstRand Foundation, the LEGO Foundation, This Day, and Yellowwoods.

3. PUBLIC RELATIONS & COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

In Phase 1 of the 2024 Index, “Data collection”, the team visited preschools and homes in 432 wards around South Africa (in all 9 provinces) between August and November 2024. Over 5,000 4-year-old children were individually assessed in almost 1,400 Early Learning Programmes (ELPs), and thousands of interviews were conducted with principals, early childhood development (ECD) practitioners, and parents.

Data analysis is currently underway, and we are seeking a consultant or agency to support communication efforts in the next 2 phases, namely, “Index launch planning and delivery” (estimated completion date August 2025) and “Leveraging Index data post launch” (estimated completion date February 2026).

DataDrive2030 wishes to contract the services of a consultant/agency to lead on the overall management of the two phases of the Thrive by Five Index communications plan, with key objectives and assets per phase. The consultant/agency is expected to work with the Index team and our communications specialist to support the development of assets in each of these phases, as described in the below scope of work.



The image above shows an ELOM child assessment underway. This forms part of the data collection process.

4. SCOPE OF WORK

The anticipated scope of work is as follows:

Phase	Objectives	Assets
Index launch planning and delivery (estimated date August 2025)	<p>Continue to build awareness, knowledge and trust of the Index.</p> <p>Communicate Index findings in appropriate formats, with targeted engagement for specific audiences to ensure understanding.</p> <p>Ensure full transparency of key design elements and any methodological limitations for trust and accountability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email newsletter • Soft launch to test messages • Website overhaul • Social media posts • Human interest stories • Technical and non-technical reports • Factsheets & cheatsheets • Media engagement & information packs - radio, TV, print, digital • Infographics • Launch event • Video • Call to action
Leveraging Index data post launch	<p>Engage key stakeholder groups timeously to help them to understand the relevance of the data and to leverage insights to inform: strategies, performance frameworks, resource allocation, programming decisions and target setting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Op-eds • Insights briefs/working papers • Webinars • Conferences • News updates on website • Social media communication • Thrive by Five Index roadmap / how-to guide • Strategic targeted engagements with provinces, departments, funders, NGOs/RTOs, researchers • Case studies on data usage • Clearly communicated benchmarks • Strategies to address unintended/misappropriate use of Index data

5. TIMELINE

It is anticipated that all work will be completed by February 2026, with the option to extend. It is our intention to contract with the consultant/agency for 9 months (June 2025 to February 2026).

6. TASKS & DELIVERABLES

The consultant/agency will be responsible for overall coordination of these tasks, bringing on board the necessary technical experts to assist where necessary:

1. Overhaul and maintenance of the current [website](#), with regular updates and use tracking.
2. Finalising of videos with videography consultants. A separate company has been contracted to produce the videos and these are in near-final format.
3. Supporting the production of technical and non-technical reports, the field work report and the listing report.
4. Supporting the working paper series along with internal and external stakeholders.
5. Crafting core messages and testing these with key audiences, including comparisons between the 2021 and 2024 Index, and between provincial results.
6. Refining messages and visuals, to align with the Thrive By Five Index brand.
7. Planning the official launch of the 2024 Index.
8. Briefing media, coordinating engagement and tracking coverage.
9. Preparing op-eds and other written materials.
10. Coordinating webinars to share results.
11. Troubleshooting and risk-mitigation - including strategies to address unintended/misappropriate use of Index data.
12. Coordinating targeted stakeholder engagement, including briefing preparation e.g. Parliament, Provincial profiling and messaging.
13. Convening symposiums with key groups e.g. funders, government, researchers, and NGOs.
14. Identifying and securing strategic opportunities to present the Index work.
15. Tracking use or uptake of information - media, donor strategies, policy etc.
16. Thrive by Five Index roadmap (content is being developed separately) - preparation and finalisation of interactive formats, testing and sharing with the public.

Notes:

- DataDrive2030 retains all rights to alter and use any knowledge products or other written work.
- The selected consultant/agency will not be allowed to add or embed its branding, captions or watermark signatures on any of the communication products.

7. BRAND

All deliverables should be in line with the Thrive by Five Index branding (this has been developed):

1. Tone of voice:
 - Factual
 - Rational
 - Accessible
 - Trustworthy
2. Visual language:
 - Modern and fresh
 - Systematic and organised
 - Warm and approachable
 - Aspirational
 - Clear and understandable
 - Graphic-style
3. Messaging:
 - Clear and understandable for non-technical audience while maintaining and communicating technical rigour.

8. RFP PROCESS DETAILS

Proposals due date: 9 May 2025. **Notification of shortlisting** within 10 days.

Proposals to be submitted to: Simone Beukes on info@thrivebyfive.co.za

9. CONTENT OF PROPOSAL

1. **Description of scope of work**

The proposal should describe your work plan and approach that will accomplish the specific tasks outlined in the RFP. Please describe your interest and capacity to meet the requirements outlined in this RFP. The description should include:

- Your skills and experience with similar assignments.
- A description of how you would propose completing this project.
- Clarify your plan for public and media relations.

2. **Qualifications and experience**

Overview of the bidder, the number and nature of the staff to be employed for this project, and the type of other resources in place for this project. The bidder should describe any qualifications and/or experience and/or demonstrated competency specifically related to NGO-sector PR, marketing, advocacy and communication work executed in the past.

3. **Identification of anticipated problems**

The proposal should identify and describe any anticipated or potential problems.

4. **Costing**

The bidder must provide their rate for carrying out the tasks, including a total project cost with an itemised breakdown.

5. **Examples of previous work**

The bidder must provide some evidence of experience by sharing links to their past work.