

# AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS OLYMPIAD PROGRAM

## Program Evaluation and Business Plan Development

### Request for Tender

#### Overview

Australian Science Innovations (ASI) is inviting tender proposals to undertake a project in two parts (“the Project”).

The first part is an evaluation of both of the Australian Science and Mathematics Olympiads programs (“the Olympiad Program”). The evaluation will include a review of the appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness of the current programs, including their governance, financial and management arrangements. The Olympiads are educational events with large components of voluntary work.

The second part will be the development of an optimal business model for running the Olympiad Program, designed to achieve enhanced effectiveness and long term sustainability, and reflecting the findings from the evaluation. A report will be produced with a business plan for future delivery of the Olympiad Program.

Tenderers may include consortia of individuals or organisations.

#### Definitions

Science Olympiads: the Biology, Chemistry and Physics Olympiads.

Mathematics Olympiads: the Mathematics and Informatics Olympiads.

#### Objectives

The objectives for the Olympiad Program are not currently articulated fully; however, they include:

- to create and provide high quality extension programs for senior high school students in science, mathematics and informatics;
- to encourage the highest level of participation by Australian students possible in the preliminary activities that lead up to the international Olympiad competitions; and
- to select and train teams to represent Australia at the annual International Science and Mathematics Olympiads.

The Olympiads aim to achieve these objectives through several means, including:

- stimulating the interest of students in science and mathematics;
- promoting and rewarding the pursuit of excellence in science and mathematics;
- fostering a positive image of science and scientists, and mathematics and mathematicians;
- conveying the importance of advanced study in science and mathematics; and
- encouraging the teaching and understanding in the wider community of the value of mathematics, science and technology.

#### Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to critically review the appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness of the Olympiad Program in Australia, including:

1. to clarify the objectives and purposes to be served by the Olympiad Program and to identify a set of appropriate performance indicators
2. to assess the effectiveness of the Olympiad Program in meeting its objectives, including its volunteer and education components

3. to assess and advise on the case for continuing Government support for Australia's participation in the International Science and Mathematics Olympiads.

### **Purpose of Developing an Optimal Business Model**

The purpose of developing a new business model for the operation of the Olympiad Program in Australia is to:

1. present a business plan to guide the implementation of optimal Olympiad Program design, governance and management arrangements from 2011
2. identify possible and appropriate longer term non-government funding sources to ensure sustainability
3. ensure that participation is accessible on an equitable basis and achieves the best experience for the greatest number of students
4. determine the most effective support for and communications with schools.

### **Project Requirements/Outcomes**

1. The evaluation will examine any current articulated or implied objectives for the Olympiad Program and recommend revised objectives to the Steering Committee (established under the Commonwealth Funding Agreement for the Olympiads Program and comprising representatives of the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australian Science Innovations and the Australian Mathematics Trust) for approval at the beginning of the evaluation process.
2. In revising the Olympiad Program objectives, consideration will be given to the Australian Government's policies and priorities for education, science, mathematics and innovation.
3. The evaluation will examine and report on how well the Olympiad Program meets its current objectives. This will include reviewing the Olympiad Program's five subjects areas (chemistry, physics, biology, mathematics and informatics), including its design and delivery.
4. The evaluation will examine and report on the roles and functions of Australian Science Innovations (ASI) and the Australian Mathematics Trust (AMT), in delivering benefits to Australian secondary students through their administration of the Olympiad Program, including its promotion, communication with and support for schools on an equitable basis, and the selection, training and assessment of students considered potentially suitable for participation in the Olympiads.
5. The evaluation will examine and report on the continuing viability and sustainability of the Olympiad Program.
6. The evaluation will examine and report on:
  - the place of the Olympiads in the Australian education, science, mathematics and innovation landscape with regard to comparable initiatives and any opportunities for rationalising provision and connecting and collaborating with other initiatives;
  - the cost-effectiveness of the Olympiad Program, including as appropriate any costs and administration for other competitions or programs that feed into it;
  - other comparable secondary school extension programs in Australia, including a description of any such programs, noting any recognised good practices in student selection or training models;
  - any patterns or gaps in the schools that do and do not tend to participate in the Olympiad Program;
  - the Olympiad Program's compliance with relevant aspects of Australia's Working with Children laws.

7. The evaluation will assess the Olympiad Program's value to Australia's participation in the International Science and Mathematics Olympiads, taking into account any views of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
8. The evaluation will investigate and describe a selection of International Science and Mathematics Olympiads programs from five countries comparable to Australia, including operations, outcomes and opportunities provided for returning Olympiad students. The countries will be selected in consultation with the Steering Committee.
9. The case for any continuing Australian Government or other government support for the Olympiad Program will be assessed, including in terms of:
  - **Appropriateness.** Whether there is a role for the Australian Government or state/territory governments to fill a gap left by the market.
  - **Effectiveness.** Whether the Government's contributions are leading to the outcomes intended.
  - **Efficiency.** Whether existing management of the Program achieves good value for public money.
  - **Performance assessment.** The appropriate level of Government oversight of Olympiad Program activity.
  - **Strategic policy alignment.** The contribution made by the Olympiad Program to the achievement of Government policy priorities.
10. A draft proposed business model and plan for the Olympiad Program will be produced. The draft business model and plan will include recommended optimal governance and administrative arrangements, and such other changes to the operation and delivery of the Olympiad Program as seem appropriate.
11. The proposed business model and plan will provide a blueprint for improving the Olympiad Program to meet its objectives.
12. The proposed business model and plan will clearly articulate the vision and the objectives of the Olympiad Program, and a set of performance indicators against intended outputs and outcomes.
13. The proposed business model and plan will outline options to improve the Olympiad Program's public visibility and a communication strategy targeting state and territory education authorities, the private sector, the general public and other key stakeholders
14. The proposed business model and plan for the Olympiad Program will address revenue streams and present options for maximising these to ensure long term viability. It will include an examination of the fees or other charges levied on families or schools, any equity issues arising from these fees or charges, and possible opportunities for attracting private sector support.

## **Key stakeholders**

Key stakeholders must be consulted as part of the Olympiad Project; these must include:

- a selection of student participants, within all categories over the past three years, including both the full cohort of student participants and the smaller cohort of talented students from which the Olympiad teams are annually selected;
- education stakeholders, including state and territory education authorities, teacher associations, a representative selection of participating schools' science and mathematics teachers, and a representative selection of science and maths teachers from schools that do not participate;

- higher education institutions, particularly those with a focus on encouraging Olympiad participants' enrolment;
- DIISR and DEEWR;
- Olympiad volunteers; and
- Board and staff of ASI and AMT.

## **Budget**

ASI will allocate up to \$130,000 (excluding GST) for the Project.

## **Tender Requirements**

ASI is seeking tender submissions from organisations or individuals with demonstrated experience, knowledge and abilities, as well as a track record relevant to the delivery of the elements of this Project. Tenderer's claims must be supported by Referee Statements and, upon request, proof of claims must be provided.

Tenderers should provide:

- a proposed methodology to address each of the Project Requirements/Outcomes and associated criteria. The evaluation methodology should include a draft Project plan and proposed consultation strategy, setting out the methods proposed to be employed in undertaking the Project against the Project Requirements/Outcomes
- a general overview of their organisation, its operations and track record, and demonstrate how they can fulfil the required objectives and outcomes as detailed herein for each phase of the Project
- evidence of their demonstrated ability to deal with educational programs with large components of voluntary work
- CVs (maximum 3 pages) of personnel nominated, and the work they will each undertake
- the amount of time proposed to be spent by nominated personnel on each of the evaluation and business plan elements
- separately costed phases of the work (for example: literature review, consultations, data collection, data analysis, reporting, presentation of findings and report revision)
- a fixed fee, exclusive of GST, for the Project, including a detailed budget for each component of the Project which itemises all proposed expenditure. The budget should cover the full cost of finalising the Project as outlined above and include (but not be restricted to) the following items where relevant: personnel/consultant fees, travel expenses, field work/consultation costs; administration/management costs; and any unique expenditure items. Budget items may be amended, in consultation with the successful tenderer, when the contract is being finalised.

## **Conflict of Interest Declaration**

A conflict of interest arises when a tenderer, or a person or organisation associated with the tenderer, is in a position to benefit directly or indirectly from actions of the tenderer through an unfair or unintended imposition or loss on the Australian Science Innovations (ASI), the Australian Mathematics Trust (AMT) or other party. A conflict of interest can also arise when a tenderer's integrity, objectivity or fairness in performing the services is at risk due to a personal interest or conflicting business arrangements.

Tenderers must disclose in their tenders any potential or actual conflicts of interest that they may have or may be perceived to have in respect of their responsibilities to the ASI, AMT and other parties in the course of delivering the services, should they be selected as the successful tenderer. Tenderers must also specify how they will identify and manage the potential for conflicts or perceptions of conflicts to arise.

If tenderers have identified real or potential conflicts, they should specify how they propose to address them. Tenderers must explain how ASI will gain assurance that the conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest will not impact adversely on the performance of the services.

Identification of a conflict of interest or a perceived conflict of interest will not automatically exclude a tenderer from consideration. ASI reserves the right to assess the potential impact of the conflict or perceived conflict in relation to the tender before a final decision is made. However, ASI’s decisions will be final.

**Tender Costs**

Tenderers will bear their own costs for all activities associated with preparation, submission and any subsequent negotiations.

**Form of Contract**

A draft contract will be provided in early August to tenderers who request a copy.

**Project Deliverables**

The successful tenderer will be required to deliver the following:

- A Project Plan, detailing the final methodology and consultation strategy
- A progress report detailing the outcomes of consultation
- A draft Final Report with recommendations, a draft business plan and implementation plan for the Olympiad Program.
- Presentation of findings to the Steering Committee.
- A Final Report taking into account feedback from ASI and the Steering Committee. The Final Report will include:
  - an Executive Summary
  - summary of methodologies
  - a comprehensive discussion
  - proposed Business Model and Plan for the Program’s future operation.

**Project Milestones**

Project deliverables/milestones and due dates are listed in the table below.

<b>Milestones/Deliverables</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Project plan, including the draft revised Olympiad Program objectives, consultation strategy and detailed field work plan	Within two weeks of commencement of contract
Progress report	Within 6 weeks of commencement of contract
Draft final report	30 November 2010
Presentation of findings	First week of December 2010
Final Report	31 December 2010

Additionally, monthly progress reports will be required; however, these reports will be less formal and their form will be negotiated in contract discussions.

**Selection Criteria**

The following criteria will be used in assessing what tender(s) represent best value for money. A tender that is rated unsuitable/unsatisfactory against one or more criteria may be excluded from further consideration.

- 1. Ability to develop and deliver the Project within the framework and timeframes specified under the Statement of Requirement.**
- 2. Experience in evaluating programs and preparing business models and plans**
  - Demonstration of relevant knowledge and experience of key staff working on the Project.
- 3. Ability to manage the Project and associated risks**
- 4. Tender fees**
  - All costs, fees, allowances and charges associated with the implementation and completion of contract obligations will be taken into account.
  - Value for money based on comparison of tendered fees against the proposal.

### **Tender Closing Date**

Tenders close at 5 pm AEST on Monday 9 August. Tenders should be submitted by email to [tender@asi.edu.au](mailto:tender@asi.edu.au) or by fax to ASI at 02-6201 5244.

Enquiries and requests for copies of the draft contract can be directed to [tender@asi.edu.au](mailto:tender@asi.edu.au)

### **Notices to Tenderers**

Notices (if any) to tenderers during the tender period will be posted on the ASI website : <http://www.asi.edu.au>