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## 1. Background

DFAT through the Australian Embassy in Manila, contracted Abt Associates ('Abt') to undertake the Procurement, Administrative and Logistics Management Support Services for Aid Program Delivery (PALMSS) Facility. The overarching objective of the Facility is to provide responsive and efficient sourcing, engagement and management of individuals and/or organisations with relevant expertise required by the Embassy to complement existing staff capacity.

These individuals and/or sub-contractors are expected to provide timely advice, inputs and/or services to the Australian Embassy in Manila with the aim of enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of Australian aid investments in the Philippines.

## 2. Activity objectives and purpose

PALMSS is seeking an organization to conduct an **End of Program Evaluation for Australia Awards and Alumni Engagement Program – Philippines**.

The Australia Awards and Alumni Engagement Program-Philippines (AAAEP-P) is an eight-year (2018–2026), \$31 million program that provides Australia Awards scholarships, short courses, local scholarships, and alumni engagement activities to further contribute toward achieving the shared development goals of Australia and the Philippines.

Australia Awards are prestigious international study opportunities that offer the next generation of global leaders an opportunity to undertake study, research, and professional development in Australia. It builds skills and capabilities, people-to-people links and institutional partnerships in areas that contribute to Australia's foreign, trade and international development priorities.

AAAEP-P has the following end-of-program outcomes:

1. Alumni and, where relevant, their organisations have and use skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development;
2. Australia has alumni in key sectors and positions;
3. Links and/or formal partnerships between institutions and businesses in Australia and the Philippines are activated and matured;
4. Australia, Australians, and Australian expertise are viewed positively in the Philippines; and
5. Scholarships and alumni activities have improved gender equality and women's empowerment.

It has the following intermediate outcomes:

1. Beneficiaries and through them, their organisations, have knowledge, skills and desire to contribute to development that is aligned to shared goals of Philippines and Australia.
2. Relevant and useful network and relationships are created that allow Australia and the Philippines to take forward their mutual interest in the Philippines.
3. Women and disadvantaged cohorts have been provided greater opportunity for success.

AAAEP-P works with 11 partner Philippine government agencies, Australian and Philippine educational and training institutions, scholars, and alumni to deliver its end-of-program outcomes.

DFAT's agreement with Tetra Tech International Development, the implementing partner, to implement AAAEP-P will end on 30 September 2025. A program design update was approved in June 2023.

This end of program evaluation is proposed to be conducted from last week of June until October 2024. While this will serve as the first formal review of the program, AAAEP-P components have previously been reviewed. Its In-Country Scholarships Program (ICSP) underwent an evaluation in 2019 while alumni tracer studies were undertaken in 2021 and 2023. Australia Awardees and alumni from the Philippines also participate in the Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility and the Australia Awards Scholarships Surveys overseen by the Global Education and Scholarships Section in Canberra.

This evaluation will assess whether and to what extent AAAEP-P has been delivering design outcomes. The evaluation will also provide recommendations for improvements for the remainder of the program. Insights and suggested improvements may also be incorporated into a new successor program/procurement process expected in the first half of FY 2025.

Evaluation findings will be used by DFAT program managers, Philippine government members of the AAAEP-P board and coordinating committee, the implementing partner, and the design team of AAAEP-P's successor investment. It will also be published on the DFAT website as per DFAT's [Development Evaluation Policy](#).

This evaluation aims to:

- a. Assess how well AAAEP-P aligns with the strategic objectives of the Philippines and Australia, especially considering Australia's new International Development Policy and the Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028;
- b. Assess the efficiency and effectiveness of AAAEP-P's implementation; and
- c. Provide recommendations for future activities and improvements that should be considered during the remainder of the program and the design of AAAEP-P's successor program.

### Key Evaluation Questions

The following draft key evaluation questions, which will be finalised with the evaluation team:

1. Relevance: To what extent does AAAEP-P align with the strategic priorities and needs of the Australian and Philippine Governments?
  - a. To what extent does AAAEP-P support the Philippine Government in implementing its development policies?
  - b. To what extent is AAAEP-P consistent with the Australian Government's strategic priorities?
  - c. To what extent is AAAEP-P consistent Australian development policies, including but not limited to gender equality and disability and social inclusion?
  - d. To what extent does AAAEP-P substitute or complement other interventions in the Philippines, regardless of funder?
2. Effectiveness: To what extent has AAAEP-P achieved its intended intermediate and end-of-program outcomes?
  - a. To what extent have targets for the intermediate and end-of-program outcomes been attained?
  - b. What factors were crucial for the achievement or failure to achieve AAAEP-P outcomes?
  - c. Was AAAEP-P's reach (e.g., number of long-term scholarship slots and short course participants, etc) sufficient to realise the required scale of change?
  - d. To what extent has AAAEP-P changed norms or processes among its partner Philippine government agencies? (*Desirable if there is sufficient time/resources.*)
  - e. To what extent has AAAEP-P changed the lives of its beneficiaries? (*Desirable if there is sufficient time/resources.*)
3. Efficiency: To what extent was AAAEP-P administered and delivered efficiently?
  - a. What, if any, significant administrative constraints or costs were experienced?
  - b. Were the target outcomes appropriate and related to the program objectives?
  - c. Were program resources used appropriately/proportional to results achieved?
  - d. How did AAAEP-P's outcomes compare with similar programs or with alternative ways of achieving the same outcomes?
4. Sustainability: To what extent are AAAEP-P stakeholders (e.g., partner organisations and alumni communities, etc) capable and prepared to continue the positive effects of the program without support in the long term?

5. Lessons learned: What lessons can be drawn from AAAEP-P's implementation to improve outcomes and inform its successor program?

All program components since its inception in 2018 will be included in the evaluation.

Data collection within the Philippines is expected.

### **Evaluation Team**

The evaluation is proposed to be undertaken by a team of independent consultants not directly involved in program management and who will collectively have the following knowledge, skills, and abilities:

- In-depth knowledge of DFAT's [Development Evaluation Policy](#) and [Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Standards](#) and the [OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria](#).
- Ability to engage with, listen to, and learn from a broad range of evaluation stakeholders and encouraging their meaningful participation in the evaluation process.
- Ability to provide leadership in a team setting, move members forward and build consensus.
- Ability to work as part of an interdisciplinary team to plan and conduct evaluations.
- Ability to understand the context of a program, preferably one focused on human capital and capacity development, and how it affects program planning, implementation, and outcomes.
- Knowledge of approaches for generating, revising, and prioritizing evaluation questions.
- Knowledge in the development of evaluation plans.
- Knowledge of methods for designing evaluations to increase the likelihood that the findings will be used by primary evaluation stakeholders.
- Knowledge of inclusion issues, including working with disabled peoples' organisation, women's organisations, and inclusion-focused non-government/civil society organisations, preferably in a context like the Philippines'.
- Ability to gather data using qualitative and quantitative approaches such as interviews, group processes, participant observation, surveys, electronic data files, or other methods.
- Knowledge of appropriate quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods and ability to use these methods.
- Skill in working with stakeholders to develop feasible recommendations.
- Ability to prepare and present evaluation information and results to increase the likelihood that they will be used and accepted by diverse stakeholders.
- Ability to work with stakeholders to present analyses, find common themes, and identify relevant and actionable findings from evaluations.

The evaluation team will be led by a Team Leader, who will be responsible for producing the evaluation plan and ensuring that the evaluation team delivers on the Plan, including the delivery of a final report that adheres to DFAT standards.

DFAT encourages the involvement of local evaluators/consultants.

Manila Post's Scholarships and Innovation team will support the consultants by providing program and country context as well as insights regarding resulting the appropriateness and feasibility of evaluation recommendations. The Portfolio Manager (Scholarships and Innovation) is the Evaluation Manager. The Counsellor (Political, Economic, and Public Affairs) retains oversight of the evaluation process.

Further details are in the proposal template in Annex 1.

### 3. Timeframe and Tasks

The review will be undertaken between June to October 2024 and the report is to be completed in September 2024. Estimated timeline is as follows:

Table 1: Indicative End of Program Evaluation Timeframe

Activity	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Embassy to brief evaluation team on key issues and priority information sought (inception meeting)					
Evaluation team to undertake desk review					
Evaluation team to develop evaluation plan					
Evaluation plan to be reviewed and approved by Embassy					
Evaluation team to undertake consultations, data gathering, and analysis					
Evaluation team to prepare aide memoire and draft evaluation report					
Embassy to provide feedback on draft report					
Evaluation team to finalise report and submit to Embassy					
Embassy to draft and clear management response					
Finalize evaluation					

Key deliverables will include:

1. Evaluation plan (July 2024)
  - This document will replace these terms of reference as the basis for the evaluation and will contain the methods and approaches to be used in the evaluation as well as limitations and constraints for the evaluation.
  - It includes, among others, the methodology, including key evaluation questions and sub-questions, key informant categories, and draft interview guides.
  - The evaluation plan will be informed by an initial review of relevant materials, including but not limited to key documents listed in Annex A.
  - This should adhere to [DFAT's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Standards](#).
2. Draft report (July/August 2024): A draft evaluation report will be prepared as well as an aide memoire containing initial findings and recommendations that will be presented to stakeholders from the Australian and Philippine governments and the implementing partner.
3. Final report (August/September 2024): At the completion of the evaluation process, the evaluation team will submit a final report to DFAT, which addresses all key evaluation questions.
4. Participation in knowledge sharing sessions: The evaluation team is expected to participate in knowledge sharing sessions after the final report has been published, which will highlight key findings from the evaluation.

All reports should conform to DFAT policy guidelines and standards, such as the Development Evaluation Policy; Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Standards; Accessibility Guidelines, and Logos and Style Guides.

### 4. Budget

The maximum budget allocated to this arrangement is up to AUD 106,060

Funding will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis according to criteria such as Value for Money. Any final decision will be based on the results of the selection and due diligence processes.

## 5. Selection Criteria

- 5.1. The Proposals (including Financial Proposal) must be specific and presented concisely. Proponents will be evaluated based on these documents, inclusive of supporting information and due diligence processes, in order to determine the best value for money and merit-based outcome to achieve DFAT's objectives.
- 5.2. Proposals will be assessed based on the following criteria:

Factor		Weighting
<b>1. Technical capability and approach</b>	The extent to which: 1. The proponent's evaluation approach (including methods and sampling) and plan will effectively capture and address the evaluation questions; 2. The proponent demonstrates strong capacity to evaluate programs, including capacity to gather and analyse data and draw logical conclusions from findings; 3. The proponent demonstrates technical expertise to produce high quality reports, anchored on data analysis, in English.	40
<b>2. Organisational capability to deliver</b>	1. The proponent has demonstrated, relevant evaluation expertise in Southeast Asian countries, including programs similar to AAAEP-P. 2. The proponent has strong management capability and is capable of adhering to DFAT's safeguarding requirements and understanding of DFAT policy guidelines and standards.	20
<b>3. Team</b>	1. The proponent has proposed appropriate personnel to manage activities with relevant experience and networks, and requisite skill sets in M&E and Program Management, and knowledge of GEDSI in relation to the program's focus area(s).	30
<b>4. Value for money</b>	1. Cost consciousness and realism consistent with the end of program evaluation requirements and workplan, as evidenced by a sound financial proposal that outlines a detailed budget, covering all costs required to execute the evaluation. 2. Strong balance of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and ethics as defined by the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: <a href="https://dfat.gov.au/aid/who-we-work-with/value-for-money-principles/Pages/value-for-money-principles.aspx">https://dfat.gov.au/aid/who-we-work-with/value-for-money-principles/Pages/value-for-money-principles.aspx</a> .	10

## 6. Proposal Requirements

- 6.1. All Proposals must be submitted in English.
- 6.2. Proponents must submit their Proposal using the Proposal Forms provided in this RFP documentation (**Annex 1**, Schedules A – B):
- (a) **Proposal Submission Form** as contained in **Schedule A**; and
  - (b) **Proposal for End of Program Evaluation for Australia Awards and Alumni Engagement Program – Philippines** as contained in **Schedule B**.
- 6.3. All Proposals and any accompanying or subsequent documentation submitted under this RFP become part of the Proposal Process.
- 6.4. The Proposal validity period is 30 days (unless otherwise negotiated).

- 6.5. Proponents accept that their failure to provide all requested information, at any stage of the Proposal Process, may result in their Proposal being excluded from further consideration.
- 6.6. It will be presumed that, by submitting a Proposal for **End of Program Evaluation for Australia Awards and Alumni Engagement Program – Philippines**, the Proponent agrees to the Proposal Conditions.
- 6.7. All Proposals must be conducted in a manner that are non-collusive and does not represent deceptive or corrupt behaviour. Abt Associates has a zero tolerance to such behaviours. Any and all conflicts of interests, or those that may be perceived as a conflict, are to be identified during the Proposal Process.

#### **Proposal Submission**

- 6.8. Proposals must be submitted electronically to [quintin.atienza@abtglobal.com](mailto:quintin.atienza@abtglobal.com) before the Proposal Closing Time and Date, using the subject line: “**End of Program Evaluation for Australia Awards and Alumni Engagement Program – Philippines – Proposal.**” All Proposals must be received in PDF format attached in the email.
- 6.9. **The request for proposals will close at 5:00 pm Philippine Standard Time, 17 June 2024.**
- 6.10. It is the responsibility of Proponents to ensure that their proposal submission, including all attachments, has been received in the above email inbox, [quintin.atienza@abtglobal.com](mailto:quintin.atienza@abtglobal.com), prior to the Proposal Closing Time and Date. Any Proposal received after the Proposal Closing Time and Date will be considered a late submission. **PALMSS will reject all Late Proposals.** PALMSS recommends that Proposals are formally lodged earlier than the nominated Proposal Closing Time and Date, in the case of telecommunications issues. PALMSS will not be responsible for any large files that are rejected by email servers. It is suggested to compress all media images to limit overall file size.

#### **Proposal Evaluation Process**

- 6.11. The Evaluation Panel will assess the Proposal submitted in response to this RFP. This panel will consist of members of the DFAT team.
- 6.12. The Evaluation Panel will undertake a shortlisting of Proponents in accordance with the Selection Criteria as set out in clause 5.
- 6.13. Proposals will be assessed against the Selection Criteria as set out in clause 5 and may be notified via email and invited to present their Proposals to the Evaluation Panel.
- 6.14. Material tendered in response to one selection criterion may be used in the evaluation of other selection criteria.
- 6.15. The Evaluation Panel will prepare an Evaluation Report Assessment and make a final recommendation to PALMSS. Any decision will be at the discretion of PALMSS and in accordance with the nominated criteria and technical advice.
- 6.16. Unsuccessful Proponents will be notified in writing. The decision of PALMSS is final. PALMSS feedback upon request on the evaluation process is for purposes of courtesy and quality improvement only. No further correspondence from PALMSS will be undertaken, on the basis of this feedback and RFP process.
- 6.17. Preferred Proponents will enter the stage of contract negotiations.

#### **Questions during the application process**

- 6.18. Parties invited to this RFP may register their intent to submit a proposal by emailing [quintin.atienza@abtglobal.com](mailto:quintin.atienza@abtglobal.com) using the subject line “**End of Program Evaluation for Australia Awards and Alumni Engagement Program – Philippines – Registration.**” This will allow PALMSS to provide you with any updates prior to the Proposal Closing Time and Date.

- 6.19. Registration details must include:
- (a) Institution/Company/Entity Name;
  - (b) Nominated Representative of the Entity; and
  - (c) Contact Details (office address, email, and phone).

Parties that have not registered their interest may still submit Proposals but will not receive updates prior to the Proposal Closing Time and Date.

- 6.20. Any clarification or enquiries from interested parties must be submitted no later than **5:00 pm Philippine Standard Time, 10 June 2024** through [quintin.atienza@abtglobal.com](mailto:quintin.atienza@abtglobal.com), with subject line: **"End of Program Evaluation for Australia Awards and Alumni Engagement Program – Philippines – Query."**
- 6.21. PALMSS will host an online information session tentatively scheduled on the week of **13 June 2024**. Interested parties should register by responding to the invitation to be sent by PALMSS. During the session, interested parties can raise questions on the RFP. For the avoidance of doubt, interested parties can raise questions outside the allocated information session by submitting questions through [quintin.atienza@abtglobal.com](mailto:quintin.atienza@abtglobal.com) in accordance with the process as set out under clause 6.18 and 6.19.
- 6.22. PALMSS reserves the right to issue or publish responses and answers to clarifications to all registered Proponents. Responses will be de-identified. Notification will be provided to all Proponents via the contact details of the Nominated Representative at the time of registration.

#### **Proponent Costs**

- 6.23. PALMSS is not responsible for any costs that may be incurred by any Proponent in responding to this RFP PALMSS. Proponents are responsible at their own cost, related to their submission of this RFP, including:
- (a) All the arrangements and obtaining and considering all information relating to the RFP preparation; and
  - (b) Preparation and lodgement of the Proposal including any cost incurred related to travel arrangement or any other costs (e.g. communications cost).

#### **Negotiation and Contracting**

- 6.24. Abt Associates will clarify any areas for final agreement through a clarification and negotiation process that is transparent and accountable. Any agreement will subject to the clauses negotiated and agreed.
- 6.25. An Abt Associates Contract will be issued to formalise End of Program Evaluation for Australia Awards and Alumni Engagement Program - Philippines. The maximum payable under the agreement will be agreed and will be detailed in the final agreement document. The evaluation activities must then be completed according to the specifications of the contract within any agreed schedules.

#### **Abt Associates Rights**

- 6.26. Abt Associates reserves the right in its absolute discretion at any time to:
- (a) Terminate this proposal, or cease to proceed with this proposal, change the structure and timing of the proposal, or vary or extend any detail in this proposal at any time;
  - (b) Seek clarification of non-conforming proposals or request additional information or clarification, or provide additional information or clarification;
  - (c) Negotiate with any one or more Proponent;
  - (d) Perform such security, probity, and financial investigations and procedures as Abt Associates may determine are necessary in relation to any Proponent, its employees, officers, partners, associates, sub-contractors or related entities including consortium members and their officers, employees and sub-contractors. Proponents should promptly provide Abt Associates with such information or documentation that Abt Associates requires in order to undertake such investigation. A Proposal may be rejected by Abt



Associates if the Proponent does not promptly provide, at its cost, all reasonable assistance to Abt Associates in this regard or based on the outcomes of the investigations or procedures. Abt Associates may also make independent enquiries about any matters that may be relevant to the evaluation of a Proposal;

- (e) Call for new proposals;
  - (f) Accept or reject any Proposal, and to cancel the Proposal Process and reject all Proposals, at any time prior to the award of Contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Proponent(s);
  - (g) Assess or reject a non-conforming proposal. Abt Associates will not enter into any correspondence or discussion about a decision to assess or reject a non-conforming proposal;
  - (h) Seek clarification of, and negotiate the terms included in, short-listed proposals after the proposal closes. These discussions will be documented and form part of the proposal for evaluation purposes;
  - (i) Exclude from consideration any Proposal if the Proponent or one of its related entities is listed by The World Bank on its "Listing of Ineligible Firms" or "Listing of Firms Letters of Reprimand" posted at [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org) (the "World Bank List");
  - (j) Exclude any individual or entity determined by the Minister for Foreign Affairs under the Charter of the United Nations Act 1945 and/or listed in regulations made under Division 102 of the Criminal Code Act 1995. Further information about listed persons and entities is available from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website at [www.dfat.gov.au](http://www.dfat.gov.au);
  - (k) Exclude any individual or entity excluded by any other donor of development funding on a list similar to the World Bank List; and
  - (l) Terminate any negotiations being conducted at any time with any Proponents for any reason.
- 6.27. Unsuccessful Proponents will have no redress against Abt Associates or PALMSS, regardless of any addition or amendment to any Proposal Conditions in these circumstances.
- 6.28. This RFP does not give rise to a binding contractual relationship between Abt Associates and any Proponent.

#### **Confidentiality**

- 6.29. The contents of this RFP together with all other information, materials, specifications or other documents provided by Abt Associates or the program, or prepared by respondents specifically for them, shall be treated at all times as confidential by the respondents. Respondents shall not disclose any such information, materials, specifications or other documents to any third parties or to any other part of the respondents' group or use them for any purpose other than for the preparation and submission of a response to this RFP, nor shall respondents publicise the name of Abt Associates or the program, or this project, without the prior written consent of Abt Associates. Abt Associates and the program confirm that they shall treat all information provided to them by the respondent as confidential and further confirm that such information will not be disclosed by them group to any third parties, other than their advisers and consultants.
- 6.30. Respondents shall ensure that all third parties to whom disclosure is made shall keep any such information, materials, specifications or other documents confidential and not disclose them to any other third party except as set out in clause 15.1.
- 6.31. Respondents must seek the approval of Abt Associates before providing to third parties any information provided in confidence by Abt Associates or the program or their professional advisers and must maintain a register of all employees and third parties who have access to such information. If so requested by Abt Associates, respondents must make such a register available for immediate inspection by Abt Associates or its duly authorised representatives.
- 6.32. The names of respondents submitting their interest will not be made available to other respondents. All firms/consultants will be required to maintain confidentiality with respect to their own submission and should not seek details of competing submissions.

**Warning and Disclaimer**

- 6.33. Nothing contained in this RFP or any other communication made between Abt Associates or their representatives and any party shall constitute an agreement, contract or representation between Abt Associates and any other party (except for a formal award of contract made in writing by Abt Associates). Receipt by the respondent of this RFP does not imply the existence of a contract or commitment by or with Abt Associates for any purpose and respondents should note that this RFP may not result in the award of any business.
- 6.34. Abt Associates reserves the right to change any aspect of, or cease, this RFP and subsequent proposal process at any time.
- 6.35. The information contained in this RFP is subject to constant updating and amendment in the future and is necessarily selective. It does not purport to contain all of the information which a respondent may require. While Abt Associates and the program have taken all reasonable steps to ensure, as at the date of this document, that the facts which are contained in this RFP are true and accurate in all material respects, Abt Associates and the program do not make any representation or warranty as to the accuracy or completeness or otherwise of this RFP, or the reasonableness of any assumptions on which this document may be based. All information supplied by Abt Associates or the program to the respondents, including that contained in this RFP, is subject to the respondent's own due diligence. Abt Associates and the program accept no liability to respondents whatsoever and however arising and whether resulting from the use of this RFP, or any omissions from or deficiencies in this document.
- 6.36. Abt Associates or PALMSS may exclude any respondents from this process who have been found to be in breach of confidentiality and may pursue any remedy or take any other action for breach as it considers appropriate.