

**Request for Proposal: Approaches
to CPD Measurement**



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL: APPROACHES TO CPD MEASUREMENT

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Section 1: Administration

1.1 Request for Proposal

This document is a formal Request for Proposal (RFP)¹ for the supply, to the International Accounting Education Standards Board (IAESB)² of an International Education Paper (IEP)³ exploring approaches to continuing professional development (CPD) across a range of professions, including the accounting profession. The IEP will focus in particular on different approaches to the measurement of CPD learning activities, and make recommendations as to “good practice” for possible adoption by IFAC member bodies.

This RFP has been sent to all of IFAC’s member bodies and a shortlist of other potential suppliers as well as posted to the IFAC website and disseminated through the International Association for Accounting Education and Research (IAAER), so as to elicit a proposal from any interested party.

The proposal should include all the costs associated with the production of the IEP. The successful supplier will be responsible for the production of an IEP of suitable quality for release by the IAESB.

1.2 Contact at IFAC

All inquiries relating to this RFP should be directed to:

Simon Thompson
Technical Manager, International Accounting Education Standards Board
Email: simonthompson@ifac.org

with a copy to:

James M. Sylph
Executive Director, Professional Standards
Email: jimsylph@ifac.org

1.3 Confidentiality of Information

All information contained in this RFP is publicly available. We will, however, treat in the strictest confidence all information included in the proposals.

1.4 Submission of Proposals

IFAC is not responsible for any costs incurred by you in the preparation of your response to this invitation. The preparation of your proposal shall be made without obligation by

¹ In some jurisdictions this is referred to as an Invitation to Tender (ITT).

² The IAESB is an independent standard setting body established by the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC). See www.ifac.org/Education for more details.

³ See 2.4 below for a definition and explanation of the term *International Education Paper (IEP)*.

IFAC to acquire any of the items included in the proposal or to discuss the reasons why the proposal is accepted or rejected.

If the proposal is accepted, it will form part of the contract that will be negotiated subsequently. Any statements, therefore, included in the proposal as to the development and production of the IEP will be contractually binding.

We may require meetings with suppliers to clarify details included in the proposals and these shall be arranged at the discretion of IFAC.

If any sub-contractors or third-party suppliers will be used for any part of the development or production of the IEP, this should be clearly stated.

The successful supplier must undertake not to make any reference to IFAC in any literature, promotional material or sales presentation without prior consent from IFAC.

Proposals should be completed and submitted no later than midday (US Eastern Standard Time) on Friday, January 12, 2007 and should be addressed to Simon Thompson with a copy to James M. Sylph at the email addresses shown above.

1.5 Assessment Criteria

The main criteria on which the proposals will be assessed include the:

- Quality of the proposal submitted, in relation to the required specifications as described elsewhere in this RFP; and
- Relevant experience of the supplier, in particular their previous experience in research comparing professions, professional education and/or CPD systems.

Detailed criteria that will be used to judge proposals are set out below in Section 4 of this RFP.

IFAC does not bind itself to accept the lowest proposal or any proposal. In this respect, IFAC reserves the right to award any contract for the development of the IEP which, in its opinion, represents value for money.

1.6 Successful Proposal

All proposals will be systematically analyzed by IFAC staff in conjunction with members of the IAESB's CPD Task Force. **The final decision as to the awarding of the project will be communicated via email to all organizations that submitted a proposal by March 15, 2007.**

Section 2: Background

2.1 IFAC and IAESB Profiles

IFAC is the worldwide organization for the accountancy profession dedicated to serving the public interest by strengthening the profession and contributing to the development of strong international economies. IFAC's current membership consists of approximately

160 professional accountancy bodies in 120 countries, representing more than 2.5 million accountants in public practice, education, government service, industry and commerce. IFAC, through its independent standard-setting boards, sets international standards on ethics, auditing and assurance, education, and public sector accounting. It also issues guidance to encourage high-quality performance by professional accountants in business.

As an independent standard setting body under the auspices of IFAC, the IAESB develops and issues, in the public interest and under its own authority, standards, practice statements, and information papers on both pre-qualification education and training of accountants and on continuing professional development for members of the accounting profession.

In addition, the IAESB acts as a catalyst in bringing together the developed and developing nations and assisting in the advancement of accounting education programs worldwide, particularly where this will promote economic development.

2.2 Intended Users

This project is designed to assist IFAC's member bodies in developing approaches to CPD measurement that would be applicable to the wide variety of professional accountants that comprise the membership of these bodies.

The IEP is primarily aimed at IFAC member bodies, but will also be of interest to a wide range of external stakeholders involved in developing, delivering, monitoring and benefiting from CPD, including the academic community, accounting educators, policy makers, researchers, regulators and professional accountants themselves.

We anticipate the IEP will be used by member bodies and others to inform the further development of effective CPD systems for professional accountants.

2.3 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Professional Accountants

This project is important to IFAC's strategic priority of enhancing the level of competence within the accountancy profession. CPD plays a major role in maintaining and enhancing the competence of professional accountants throughout their working lives.

International Education Standard (IES) 7, *Continuing Professional Development: A Program of Lifelong Learning and Continuing Development of Professional Competence* came into effect on January 1, 2006. It prescribes IFAC member bodies' obligations in respect of CPD for all professional accountants, recommending three possible approaches to the measurement of completion of CPD:

- (a) Input-based approaches: by establishing a set amount of learning activity that is considered appropriate to develop and maintain competence;
- (b) Output-based approaches: by requiring professional accountants to demonstrate, by way of outcomes, that they develop and maintain professional competence; and

- (c) Combination approaches: by effectively and efficiently combining elements of the input- and output-based approaches, setting the amount of learning activity required and measuring the outcomes achieved.

The IAESB generally favors output-based approaches to the development of the professional knowledge professional skills and professional values, ethics and attitudes required of professional accountants. Anecdotal evidence suggests, however, that most IFAC member bodies have adopted an input-based approach to the measurement of CPD, and that few member bodies have, to date, implemented output-based or combination approaches.

Recognizing that this was an area where member bodies may welcome additional guidance, the IAESB began, in February 2006, a project exploring the production of an IEP to assist with the implementation of IES 7. A volunteer task force was appointed to conduct initial research into the extent and scope of CPD systems across a range of professions, which reported back to the IAESB in July 2006.

The task force reported that, while the majority of professions studied followed input-based approaches to the measurement of CPD, a number of professions (including medicine, engineering and teaching professions) in some countries had adopted output-based or combination approaches and were worthy of more detailed investigation. It was also noted that a number of IFAC member bodies had recently introduced output-based or combination approaches to CPD.

The IAESB agreed that further research by the task force alone would be difficult, given the limited resources available to it. It was therefore decided that the IAESB would commission external researchers to conduct more in-depth research into approaches to CPD measurement adopted by a range of professions comparable to the accounting profession, with the end result being the publication of an IEP exploring and proposing approaches to CPD measurement for consideration for potential implementation by IFAC member bodies.

2.4 International Education Papers for Professional Accountants

International Education Papers for Professional Accountants (IEPs) are intended to promote discussion or debate on education and development issues affecting the accountancy profession, present findings, or describe situations of interest relating to education and development issues affecting the accountancy profession. IEPs are not authoritative.

IEPs may raise discussion within the accountancy profession to a level whereby issues may be progressed or eventually resolved. As such, they may explain, examine, analyze, or otherwise critically assess education issues and practices. The aim of such IEPs is to provoke consideration of the issues and to encourage comment and feedback so that the issues can be advanced. In this way, they may be useful for exposing views, approaches and methods that are in early stages of development and thus may be useful forerunners to International Education Standards (IESs) and International Education Practice Statements (IEPSs). Alternatively, IEPs may be simply descriptive in nature. In this

function, they aim to promote awareness of, and to transfer knowledge and information on, education and development issues or practices relating to the accountancy profession.

Section 3: Statement of Requirements

A detailed analysis of the IAESB's requirements for the development of the proposed IEP on *Approaches to CPD Measurement* is set out in this section.

3.1 Project Deliverables

The main deliverable from this project will be an International Education Paper (IEP), written in the English language, in a form where it may be approved for publication by the IAESB. This should include a summary of the IEP to help the IAESB publicize the document. The final deliverables provided to the IAESB should be suitable for distribution and circulation among IFAC member bodies and other stakeholders and interested groups. Written documents and other deliverables should conform to IFAC style and editorial guidelines.

3.2 Content of Proposed IEP

The content of the IEP shall include, as a minimum:

- A comprehensive literature review, focusing on (a) models of CPD measurement proposed by academic experts and others, and (b) reviews of CPD measurement systems implemented to date by professional bodies comparable to the accounting profession;
- An inventory of examples of good practice in CPD measurement systems in the accounting profession and other comparable professions, wherever possible drawing on examples from a range of countries;
- An analysis of different practices/methods that may be used in the implementation of CPD measurement systems, including discussion of the benefits, costs, advantages, and disadvantages of each to a range of stakeholders including professional bodies, employers, regulators and the general public (public interest);
- An analysis of links between professional bodies' systems of initial professional development and continuing professional development (CPD), where these exist;
- Recommendations for the implementation of CPD measurement systems by IFAC member bodies, and guidance for member bodies on institutional strategies, choices and implementation policies; and
- A list of sources of further information (including websites) and published works on approaches to CPD measurement.

3.3 General Requirements

3.3.1 Indicative Timeline

IFAC intends to publish the final IEP in the first quarter of 2008. In order to meet this deadline the supplier will need to adhere to the indicative timeline below. The IAESB is prepared to consider variant solutions where a supplier believes that a revised timeline will result in the production of an IEP of significantly higher quality.

Deadline for submission of proposals	January 12, 2007
Consideration of proposals	Up to February 15, 2007
Decision on awarding project	March 1, 2007
Decision communicated to tendering organizations	By March 15, 2007
Contracts signed with chosen supplier	By March 15, 2007
Progress report	June 2007
Progress report/draft IEP	October 2007
Final draft IEP received	February 2008
Publication of IEP	March 2008

3.3.2 Conduct of Research Project

It is envisaged that the research project leading to the drafting of an IEP will encompass a mixture of (a) review of current literature, (b) desk-based research and (c) survey work. We are interested in hearing from suppliers as to their proposals for an effective research methodology.

The supplier will apply the research method and produce the final deliverables in accordance with their proposal, accepted by the IAESB. Recommendations for significant changes to the project proposal and/or deliverables must be submitted in advance to the IAESB CPD Task Force for approval.

A principal researcher, appointed by the supplier and approved by the IAESB, will lead the project through to completion and will provide written progress reports. Regular progress reports are to be submitted to the IAESB Technical Manager.

3.3.3 Written Progress Reports

A written progress report for the IAESB's meeting in June 2007 is required by May 15, 2007. A similar report or early draft IEP, for IAESB comment and discussion at its meeting in October 2007 is required by September 30, 2007. Other progress reports, if required, are to be provided to the IAESB Technical Manager on a regular basis, as agreed.

3.3.4 Final Delivery Date

A final IEP is to be presented to the IAESB for approval for publication at its meeting in February 2008. The final IEP and other materials are to be made available to the IAESB in advance of the meeting, as agreed with the IAESB Technical Manager, but usually no later than three weeks before the meeting.

3.4 Copyright

Copyright for the IEP will rest solely with IFAC, although acknowledgment of the researcher(s) will be given in the IEP when published by IFAC.

3.5 Budget

A maximum budget of US \$55,000 is available for the total costs of researching, drafting and for any other activities involved in delivering the proposed IEP.

Section 4: Basis for Award of Contract

The criteria that will be used to judge the proposals are as follows:

Product

- Meets the specifications for the content of the IEP outlined in this RFP.
- Proposed research methodology
- Proposed IEP surveys a wide range of professions and countries.

Supplier

- Experience relevant to this project (e.g., research relating to professional bodies, professional education and CPD).
- Demonstrated ability to complete the project on time and in accordance with the product specification.
- Demonstrated ability to produce similar, high-quality publications.

Terms and Conditions

- Cost and ability to deliver within the specified budget.
- Conditions surrounding supply.

Section 5: Information Required

5.1 Proposal Content and Format

Proposals should set out clearly all information requested in the following sections.

Where specific questions are asked, individual and factual replies must be given, not general answers or reference to sales or other literature. Proposals may include relevant additional literature but this should be presented in separate appendices.

5.2 Information Summary

Please provide a summary of your intended research methodology and general approach to this project, stating the main tasks and milestones involved. The proposal should clearly state that the IEP satisfies our needs as described in Section 3 of this Request for Proposals.

5.3 Structure and Format of IEP

Please provide a more detailed description of your proposed research methodology, leading to the development of an IEP. Please also provide a more detailed description of the proposed structure and content of the IEP, ensuring that you meet the specifications outlined in this RFP.

5.4 Supplier Information

Please provide:

- Name of supplier;
- Track record in research and publishing related to the accountancy and other professions, professional education and CPD;
- Samples of similar products, if any;
- Limited list of references (2 or 3);
- Brief resumes for proposed researcher(s); and
- Details of any sub-contractors to be used.

5.5 Delivery, Publication and Payment

Please supply:

- An outline project plan in accordance with the indicative timeline in section 3.3.1, or a variant solution with the reasons for proposing such a solution;
- The terms and conditions included in your standard contract (if applicable) for the development of the proposed IEP; and
- Details of the payment schedule proposed. This will need an acceptance criteria schedule (set in the contract). Final payment will not be made until the IEP has been delivered and is accepted for publication by the IAESB.

5.6 Financial Proposal

Please provide us your proposal for the total cost for the successful development of an IEP and associated materials, as specified above. This should not exceed the amount of US \$55,000, including all incidental expenditure.



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