ASEAN-Australia Centre

Short Course Request for Tender

ASEAN's Digital Transformation: Balancing Innovation, Integrity and Inclusion

Abbreviations and acronyms

Term	Meaning
ABN	Australian Business Number
ACN	Australian Company Number
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AUD	Australian Dollars
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion
GST	Goods and Services Tax
IP	Intellectual Property
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
RFT	Request for Tender
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
STEM	Science, Technology Engineering and Math
TAP	Technical Assessment Panel

ASEAN-Australia Centre

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1. Introduction

1.1. Invitation to Tender

Palladium, the Managing Contractor for the ASEAN-Australia Centre Leadership Program (the Program) is seeking tenders for a **cost-effective** solution to the design and delivery of the Short Course: ***ASEAN's Digital Transformation: Balancing Innovation, Integrity and Inclusion.***

Details of the course are included later in this Request For Tender (RFT) (see Section 4 – Scope of Services) and should be read in conjunction with the *Short Course Provider Handbook*.

To be eligible to tender for the design and delivery of this Short Course, the lead business must be a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) in Australia, or an Australian tertiary institution as defined in the Higher Education Support Act, 2003 Table A, B and C. Consortia proposals are acceptable, provided that the lead and accountable organisation meet the above criterion.

1.2. Key dates and details related to this RFT

A timetable for the tender process is outlined below:

Description	Date/ Details
Request for Tender released	29 October 2025
Online briefing session for tenderers with Q&A	2:00pm AEDT 7 November 2025 **Microsoft Teams Need help?** **Join the meeting now** Meeting ID: 224 201 013 009 9 Passcode: 7W2m5VS2 **Dial in by phone** +61 2 7208 4653,,866144077# Australia, Sydney Find a local number Phone conference ID: 866 144 077#
Closing date for registration of intent to submit a tender	5:00pm AEDT 12 November 2025 Note: Only registered Tenderers will receive any addenda to the RFT.
Contact person for registration or enquiries related to this RFT	Program Coordinator, ASEAN-Australia Centre Leadership Program alp.tenders@thepalladiumgroup.com
Closing date for questions on the RFT	5:00pm AEDT 12 November 2025

Description	Date/ Details
	Note: All queries pertaining to the RFT must be sent to: alp.tenders@thepalladiumgroup.com before this closing time.
Closing date for Tender submission	5:00pm AEDT 26 November 2025 Note: Late submissions will not be considered unless the delay is solely due to mishandling by Palladium.
Mode of submission	Email submission to: alp.tenders@thepalladiumgroup.com before the Tender submission closing time.
Number of copies and format of Tender	One (1) electronic (.pdf) file of the Technical Proposal including all required annexes. One (1) electronic (.pdf) file of the Financial Proposal.
Anticipated tender outcome notification date	Mid-December 2025 Note: date is subject to change at DFAT/Palladium discretion.

1.3. Introduction to the ASEAN-Australia Centre Leadership Program - Short Courses

The ASEAN-Australia Centre Leadership Program (the Program) supports the ASEAN-Australia Centre's work to build a network of future ASEAN leaders with strong connections to Australia, who will drive positive change across Australia and Southeast Asia. It responds to the call in *Invested Australia's Southeast Economic Strategy to 2040 (Invested)* for continued investment in Australia's education offerings, advocacy, alumni and scholarships to drive Australia's economic and people-to-people connections with Southeast Asia.

The Program consists of two tiers of activities in Australia: Short Courses and Emerging Leaders Programs. The Short Courses aim to build technical capacity, knowledge and expertise of Australian and ASEAN participants in the STEM and resources sector. This RFT is for one of the short courses – ***ASEAN's Digital Transformation: Balancing Innovation, Integrity and Inclusion.***

1.4. Document Structure

This RFT consists of the following sections:

- Section 1: Introduction
- Section 2: Tender conditions
- Section 3: Tender requirements and attachments (including Statutory Declaration)
- Section 4: Scope of Services
- Section 5: Selection criteria and information required for technical assessment
- Section 6: Selection criteria and information required for price assessment

- Attachments 1 –8: Note that Attachment 5 (Financial Proposal and Indicative Budget), Attachment 7 (*Short Course Provider Handbook*), and Attachment 8 (Palladium Subcontractor Agreement Template) are separate files.

Tenderers should carefully read and familiarise themselves with the RFT documentation, including all attachments to ensure compliance with the Tender requirements and ensure they can execute a contract without delay. Tenders deemed non-conforming by Palladium may be rejected.

1.5. Definitions

In this RFT, the following terms have the following meanings:

“DFAT” means the Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade;

“Short Course” means the Short Course to be delivered under the ASEAN-Australia Centre Leadership Program

“the Commonwealth” means the Commonwealth of Australia and its implementing agency, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade;

“Contract” means Palladium’s draft Services Agreement or Services Agreement;

“RFT” means this document (Request for Tender), Palladium’s draft Services Agreement and any Addenda issued by Palladium prior to the closing date and time for the submission of Tenders;

“participant(s)” means people in receipt of an ASEAN-Australia Centre Leadership Program Short Course.

2. Tender Conditions

2.1. Corrections and Additions

If a Tenderer finds any discrepancy, error or omission in the RFT, has a question, or wishes to make an enquiry concerning the RFT, it is to notify Palladium in writing and in accordance with Section 1.2 *closing date for queries*. Where appropriate, answers to any such notices or questions will be given by Palladium in the form of Addenda and will be issued to all registered Tenderers.

Palladium may amend any part of this RFT and attachments prior to the *closing date for tenders* (Section 1.2). Any amendment to, or clarification of, any aspect of the RFT will be issued in the form of an Addenda and provided to all registered Tenderers before the *closing date for tenders* (Section 1.2). Such Addenda will become part of the RFT.

Tenderers' attention is drawn to paragraph 2.19 regarding Addenda.

2.2. Expenses

Tenderers are responsible at their own expense for:

- making all arrangements and obtaining and considering all information relating to the preparation, delivery and lodgement of their Tender;
- answering any queries and providing any further information sought by Palladium;
- dealing with any issues, including disputes, that may arise out of the RFT process; and
- engaging in any further process, subsequent negotiation or discussions with Palladium that may result from the RFT.

2.3. Ownership of Tenders

All Tenders become the property of DFAT on submission.

Such Intellectual Property (IP) rights as may exist in the information contained in Tenders will remain the property of the Tenderer.

The Tenderer authorises Palladium to copy, adapt, amend, disclose or do anything else necessary (in Palladium's sole discretion) to all materials (including that which contains IP rights of the Tenderer or other parties) contained in the Tender for the purpose of its evaluation of Tenders, negotiating any contract with the Tenderer (if the matter proceeds that far) and all other matters relating there to, including Governmental and Parliamentary reporting requirements.

Palladium may make such copies of Tenders, as it requires for these purposes.

2.4. Tenderer's Acknowledgment

A Tender is made on the basis that the Tenderer acknowledges that:

a) it examined the RFT documents (Sections 1 to 6 and Attachments 1 to 8)

b) the RFT specifies Palladium's rights in respect of the RFT and the Tenderer agrees that Palladium may exercise its rights as set out in the RFT in respect of the RFT process

c) it sought and examined all necessary information which is obtainable by making reasonable enquiries relevant to Palladium's requirements, including the risks and other circumstances which may affect a Tender

d) in lodging its Tender it did not rely on any express or implied statement, warranty or representation, whether verbal, written, or otherwise made by or on behalf of Palladium other than any statement, warranty or representation contained in the RFT

e) it did not use the improper assistance of Palladium's employees or ex-employees, or Commonwealth employees or ex-employees, or information unlawfully obtained from Palladium or the Commonwealth in compiling its Tender

f) it satisfied itself as to the correctness and sufficiency of its Tender

g) it is responsible for all costs and expenses related to its involvement in the RFT, in accordance with Section 2.2

h) Palladium and the Commonwealth are not responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by the Tenderer or any other person in responding to or taking any other action in relation to this RFT, whether or not Palladium terminates, varies or suspends the RFT process or takes any other action permitted under this RFT

i) the Tenderer understands that the selection of a successful Tenderer and/or Subcontractor must have DFAT agreement before Palladium can award a contract for the activity and that DFAT reserves its rights to accept or reject any Tenderer or Subcontractor for any reason

j) the Tenderer will comply with the rules set out in this RFT and as applicable to Short Courses.

2.5. Right to Conduct Security, Probity and Financial Checks

Palladium, in its absolute discretion, reserves the right to conduct such security, probity and/or financial checks on Tenders and/or Tenderers for the purpose of evaluating Tenders to this RFT or any other stage of the Tendering process for the services described in this RFT, as it deems necessary.

2.6. Palladium's Rights

Without limiting its rights at law or otherwise, without incurring any liability for any costs, losses or expenses or damages incurred by any Tenderer or Tenderers and without any obligation to inform any affected Tenderer or Tenderers of the grounds for such action, Palladium reserves the right in its absolute discretion at any time to:

a) subject to the RFT, evaluate Tenders as Palladium sees appropriate in the context of its requirements

cease to proceed with the process outlined in this RFT or any subsequent process

suspend or vary the process or any part of it

b) require additional information or clarification from any Tenderer or anyone else or provide additional information or clarification to any Tenderer

c) call for new Tenders

d) accept or reject any Tender that does not comply with this RFT

e) add to, alter, delete or exclude any services as required by Palladium.

2.7. Contracting Entity with Palladium

Palladium intends to contract with one legal entity only. If the Tenderer is a member of a consortium or teaming arrangement then the tender must stipulate which part(s) of Palladium's requirements each entity comprising the consortium or teaming arrangement would provide and how the entities would relate with each other to ensure full provision of the requirements.

Tenderers must provide detailed information on services proposed to be sub-contracted and will be expected to take full responsibility for all sub-contracted services.

2.8. Purchasing of Goods and Services

In its purchasing of goods and services, the appointed Contractor will be required to comply with Commonwealth Procurement Rules in order to achieve "value for money" through "open and effective competition" in the selection of suppliers. In addition, the Contractor will be required to follow Palladium's procedures as set out in the Contract and its Scope of Services. All procurement processes must be carefully documented. The Contractor will be liable to audit by Palladium or its nominee to ensure adherence to these principles. The sub-contractor must comply with Australian copyright law.

2.9. Relationship with Tenderers

Palladium is not bound contractually or in any other way to any Tenderer by this RFT.

2.10. Tender Validity

Tenders are accepted on the basis that they are valid for ninety (90) days from the closing date for receipt of Tenders.

2.11. Repeat Courses

Palladium may, from time to time and at its discretion, request a quotation from the selected Tenderer for repeat delivery of the course tendered for within the term of the Agreement. Upon receipt of the quotation, Palladium may enter negotiations with the selected Tenderer for repeat delivery of the course in the same or another Program country location.

Tenderers interested in being considered for repeat delivery should indicate their interest within the tender proposal submission and **specify within the Financial Proposal (Schedules 5) which costs would not apply to a repeat delivery**. Palladium shall only seek to enter negotiations for delivery of repeat courses in circumstances where value for money can be demonstrated by not going to market.

2.12. Contract Format

Palladium intends to enter negotiations with the preferred Tenderer. These negotiations will be based on a Contract including fixed and reimbursable cost components. The contract also provides for payments made against the achievement of measurable milestones for the delivery of defined outputs.

Palladium is responsible for ensuring that the Commonwealth obtains value for money through the tendering process.

The successful Tenderer will be required to enter into a Services Agreement with Palladium in the form outlined in Attachment 8 to this RFT. Tenderers seeking amendments to the Palladium Services Agreement Template (Attachment 8) are required to complete Attachment 8 and submit this along with the Tender by the *closing date for tenders* (Section 1.2). No representation is made by Palladium that proposed amendments will be accepted. This Palladium Services Agreement Template (Attachment 8) may be amended by Palladium to meet the specific requirements of the relevant Short Course for the Program.

2.13. Disclosure of Information Provided by Tenderers

Palladium's selection process for services is conducted in accordance with Commonwealth Procurement Rules. It is Palladium policy not to divulge to one Tenderer, information that has been provided in confidence by another.

Tenderers should note that the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth) (The Act) gives members of the public rights of access to official documents of the Commonwealth Government and its Agencies. The Act extends, as far as possible, rights to access information in the possession of the Commonwealth Government and its Agencies, limited only by considerations for the protection of essential public interest and of the private and

business affairs of persons in respect of whom information is collected and held by departments and public authorities.

2.14. Technical Assessment

Palladium will rank Tenderers on the basis of technical and financial assessments. Palladium is seeking a **cost-effective** solution to the design and delivery of the Short Course

A Technical Assessment Panel (TAP), chaired by a representative from Palladium, will assess each submission using the criteria as set out in this RFT (*Capacity and training experience, Response to course specification* and *Core personnel*). The Technical Proposal of each submission will be worth 70% of the total assessment score and will be assessed separately to consideration of the Financial Proposal.

The result, together with any other factors relevant to the selection, will be considered by Palladium in deciding on the selection of the preferred Tenderer and/or award of Contract.

2.15. Financial Assessment

Following the technical assessment, the Financial Proposal of each submission will be assessed using the criteria set out in this RFT (*Personnel course design and delivery cost, Fixed Management Fee)*. The Financial Proposal will be worth 30% of the total assessment score.

2.16. Contract Negotiations

Palladium will conduct contract negotiations only with the person identified in the Tender with the authority to negotiate and conclude a contract on behalf of the preferred Tenderer.

If Palladium is unable to satisfactorily conclude contract negotiations with the preferred Tenderer, Palladium reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to terminate the negotiations and enter contract negotiations with the next ranked Tenderer(s).

Palladium expects contract negotiations to be concluded within a reasonable period, nominally four (4) weeks.

Palladium reserves the right to negotiate with the most favourable Tenderer should it be deemed that ‘the offering prices are unreasonable or greater than the targets set in the planning process’ as per Commonwealth Procurement Rules.

2.17. Award of Contract

Any contract resulting from the Tender process outlined in this RFT is subject to the negotiation of a mutually acceptable contract based on the Palladium Services Agreement Template (Attachment 8).

2.18. Payment Policy

Tenderers should note that it is Palladium policy to pay accounts in arrears on the due date specified in the agreement with the supplier. Palladium’s standard terms are payment upon acceptance of goods or services and the receipt of a correctly rendered invoice, and subject to the delivery of outputs against specified milestones to Palladium’s satisfaction. Payment, however, does not mean that Palladium necessarily accepts that the work meets that milestone and Palladium reserves its rights to full reimbursement if DFAT does not accept that a milestone has been reached which justifies payment.

2.19. Intention to submit a tender

Interested parties are strongly encouraged to register their intention to submit a Tender no later than the date set out in Section 1.2.

Those parties who have registered their intention to submit a Tender by this time and date will be provided with any subsequent Addenda to the RFT. Parties who have not registered their intention to submit a Tender

by this time and date will not receive Addenda to the RFT. Addenda may include responses to questions from other proposed Tenderers and/or amendments to the Scope of Services after the RFT is released.

Registrations of an intention to submit a Tender should be transmitted via email to: **alp.tenders@thepalladiumgroup.com.**

Registration can be made by providing the following information:

- name of organisation;
- name of contact person; and
- full contact details for receipt of Addenda.

Providing an intention to submit a Tender will not impose any obligation on any interested party to submit a Tender. Parties who have registered their intention to submit a Tender are requested to notify Palladium if their intentions change.

2.20. Deed of Novation

At the time of executing the contract the selected Tenderer will be required to execute a Deed of Novation and Substitution, in the appropriate form to ensure the rights of DFAT, in the event of DFAT issuing a note of substitution.

3. Tender Requirements

Prospective Tenderers should read this statement of Tender Requirements carefully, along with the key dates outlined in Section 1.2. At Palladium's sole discretion non-conforming Tenders may not be accepted.

3.1. Tender Format

Palladium's requirements with respect to the format of Tenders are as follows:

- Tenders are to be submitted in the name of the entity with which Palladium would enter the contract and include the name of the person authorised to negotiate and conclude a contract.
- The font type is to be no smaller than 10 point and in single column format.
- The Palladium, DFAT or ASEAN-Australia Centre logo is not to appear on any Tender documentation.
- Number of copies: One (1) electronic (.pdf) file of the Technical Proposal including all required annexes. One (1) electronic (.pdf) file of the Financial Proposal.
- The Financial Proposal is to be submitted as a separate pdf file.

3.2. Tender Contents

3.2.1 TECHNICAL PROPOSAL (one separate PDF file)

The Technical Proposal must contain the following parts in the order as below:

Cover Page

The cover page must clearly indicate "Technical Proposal" and include the following information:

Tenderer's General Information	
Lead Business Name	
ABN or ACN	
Business type	
Contact person (authorised to negotiate and enter into a contract)	
Registered business office address	
Email	
Phone	
Partner Organisations (if any)	

Response to the Selection Criteria

The Technical Proposal must substantively and individually address the selection criteria as set out in Section 5 and be no more than ten (10) A4 typewritten pages (including tables, diagrams, notes and references but excluding title page and annexes). Text more than ten pages will not be assessed.

Technical Proposal Annexes

The following annexes must be submitted in the format as requested in Section 5.2:

- Annex 1 – Curricula Vita (CV) Proforma
- Annex 2 – Draft Course Outline
- Annex 3 – Risk Mitigation Matrix
- Annex 4 – Statutory Declaration

3.2.1. FINANCIAL PROPOSAL (one separate PDF file)

The Financial Proposal is to include fully costed quotes in Australian dollars at current prices valid for ninety (90) days from the closing date for the receipt of Tenders.

The Financial Proposal must include the following parts in the order as below:

Cover Page

The cover page must clearly indicate "Financial Proposal", the Tenderer's contact person and contact details.

Schedule 1. Personnel Costs for Design of Course

Tenderers must provide details as described in **Attachment 5.1** to this RFT.

Schedule 2. Personnel Costs for Delivery of Course

Tenderers must provide details as described in **Attachment 5.2** to this RFT.

Schedule 3. Fixed Management Fee

Tenderers must provide details as described in **Attachment 5.3** to this RFT.

Schedule 4. Cost Summary Schedule

Tenderers must provide details as described in **Attachment 5.4** to this RFT.

Schedule 5. Indicative Budget

Tenderers must provide details in the format described in **Attachment 5.5** to this RFT.

Note: Tenderers should be aware that the fixed cost information provided in Schedules 1 to 4 is required to be the same as those costs detailed in the fixed cost component within Schedule 5.

Schedules 1 to 4 form part of the "like-for-like" assessment of the Financial Proposal.

3.3. Lodgement of Tenders

Tenders must be submitted via email to alp.tenders@thepalladiumgroup.com no later than **5.00pm AEDT** on 26 November 2025.

The subject line of the email tender submission should include the course title:

RFT 02-2025 ASEAN-Australia Centre Leadership Program: ***ASEAN's Digital Transformation: Balancing Innovation, Integrity and Inclusion***

Late submissions will not be considered unless the delay is solely due to mishandling by Palladium.

4. Scope of Services

4.1. Activity Identification

Client	ASEAN-Australia Centre
Program	ASEAN-Australia Centre Leadership Program
Short course title	ASEAN's Digital Transformation: Balancing Innovation, Integrity and Inclusion ASEAN
Delivery mode	**Hybrid:** (synchronous and asynchronous) delivered virtually online and one week immersion program in-Australia
Short course duration and delivery schedule	Delivered over up to 12 weeks (12 weeks preferable), commencing from beginning February 2026 and completing no later than mid-May 2026 Tenderers are to propose the indicative training schedule including an online preliminary component, in-Australia component and online applied component *Tenderers are to take into consider the Lunar New Year holiday (17-18 February 2026), Easter period (30 Mar-12 Apr 2026) and Eid ul Fitr (19-10 Mar 2026) when scheduling the in-Australia component*
No. of participants	24 participants from ASEAN Member States and Australia

4.2. Contract Details

Delivery	Tasks must be performed by a qualified and competent team.
Contract type	Service Agreement to be negotiated between Palladium and the lead Tenderer.
Basis of payment	Fixed design and delivery costs and management fee plus agreed reimbursable expenses (for example, actual costs incurred in delivery of the course as per an agreed budget including participant allowances, etc.). Reimbursable budget is negotiated with the preferred Tenderer.

4.3. Short course details

Program goal	The goal of the ASEAN-Australia Centre Leadership Program is to build a network of future ASEAN leaders with strong connections to Australia, who will drive positive change across Australia and Southeast Asia.
Context	- ASEAN's digital economy is predicted to reach $330 billion in 2025, driven by internet penetration and mobile connectivity. However, the growth is uneven, with disparities in digital literacy and access across member states.

	- Southeast Asia's population is young and digitally savvy-around 380 million people in Southeast Asia were aged under 35 in 2022, and daily social media usage is among the highest in the world. - The 2021 ASEAN Digital Generation report highlights that while youth are optimistic about technology's potential, they also express concerns about its impact on employment and societal values. - Initiatives like the ASEAN Digital Literacy Programme aim to empower young people with the skills to discern credible information and engage positively online. - Misinformation poses significant risks in the region, often exacerbated by the rapid spread of false information on social media platforms. The ASEAN Guideline on Combating Fake News emphasises the need for governments to manage information effectively to counteract misinformation. - Delivery of this Short Course is strategically timed, with the signing of the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA) expected in 2026. DEFA will establish the foundation for digital economy interoperability within the region. - At the same time, Australia is implementing policies to protect young people from the negative impacts of social media. From December 2025, age-restricted social media platforms will have to take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under the age of 16 from creating or keeping an account. The restrictions aim to protect young Australians from pressures and risks that users can be exposed to while logged in to social media accounts. - Across ASEAN and Australia, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Big Tech platforms are accelerating digital transformation—reshaping economies, governance, and daily life. AI has the potential to boost productivity, enhance service delivery, and support sustainable development. However, it also raises ethical, regulatory, and societal challenges, including algorithmic bias, surveillance concerns, and concentration of power among major technology companies. The influence of Big Tech in shaping information flows, public opinion, and market access underscores the importance of digital sovereignty and policy coherence. - As AI systems increasingly mediate information and automate decision-making, the intersection between technology, trust, and youth wellbeing has become a critical policy frontier. Understanding how to balance innovation with protection—while promoting fair competition and equitable participation—is essential for sustainable digital governance. - This course explores these complex dynamics through the lenses of policy, ethics, innovation, and inclusion. It equips participants with practical tools and insights to navigate digital transformation responsibly, fostering trusted and resilient digital ecosystems that align with ASEAN's regional digital strategy and Australia's commitment to a safe, fair, and inclusive online environment.
Purpose	- The purpose of this Short Course is to strengthen the capacity of emerging and mid-career leaders from ASEAN Member States and

	Australia to navigate the opportunities and risks of digital transformation, with a focus on AI, Big tech influence and youth well-being. - The course promotes responsible, inclusive, and ethical approaches to digital governance that support regional cooperation under the forthcoming ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA) and align with Australia's priorities on digital safety, trust, and innovation. - Through policy dialogue, applied learning, and engagement with Australian experts, participants will explore how to design and implement frameworks that harness digital technologies for growth and inclusion—while safeguarding societies against misinformation, exploitation, and inequitable digital power structures.
- Intended learning outcomes	By the end of the Short Course, participants will be able to: - Analyse the growth trajectory and structural dynamics of ASEAN's digital economy, including the role of AI, platform ecosystems, and data-driven business models. - Evaluate the societal, economic, and ethical implications of Artificial Intelligence and Big Tech dominance, including impacts on employment, privacy, competition, and governance. - Assess the risks and consequences of misinformation and disinformation, and review ASEAN and Australian strategies for building information integrity and public trust. - Examine policies and frameworks that support responsible AI, digital rights, and youth protection in online environments, identifying shared lessons across ASEAN and Australia. - Explore innovations and practical tools for digital literacy, critical thinking, and ethical technology design, empowering young people and communities to engage safely and effectively online. - Identify opportunities for regional cooperation and investment in digital innovation, data governance, and cross-border interoperability aligned with DEFA objectives. - Develop actionable strategies or policy recommendations to strengthen digital resilience, inclusion, and accountability, ensuring that digital transformation benefits all sectors of society.
Course Overview	Learning will be delivered through a range of strategies/modes, which may include but not be limited to: - Policy dialogues with AI ethics and digital policy experts, panel discussions and case study analysis (from the region and globally); - Site visits to Australian start-ups, innovation hubs, government agencies and research institutes; - Peer to peer learning and mentoring; and

	- Practical, project-based assessment linked to participants' country contexts. This Short Course may include a series of theoretical modules delivered virtually, followed by one week in Australia and another series of follow-up virtual sessions, including 1:1 or group mentoring activities to support completion of a capstone project. Tenderers will be encouraged to propose innovative, flexible and value for money solutions to achieve the course objectives and maximise linkages with Australia and across the region.
Training content	Topics may include, but not be limited to: - *Understanding AI and Digital Transformation*, including foundations of AI, machine learning, data ecosystems and digital governance. - *ASEAN Digital Landscape and Policy Frameworks*. - *Misinformation and Disinformation in a Digital Era* to understand the information ecosystem, deepfakes and echo chambers. - *Media Literacy and Trust Building*, including use of practical tools to build digital resilience. - *The Role of Big Tech and Platform Governance*, including an analysis of Big Tech's influence on democracy, privacy and local economies. - *Cybersecurity, Data Protection and Digital Sovereignty*, using case studies from the region. - *Understanding, youth, AI and Digital Wellbeing*, through dialogue with youth leaders and engagement with Australia's eSafety Commission. - *AI Ethics and Responsible Innovation* to enhance understanding of bias, transparency and ethical frameworks for AI. - *Digital Inclusion and Equity* to examine barriers and inclusive policy design. - *Digital Economy and Future Skills* to understand skills transitions and innovation systems.
Institutional and individual linkages	Tenderers proposals will be required to identify aligned counterparts (Australian and regionally) to be invited to contribute to the program. These may include: - Australian eSafety Commissioner - DFAT Digital Cooperation Office - UNESCO - ASEAN Foundation - Regional youth and media literacy NGOs - AI policy researchers across the region
Certification requirements	Submissions which propose awarding a micro-credential or credits towards further study are strongly preferred and will be highly regarded. Tenderers proposing formal certification or study credits must specify any additional

	costs and indicate the volume of learning (in hours) required to achieve the certification. At a minimum, the successful Tenderer will award the participants with a Certificate of Completion (template provided to the successful Tenderer by Palladium), which will be awarded to participants at the conclusion of the Short Course.
Participant profile and selection criteria	Participants may be drawn from early to mid-career policymakers, civil servants, media professionals, educators, technologists, and youth advocates from ASEAN Member States and Australia. Participants will: - be citizens of and be residing in an ASEAN Member State or Australia[1] - hold a bachelor's degree or equivalent - have between five and ten years of professional experience related to digital technology and transformation - be able to demonstrate how the course will enable them to lead digital transformation in their sector ASEAN participants will: - have professional working proficiency in English (recommended at least IELTS 6.5)
Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)	The Program is committed to inclusive development and recognises that achieving sustainable outcomes depends on the full and equitable participation of all people—regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or socio-economic background. At a minimum, course providers must: • Integrate GEDSI concepts and practical tools into course sessions, site visits and mentoring • Ensure representation of diverse voices in examples, case studies, and presenters • Design learning activities that are inclusive and accessible to all participants • Monitor and report on GEDSI outcomes, with disaggregated data Gender equity will be adhered to in the selection process. Women, people from diverse ethnic backgrounds and people with disabilities who meet the participant profile will be encouraged to apply. The Program is inclusive and there may be participants with disability. The successful Tenderer will be provided with further information so that reasonable adjustments and accommodations can be made as required.

[1] Residential requirement does not apply to Myanmar

Communication and public diplomacy	The course provider will support and contribute to the program's communication and public diplomacy activities. This includes two social media posts during course delivery, an article and the provision of professional / high quality images. The course provider must comply the Centre's branding guidelines as outlined in the *Short Course Provider Handbook*.

4.4. Financial Details

Funding of Courses	The successful Tenderer is to submit a detailed indicative budget using the templates included in **Attachment 5** to this RFT. The indicative budget will be finalised in conjunction with Palladium during contract negotiations.
Invoicing and Payment	Palladium will pay the Contractor the Service Fees in instalments known as Milestone Payments based on outputs as summarised below. The Milestone Payments will be payable to the Contractor progressively, on Palladium's acceptance of the satisfactory completion of identified outputs and a correctly rendered invoice. Where a Milestone Payment is to follow acceptance of a report, Palladium will not be obliged to make full payment until all outputs to be achieved by the Contractor in the period covered by the report have been achieved to its satisfaction and within the agreed timeframes.
Value for Money	Palladium is seeking a **cost-effective** solution to the design and delivery of the short course. A Course Budget template is provided at Attachment 5 and consists of two parts: **Part A: Non-reimbursable (fixed) costs** - A1: Fixed personnel costs design of course - A2: Fixed personnel costs delivery of course - A3: Fixed management fee (head office administration costs and fees) **Part B: Reimbursable costs incurred by Contractor** - B1: Personnel costs for delivery (e.g. specialist presenters) - B2: Course delivery costs - B3: Accommodation - B4: Participants allowances (per diem) - B5: Local travel and transfers - B6: Other costs and expenses NOTE: Estimated reimbursable costs in Part B of the Course Budget are to be included as part of the Financial Proposal. These costs are not considered in the Value for Money assessment but will be provided to the Centre as part of the approval process and will be subject to negotiation

	with the selected Tenderer as part of the contract process in line with mandated service levels.

4.5. Services to be provided

Overview	- The successful Tenderer will be responsible for all aspects of the activity, from course design through to course completion. - The *Short Course Provider Handbook* stipulate the requirements for: staffing, pre-course preparation; delivery; logistics (e.g. in-Australia travel, orientation, accommodation, per diems and communications); welfare/pastoral care; MEL and reporting; financial management and; communications and public diplomacy. - Tenderers will be required to present innovative delivery strategies to achieve the short course objectives and intended learning outcomes. - The successful course provider will be required to conduct a Learning Needs Analysis (LNA) to assess participants' needs and expectations. Based on the LNA, the course provider will be required to make reasonable adjustments to enable equitable access to learning. The LNA must occur at the start of the short course program. - Tenderers will be required to develop course content contextualised to participant needs and to demonstrate cultural understanding and the capacity to support diverse needs. This approach will maximise opportunities for participants to contextualise their learning to their own skills ecosystem and facilitate information exchanges with key stakeholders and counterparts across the region and in Australia.
Key personnel	▪ Course Designer/s ▪ Course Leader/s ▪ Course Coordinator ▪ Welfare Officer **Please note -** this is a recommended list only based on anticipated inputs required of the course provider for course design and implementation.

5. Selection criteria and information required for technical assessment

5.1. Selection Criteria

A. Capacity and training experience: (10% of the technical assessment)

The Tenderer must demonstrate:

i. Technical capability and expertise to design and deliver a short course on ***ASEAN's Digital Transformation: Balancing Innovation, Integrity and Inclusion***, as outlined in the Scope of Services at Section 4.

ii. Experience in the design and delivery of short courses for international participants, particularly Southeast Asian participants, including the ability to provide administrative, logistical and welfare support services as outlined in the Scope of Services Section 4.

B. Response to course specification: (60% of the technical assessment)

The Tenderer must provide details of their approach to the design and delivery of the short course. Specifically, Tenderers must demonstrate **how** they will:

i. Design and deliver the course using an action-based learning approach to enable the achievement of course objectives and desired learning outcomes. Proposals which propose awarding a micro-credential, Skill Set or credits towards further study will be highly regarded. Tenderers proposing formal certification or study credits must specify additional costs and indicate the volume of learning (in hours) required to achieve the certification.

ii. Flexibly tailor course design and delivery to align with the individual needs of participants. Tenderers must describe how Southeast Asia contextualisation will be integrated throughout (i.e. in design and delivery).

iii. Facilitate the establishment of linkages between Southeast Asian participants and Australian participants and course stakeholders, to promote sustainable collaboration after short course completion.

iv. Achieve innovative and value for money outcomes through course design and delivery.

v. Monitor and evaluate progress towards, and achievement of, individual participant learning outcomes, as well as the overall progress and success of the course against its outcomes and objectives.

vi. Address key risks specific to the short course and participant cohort and mitigate/manage realised risks during the design and delivery of the course.

C. Core personnel: (30% of the technical assessment)

The Tenderer must demonstrate that the following team members have the appropriate qualifications and experience to design and implement the Short Course:

- Course Designer (1-2 nominees)
- Course Leader (1–2 nominees)
- Course Coordinator (1 nominee)
- Welfare Officer (1 nominee)

Terms of Reference for these positions are included in the *Short Course Provider Handbook*.

To enable a like for like assessment Tenderers must comply with the number of nominees indicated for each position above. It is understood that in some cases the nominee for the Course Designer and Course Leader will be the same.

It is expected that the successful Tenderer will field the key specialists identified in the proposal. Substitution of these specialists will require Palladium pre-approval.

5.2. Annexes

The Technical Proposal should include the following Annexes:

Annex 1 – Curricula Vitae (CVs)

A summary table (as below) is to be inserted at the beginning of this Annex. The table **must be** in landscape and must not exceed **one** A4 page. Submissions exceeding this limit will not be assessed.

Position	Name	Nationality	Gender	Brief description of key qualifications, expertise and experience (in bullet points)
Course Designer (1-2)				
Course Leader (1-2)				
Course Coordinator				
Welfare Officer				

Certified CVs are to be provided for each of the nominees, to a maximum of two (2) pages, for the following Core Personnel positions only. **CVs should be tailored to demonstrate the nominated Core Personnel's suitability and capability to fulfil the specified role:**

- Course Designer (1-2 nominees)
- Course Leader (1-2 nominees)
- Course Coordinator (1 nominee)
- Welfare Officer (1 nominee)

CVs should provide a clear response to the duties outlined in the *Short Course Provider Handbook*. A mandatory proforma for CVs can be found as **Attachment 1** to this document.

Palladium regards the withdrawal or substitution of personnel to be grounds for the cancellation of negotiations and reserves the right to consider alternative offers where personnel nominated in Tenders are subsequently not available.

Annex 2 – Draft Course Outline

A Draft Course Outline using **Attachment 2** to this document. Core delivery personnel should also be clearly identifiable for each of the sessions presented.

Annex 3 – Risk Mitigation Matrix

A Risk Mitigation Matrix identifying key risks specific to the successful design and delivery of the Short Course as per the Scope of Services. Tenderers are to complete the proforma as in **Attachment 3** to this document (maximum **2** pages).

Annex 4 – Statutory Declaration

Format is provided as **Attachment 4** to this RFT.

6. Selection Criteria and Information Required for Price Assessment

6.1. Introduction

Tenderers must submit a Financial Proposal as a part of their submission. Palladium is seeking **a cost-effective** training solution for 24 participants from ASEAN Member States and Australia.

6.2. Approach to the Financial Proposal

Palladium will undertake a financial price assessment of those Tenders assessed as technically suitable by the Technical Assessment Panel (TAP). Palladium reserves the right to provide the financial component of any Tender to TAP members for their examination in the context of resource adequacy evaluation against the selection criteria in the technical assessment process.

6.3. Limited Information Required for Price Assessment

The final *Course Budget* for the Program's Short Courses is negotiated with the preferred Tenderer and therefore the financial detail required for the Financial Proposal (i.e. price assessment) includes Tenderers personnel costs and management fee.

The *Course Budget* template is provided as **Attachment 5** and consists of two parts, as outlined below.

Part A: Non-reimbursable (fixed) costs

- A1: Fixed personnel costs design of course
- A2: Fixed personnel costs delivery of course
- A3: Fixed management fee (head office administration costs and fees)

Part B: Reimbursable costs incurred by Contractor

- B1: Personnel costs for delivery (e.g. specialist presenters)
- B2: Course delivery costs
- B3: Accommodation
- B4: Participants allowances (per diem)
- B5: Local travel and transfers
- B6: Other costs and expenses

Please note – Estimated reimbursable costs associated with Part B of the *Course Budget* **are to be included as part of the Financial Proposal**. These costs are not assessed as part of the 'like-for-like" assessment but will be provided to DFAT as part of the approval process. They will be subject to negotiation with the selected Tenderer as part of the contract process in line with mandated service levels.

6.4. Content of Financial Proposal

Within the Financial Proposal Tenderers must address the criteria as set out in the table below. These criteria will be used to make a like-for-like financial comparison.

Financial Proposal Criteria
Criterion 1: Personnel course design cost

Financial Proposal Criteria
Personnel costs for the design of the course, expressed as number of days, per person, at a daily rate (i.e. cost of the Course Designer/s). The Tenderer needs to assess the composition of personnel and associated number of days per person required to design the course. Tenderers must provide details in *Schedule 5.1: Fixed personnel costs for design of course.*
Criterion 2: Personnel course delivery cost Personnel costs for the delivery of the course, expressed as number of days per person for each of the key delivery positions. Please see DFAT's Adviser Remuneration Framework as a guide. Tenderers may include a Course Co-Leader. The positions of Course Coordinator and Welfare Officer must include a nomination of one person only. Tenderers must provide details in *Schedule 5.2: Fixed core personnel costs for delivery of course*. Tenderers need to make their own assessment of how many days per person will be required to undertake these tasks, noting that this component forms part of the like-for-like assessment.
Criterion 3: Fixed management fee Total management fee to be charged by the Tenderer for the design and delivery of the course as described in the Scope of Services. This must include any applicable insurance as outlined in the Palladium Services Agreement Template (Attachment 9 of this RFT). Tenderers must provide details in *Schedule 5.3: Fixed Management Fee.* Tenderers must clearly detail any other fees to be charged to the course (for example financial costs, administration costs, special fees, staff on costs, etc.). Other fees will be subject to approval during the contract negotiation process. Noting this component forms part of the like-for-like assessment. The Fixed Management Fee is exclusive of personnel costs and any other costs directly associated with course design and delivery.

Tables for inclusion within the Financial Proposal, including those containing information required for the purposes of the financial assessment, are:

Schedule 5.1: Personnel Costs for Design of Course

Schedule 5.2: Personnel Costs for Delivery of Course

Schedule 5.3: Fixed Management Fee

Schedule 5.4: Cost Summary Schedule of Unit Costs for Palladium Price Comparison.

The format for each of these schedules is provided as **Attachment 5** to this RFT. It is this information that is assessed as part of the like-for-like price comparison.

Tenderers must complete all schedules showing their firm quotations in whole Australian Dollars (AUD). Palladium requires these calculations for the purposes of disaggregating and checking the accuracy of Tenderers' total financial assessment figure. Only the final figure provided at **Schedule 4** will be subject to the financial price assessment.

Tenderers should note that inaccurate or inconsistent calculations in the financial component of any Tender may, in Palladium's sole discretion, be grounds for Palladium to deem that the Tender is non-conforming and exclude it from further consideration under the RFT process.

Tenderers are also required to submit an indicative course budget using the template provided as **Attachment 5.5** to this RFT. Information contained in this indicative budget will be provided to DFAT as part of the approval process and Sections A1, A2, A3 and B may be subject to review as part of contract negotiations.

6.5. Retention of Price Components of Tenders by Palladium

Palladium will retain the financial components of all Tenders, including those not considered technically suitable.

6.6. Escalation

There is no provision for escalation.

6.7. Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Unless expressly stated otherwise, all amounts payable under this Agreement are exclusive of GST.

Attachment 1 - Curriculum Vitae Proforma

Notes: CV must not exceed two pages. Referees MUST NOT be employees of the tendering organisation.

Curriculum Vitae

Position title: e.g. Course Designer

Specialist Fields of Expertise:

Name:

Nationality:

Academic qualifications:

Languages & degree of proficiency:

Professional affiliations:

Other training:

Countries of work experience:

Professional experience (with particular reference to tender requirements)

Date/Position/Company:

Dot points of duties and responsibilities:

Referees:

Name:

Position:

Company:

Work Phone:

E-mail:

Certification:

"I certify that this curriculum vitae is accurate and I acknowledge my willingness and availability to participate in the Short Course tender for ***Course name*** in the role of *position title*".

Signature: **Date**

Attachment 2 – Draft Course Outline

Online preliminary short course component (synchronous and asynchronous learning should be specified)

Please keep this section to 1 page only, clearly specifying the number of sessions the timing (to account for regional time zones) and the total inputs (in hours) required of participants.

In-Australia short course component

Please provide, in calendar format, the structure of the in-person component of the Short Course. Please include details regarding activity, location, date, timing of sessions, facilitators (Core delivery team and intended guest presenters/organisations), and any travel. The below calendar is a sample layout only and can be adjusted based on the structure and timing of the course. There is no page limit for this section.

Schedule	Morning Session 1	Morning Session 2	Afternoon Session 1	Afternoon Session 2
Arrival:				
DAY 1:				
DAY 2:				
DAY 3:				
DAY 4:				
DAY 5:				
DAY 6:				
DAY 7:				

Online applied short course component

Please keep this section to 1 page only, clearly specifying the number of sessions, the timing (to account for regional time zones) and the total inputs (in hours) required of participants.

Attachment 3 - Risk Mitigation Matrix Proforma

The table **must be** in landscape and **must not** exceed **two** A4 pages.

#	Risk	Impact on Program	L	C	R	Contractor Risk Management	Nominated Contractor Personnel
1	*Sentence summarising the risk to the design and/or delivery of the Short Course*	*Sentence summarising the possible impact on the design and/or delivery of the Short Course*				*Actions taken by the Contractor to manage the risk including any relevant timeframes*	*e.g. Course Leader, Course Designer, Course Coordinator etc.*

KEY

L = Likelihood (5 = Almost certain, 4 = Likely, 3 = Possible, 2 = Unlikely, 1 = Rare)

C = Consequence (5 = Severe, 4 = Major, 3 = Moderate, 2 = Minor, 1 = Negligible)

R = Risk Level Determined by Risk Level matrix below (4 = Very high, 3 = High, 2 = Moderate, 1 = Low)

Risk Level

Consequence / Likelihood	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Almost Certain	Medium	Medium	High	Very High	Very High
Likely	Medium	Medium	High	High	Very High
Possible	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
Rare	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

Attachment 4 - Commonwealth of Australia Statutory Declaration

Commonwealth of Australia Statutory Declaration

I, *(name, address and corporation of person making the declaration),* do solemnly and sincerely declare, on behalf of the Tenderer and on behalf of myself, that:

Definitions

1. In this statutory declaration:

"Services" means the services described in the RFT for this Activity;

"Tenderer" means *(details of tendering corporation as appropriate);*

"Tender Price" means the fees, rates and prices indicated by a Tenderer as being the amounts for which that Tenderer is prepared to undertake the Services;

Preamble

2. I hold the position of *(managing director or other title)* of the Tenderer and am duly authorised by the Tenderer to make this declaration on its behalf.

Accuracy of Information

3. The information contained in the Tender including CVs of nominated personnel submitted by (*name of organisation/company*) is factually based and I accept that if such information is found by Palladium to be inaccurate or misleading this may, at Palladium's sole discretion, result in disqualification of the Tender.

Tenderer's Acknowledgment

4. That (*name of organisation/company*)'s Tender is made on the basis that it acknowledges that:

a) the RFT specifies Palladium's and DFAT's rights in respect of the RFT and (*name of organisation/company*) agrees that Palladium and DFAT may exercise its rights as set out in the RFT in respect of the RFT process;

b) (*name of organisation/company*) sought and examined all necessary information which is obtainable by making reasonable enquiries relevant to Palladium's requirements, including the risks and other circumstances which may affect a Tender;

c) in lodging its Tender (*name of organisation/company*) did not rely on any express or implied statement, warranty or representation, whether oral, written, or otherwise made by or on behalf of Palladium or DFAT other than any statement, warranty or representation contained in the RFT;

d) (*name of organisation/company*) did not use the improper assistance of Palladium or Commonwealth employees or ex-employees, or information unlawfully obtained from Palladium or the Commonwealth in compiling its Tender;

e) (*name of organisation/company*) satisfied itself as to the correctness and sufficiency of its Tender;

f) (*name of organisation/company*) is responsible for all costs and expenses related to its involvement in the RFT, including: preparation and lodgement of the Tender;

I. any subsequent negotiation; and

II. any other action or response in relation to the RFT.

g) Palladium and the Commonwealth are not responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by (*name of organisation/company)* or any other person in responding to or taking any other action in relation to the RFT, whether or not Palladium terminates, varies or suspends the RFT process or takes any other action permitted under the RFT; and

h) *(name of organisation/company)* will comply with the rules set out in the RFT.

Availability of Personnel

5. The personnel nominated in the Tender have been approached and have confirmed their availability to undertake the Services at the time specified.

Security of Personnel

6. The Tenderer warrants that all necessary arrangements will be made to ensure adequate protection/security for personnel in the field.

Tender Price

7. The Tenderer warrants that it can undertake and complete the Services for the

Tender Price.

8. Should the training be deemed successful and a request be received for the Tenderer to repeat the delivery of the Short Course within 12 months, the same tender price will be offered by that Tenderer.

Collusive Tendering

9. Neither the Tenderer nor any of its servants or agents had knowledge of either the technical component of the Tender or the Tender Price for the Services of any other Tenderer prior to the Tenderer submitting its Tender for the Services.

10. Neither the Tenderer nor any of its servants or agents disclosed the technical component of its Tender or the Tender Price for the Services submitted by the Tenderer to any other Tenderer who submitted a tender for the Services or to any other person or organisation prior to the close of Tenders.

Cover Bidding

11. Neither the Tenderer nor any of its servants or agents provided information to any other Tenderer, person or organisation, to assist another Tenderer for the Services to prepare a tender known as a “cover bid”, whereby the Tenderer was of the opinion or belief that another Tenderer did not intend to genuinely compete for the contract.

12. The Tenderer is genuinely competing for the contract and its Tender is not a “cover bid”.

Unsuccessful Tenderers’ Fees

13. Prior to the Tenderer submitting its tender for the Services neither the Tenderer nor any of its servants or agents entered into any contract, agreement, arrangement or understanding that the successful Tenderer for the Services would pay any money or would provide any other benefit or other financial advantage, to or for the benefit of any other Tenderer who unsuccessfully Tendered for the Tender.

Competitive Neutrality

14. The Tenderer has complied with the principles of competitive neutrality in preparing its Tender (publicly owned Tenderers only).

And I make this solemn declaration by virtue of the Statutory Declarations Act 1959, and subject to the penalties provided by that Act for the making of false statements in statutory declarations, conscientiously believing the statements contained in this declaration to be true in every particular.

[Signature of person making declaration)]

[Optional: Email address and/or telephone number of person making the declaration]

Declared at ( ) on the ( ) day of ( )

Before me,

[Signature of person before whom the declaration is made]

[*Full name, qualification and address of person before whom the declaration is made (in printed letters)*]

[*Optional: Email address and/or telephone number of person before whom the declaration is made*]

Attachment 5 - Financial Proposal Tables (See separate file)

The indicative budget should be completed and lodged as part of the Financial Proposal.

Important note: Part B (reimbursable costs) does not form part of the like-for-like price assessment of this RFT. Part B will be further developed and negotiated with the preferred Tenderer and included in the sub-contractor agreement.

Attachment 6 - Comment on Draft Contract

Note: This form is required to be lodged as part of the Tender.

Clause/schedule/item	Comments	Service provider proposed wording of amendment to clause/schedule/item	Palladium comment (provided to the successful Tenderer through contract negotiations)

Attachment 7- Short Course Provider Handbook (See separate file)

Attachment 8 - Palladium Subcontractor Agreement Template (See separate file)