

**INTERNATIONAL ASTRONOMICAL UNION
ANNOUNCEMENT OF OPPORTUNITY**

**REGIONAL NODES AND LANGUAGE EXPERTISE CENTRES
ASTRONOMY FOR DEVELOPMENT**

1. Background. The IAU seeks partners in implementing the astronomy for development programmes described in the IAU Strategic Plan 2010 – 2020, “Astronomy for the Developing World” http://iau.org/static/education/strategicplan_091001.pdf. This Plan is an ambitious blueprint for using astronomy to further global capacity building throughout the decade.

Two key components of the Plan are

- The creation of a small IAU Office of Astronomy for Development (OAD) to provide global coordination and strategic guidance. The OAD has recently been established as a partnership between the IAU and the South African National Research Foundation (NRF), based at the South African Astronomical Observatory (SAAO).
- The creation of associated regional nodes (ROADs) at various locations throughout the world.

The OAD, together with the ROADs, will coordinate and stimulate IAU capacity building activities in primary, secondary and university education, research capacity and public outreach to realise the vision of “*Astronomy for a better world!*”

Because some human capacity building activities are language-specific over several continents, the OAD Steering Committee has decided to consider also creating a small number of Language Expertise Centres that will interact with the OAD and the relevant ROADs to initiate and implement language-specific activities across regions and to exploit language-related funding opportunities.

2. IAU Regional Nodes. An IAU Regional Office of Astronomy for Development (ROAD) will be a centre, normally consisting of at least one full time employee, hosted by an organisation or institution with strong links to astronomy research and/or education and good Internet connectivity. Among the tasks of the regional node will be:

- Fostering the goals of the IAU Strategic Plan in the region concerned.
- Regional management, coordination and evaluation of IAU capacity building programs, including recruiting and mobilizing volunteers. Examples are schools for researchers or schoolteachers and visits and lectures by experts.
- Liaison with the global OAD and the sector task forces in planning and implementing relevant programs within the region.
- Provision of administrative support for regional IAU programs in development, education, and outreach.
- Coordination of contacts between the IAU and national authorities in the region
- Maintenance of a regional IAU website and appropriate forums for development and education.
- Provision of advice, guidance and information for astronomers in all countries in the region about IAU programs.
- Proactive initiation and coordination of fundraising activities for regional development activities.

- Reporting regularly to the OAD, and IAU Executive Committee where required, on activities of the regional node.

The definition of a region will be interpreted pragmatically. The Plan envisages starting initially with a small number of ROADS and increasing their number gradually during the decade, in step with available resources.

3. IAU Language Expertise Centres. An IAU Language Expertise Centre for the OAD (LOAD) will be a centre, normally consisting of at least one full time employee, hosted by an organisation or institution with strong links to astronomy research and/or education and good Internet connectivity. Among the tasks of the LOAD will be:

- Fostering the goals of the IAU Strategic Plan by providing expertise to the OAD in a language other than English that is relevant for developing countries.
- Management, coordination and evaluation of IAU language-specific education and capacity building programs that transcend specific regions, including recruiting and mobilizing participating volunteers.
- Liaison with the OAD, the ROADS and the sector task forces in planning and implementing relevant language-specific programs.
- Provision of administrative support for language-specific IAU programs in development, education, and outreach.
- Coordination of contacts between the IAU and relevant authorities in the language-specific region.
- Creation and maintenance of an IAU Astronomy for Development website in the relevant language.
- Translation of Astronomy for Development materials into the relevant languages.
- Proactive initiation and coordination of fundraising activities for Astronomy for Development activities in the relevant language.
- Reporting regularly to the OAD, and IAU Executive Committee where required, on activities of the centre.

All LOADs are expected to work in close collaboration with the relevant ROADS that will be expected to provide the primary source of expertise and coordination for the region.

4. Funding. The IAU will provide once-off seed funding for each centre up to a level of €5,000. *The remaining funds must be provided by the host organization or by associated sponsoring bodies.* Support should cover adequate salaries, normal overheads, suitable infrastructure and sufficient support for travel, computers etc. During the next few years external funds will be sought by the OAD to support global and regional *Astronomy for Development* activities. The IAU and the OAD will support the ROADS and the LOADs in regional and language-specific fund raising campaigns that can include overhead to provide partial support for the centres. The prestige of IAU endorsement and IAU/OAD connection will be important assets for these fund-raising activities.

5. Proposals. Proposals or expressions of interest are invited from organizations or institutes willing to host these critically important and prestigious offices for an initial period of five years.

Proposals should not exceed 5 pages and should include:

- Specification of the region (for a ROAD) or language (for a LOAD) that the Centre will serve.

- Short description of the host organisations and eventual partners including details of Internet connectivity.
- Short outline of how the host organisation plans to stimulate the use of astronomy for development in the specified region (language zone) within the context of the three sector task forces (Universities and Research, Schools and children, Public outreach).
- Operational and business plans, with envisaged timescales.
- Details of the person that will provide the initial contact with the OAD.
- A proposed budget, with details of salaries and travel funds.
- Signed statements of commitment from the proposing organisation and eventual partners or sponsoring organisations.

Preference will be given to organizations which are part of a consortium and which have commitment and support of others in their region (language zone).

Organizations interested in hosting an IAU Regional Node or an IAU Language Expertise Centre are invited to submit a short expression of interest on or before 28 February 2012 and full proposals on or before 30th April 2012. A panel, consisting of members of the IAU Development Oversight Committee and OAD Steering Committee, will evaluate the proposals.

After the deadline of 30th April 2012, further proposals will be handled on an individual basis while ensuring that a fair procedure of evaluation is followed. However, interested organizations are strongly encouraged to meet this deadline or at least submit expressions of interest early in order to allow for an efficient selection process. There may be further Announcements of Opportunity at a later stage as certain underrepresented regions grow stronger.

Expressions of interest and proposals should be submitted to Kevin Govender, Director, Office of Astronomy for Development, South African Astronomical Observatory, Observatory Road, Observatory 7925, Cape Town, South Africa, or preferably electronically in pdf format to kg@astro4dev.org.