



FHSST - Free High School Science Texts

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Address

Dear Sir/Madam

Request for sponsorship

The Free High School Science Texts project is working to address the severe lack of educational resources in South Africa. The project aims to produce a set of *free* high school science text books (starting with Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics), in line with the new South African curriculum.

The text books are already well on their way to being completed. However, to help speed up the writing process and ensure that these much needed resources are distributed as soon as possible to learners across the country, we would like to host a writing competition which will allow us rapidly to produce the remaining content and integrate it into the books. This will help to ensure that the books are ready by the beginning of the 2006 school year. To this end, we are requesting sponsorship to aid in the promotion of the competition and provide prizes.

Further details about the project, current status and the proposed competition are contained in the attached proposal. On behalf of the FHSST project, I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Rory Adams

FHSST Administrative Committee

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Executive Summary

This proposal provides a high-level overview of the Free High School Science Texts (FHSST) project and describes the rapid content development initiative (writing competition) for which funding is being requested. The project aims and objectives are described as well as the need for and motivation behind the project. A detailed description of the rapid content development initiative and a breakdown of the budget required to perform the activities is presented.

Introduction

Free High School Science Texts (FHSST) is a non-profit organisation with the primary aim to develop and distribute free mathematics and physical science textbooks to grade 11 - 12 learners in South Africa.

The primary objectives are:

- To provide a **free** resource, that can be used alone or in conjunction with other education initiatives in South Africa, to all learners and teachers
- To provide a quality, accurate and interesting text that adheres to the South African school curriculum and the outcomes-based education system
- To provide a text that is easy to read and understand even for second-language English speakers
- To make a difference in South Africa through helping to educate young South Africans

Educational resources, especially books, are costly. A recent study published in *The South African Journal of Economics* found that for the Western Cape it is imperative to address the issue of lack of resources in education:

*“Poor schools with predominantly black and to a lesser extent coloured pupils do much worse than others. Moreover, ... investments to improve teacher quantity and quality are unlikely to offer a viable means of overcoming [these] shortcomings in education before shortages in complementary teaching materials are addressed, ... and the appropriate management and incentive structures are in place.”*¹

In light of this, as young South Africans trained in the sciences, we initiated a project in September 2002 to write a set of **free** high school science textbooks initially covering mathematics and physical science. The aim of the project is to produce quality texts and make them freely available to all South African learners and teachers. This is a decisive

¹S. van der Berg and R. Burger, *The South African Journal of Economics. Die Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir Ekonomie*. Vol. 71:3 September 2003

response to requests for contributions of educational material by other education initiatives, for example, the *Mindset Project*² and the *tuXlabs Project*³. The FHSST project has been endorsed by the University of Cape Town Faculty of Science and we have worked in partnership with the Shuttleworth Foundation to provide educational content for their tuXlabs project.

Rapid Content Development Initiative

It has thus far been difficult to set strict timelines for the production of the books since we rely completely on contributions from volunteers. However, the books are approaching completion in the content gathering phase and we would like to accelerate this process to ensure timely release of the books. Therefore, we propose to hold a scientific writing competition. In this way, we hope to generate more widespread awareness of the project as well as a large amount of new, urgently needed, content in a short period of time. Competition entries will be able to be used in the books either as complete sections or as partial sections.

Competition plan:

A set of incomplete or missing sections will be chosen from each of three of the FHSST textbooks (most likely Chemistry, Mathematics and Biology). These sections will be of comparable length and complexity. The chosen books and sections will depend on the state of the books at the time of the competition.

To enter the competition, a participant must write the section and submit it by a specified deadline. Judges, selected prior to the deadline, will then select three contributions as winning entries.

By making a range of different sections available to entrants and ensuring that the competition is run at a time favourable for large participation by students, who are actively studying a related field, we believe that sufficiently many entries of good enough quality will be received to satisfy all sections. This would be a major contribution to the project as a whole.

Our target audiences for potential contestants are university students and high school teachers. We propose to publicise the project to these groups via email to science societies (e.g. South African Institute of Physics (SAIP), South African Chemical Institute etc.), posters on university campuses, and if possible, radio.

Ensuring suitable content:

² <http://www.mindset.co.za>

³ <http://www.tuxlabs.org.za>

We will provide a succinct, comprehensive set of guidelines for authors as well as a number of example sections. Suitable entries must correspond to a required section and meet the basic requirements and South African syllabus for that section to be eligible for prizes.

As one of the conditions for entry, authors will be required to release their content to FHSST for use in the books. All entries will be made available online and selected entries will be integrated into the books. All entrants whose contributions are included in the books, will be included in the list of contributors of the FHSST project.

Incentives for entry:

As an incentive to enter the competition, we propose that prizes be made available. Proposed prizes are:

1 st prize	R5000
2 nd prize	R3000
3 rd prize	R2000

Timing:

We propose to run the competition during the June/July university/school vacation. This will allow university students and teachers (our primary target audiences) to spend time on writing contributions and avoid clashes with coursework and teaching responsibilities.

Rules (simplified):

1. Anybody can enter except members of the FHSST administration team and any of the judges.
2. To enter, a person must write at least one of the specified sections (more than one entry per person is allowed) according to the specified criteria, e.g. diagrams, worked examples, scope etc. and submit it to us.
3. Submission is allowed in any digital format.
4. Contestants must agree to release content under the Gnu Free Documentation License upon submission.

Budget

The main items for which sponsorship is urgently required, are :

- Creation and printing of promotional material such as posters to be displayed on university campuses
- Postage costs to transport the posters and letters to universities
- Prize money

<i>Item</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Amount (R)</i>
1 st Prize	1	5 000
2 nd Prize	1	3 000
3 rd Prize	1	2 000
Posters	60	600
Postage	30	300
Total		10 900

Incentives for Sponsors

Sponsor logos and brands will be displayed on the competition website, posters, correspondence and will be mentioned in all press interactions with regard to the competition. In this way, sponsors will gain positive publicity by being allied with a worthwhile South African education initiative working towards providing resources for all learners as well as all education initiatives.