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F R I E N D S

**ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME, KEY ACTION 2**  
**CAPACITY BUILDING IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Furthering International Relations Capacities and Intercultural Engagement to  
Nurture Campus Diversity and to Support Internationalisation at Home  
(FRIENDS)**

**Project number 598652-EPP-1-2018-1-BG-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP**

**CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)**

The purpose of this Call for EOI is to identify appropriate service providers (natural persons or organizations) that possess the necessary technical and operational capacity and are equipped to fulfil the tasks to be assigned in regard with above mentioned project's external evaluation. The call is exploratory rather than binding and Varna University of Management (VUM; in Bulgarian Visshe Uchilshte po Menidzhmant), project coordinating institution of the above indicated project reserves the right to change or cancel this requirement at any time during the EOI and/or solicitation process.

**Opening date of the call for EOI: 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019**

**Closing date of the call for EOI: 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019**

**1. Summary**

VUM is the project coordinating institution of project number 598652-EPP-1-2018-1-BG-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP that is funded through the Erasmus+ Programme, Key Action 2, Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE). The external evaluator to be selected and subcontracted shall be by default a body or an individual that is independent from and external to the project consortium. The working language of the external evaluation is English. The selected external evaluator will be in charge of continuous project external evaluation and the elaboration of External Evaluation Report at the final project stage.

**2. The FRIENDS project: [www.erasmusplusfriends.eu](http://www.erasmusplusfriends.eu)**

The FRIENDS project combines the efforts of universities in Bhutan, Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Turkey. The project's main objective is to strengthen the 12 involved Asian higher education institutions' (HEIs) capabilities and to develop their students' global competence through the integration of intercultural dimensions into the targeted HEIs' formal and informal curriculum.

The FRIENDS project is built around the concept of internationalisation at home (IaH) that shifts HEIs' focus of attention from outbound to virtual mobility and to on-campus intercultural engagement for the benefits of non-mobile students' employability and global outlook.

The following key results will be achieved through the FRIENDS project:

1. Institutional IaH Action Plans adopted to streamline PC HEIs' initiatives for IaH and to improve the 12 Asian HEIs IROs staff and faculty's capacities for internationalisation.
2. Intercultural Passport virtual module designed and embedded into the 12 Asian HEIs' elective curriculum to build students intercultural knowledge and sensitivity to cultural diversity. The Intercultural Passport is an innovative tool that combines virtual mobility and methodologies for validation of prior experiential learning evidenced through the means of digital storytelling.
3. FRIENDS Teahouse social spaces established at the 12 Asian HEIs involved to function as student-friendly multicultural hubs that welcome diversity, and support the welfare of students with diverse cultural backgrounds. In addition, FRIENDS Teahouses will contribute to the improvement of overall university experience of the Asian HEIs' students across campus.
4. Home away from Home Programme induced as a model for integrated international student care and services. In the long run, the programme will contribute to the gradual increase of international and inbound students at the 12 Asian HEIs.

Project eligibility period: 15<sup>th</sup> November 2018 – 14<sup>th</sup> November 2021

### **3. External evaluator's tasks and key responsibilities**

The external evaluator will be expected to complete the following tasks:

- To carry out and execute regular independent peer review of project results and implementation processes.
- To conduct online interviews with the WP leaders and various project team members and to review project documentation as well as project outputs and events evidence.
- To attend the 6<sup>th</sup> Partner Meeting to interview and interact first-hand with both project team members as well as with primary target groups members during the IaH National Conference to take place during Month 28 in Cebu City in the Philippines.
- To produce as a result of his/her continuous work and data collection, an External Evaluation Report at the project final stage. The External Evaluation Report will be based on the findings of the external independent peer review and will assess the quality of project results achieved and the FRIENDS impact in the five Asian countries. It will assess the consortium efficiency and will make recommendations for strengthening project results' sustainability and ensuring project's long-term impact after its formal end. Deadline for the preparation and submission of the External Evaluation Report: 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

### **4. Budget**

The potential applicants are invited to submit a draft budget that includes a breakdown of the actual costs expected to incur in regard with the external evaluator's tasks and responsibilities as indicated above (staff costs, travel costs and costs of stay linked to the participation in the 6<sup>th</sup> Partner Meeting in Month 28 in Cebu City, Philippines). Budget proposals are expected to apply the usual levels of remuneration applicable in the country of registration (or residence in case of natural persons). Furthermore, the budget proposals should reflect a realistic number of workdays planned for work. The external evaluator should also provide information on the estimated actual travel costs and costs of stay that are expected to incur in regard with the participation in the 6<sup>th</sup> Partner Meeting in Month 28 in Cebu City in the Philippines. Only reasonably drafted and well justified budget proposals that are based on the principles of sound financial management, in particular regarding the economy and efficiency, will be considered for selection.

## **5. Application procedure**

Interested parties are invited to submit their EOI by email no later than 4 pm Brussels time on the closing date of 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019 to the project coordinating institution.

Email: [friends@vumk.eu](mailto:friends@vumk.eu)

The minimum number of documents to be provided as part of the EOI should include:

- [Legal entity form](#) (to be filled out according to the applicant's profile, e.g. natural person, private entity or public body)
- Company's portfolio and/or detailed expert(s) CV(s) providing sufficient evidence that the external evaluator to be subcontracted possesses the technical and operational capacity as well as the professional experience necessary for the successful achievement of the tasks assigned
- Proposed evaluation methodology (between 8000 and 10000 characters)
- Proposed budget for the tasks described in point 3.

The award method will be the "*best value for money*" and the selected external evaluator will be the one offering the best quality/price ratio. The selected external evaluator will be requested to provide detailed documentation and evidence related to payment of due taxes and social security contributions.

## **6. Selection criteria**

The external evaluator (natural person or organization) shall be selected on the basis of the professional and technical ability to perform the tasks described in this call and according to the following criteria:

- At least 5 years of experience in project evaluation and/or as project manager
- Quality of the methodology proposed
- Feasibility of the proposed budget
- Ability to fulfil the required tasks justified through sufficient evidence
- Extensive knowledge of the higher education sector
- Experience with Erasmus+ projects as well as its predecessors Tempus, Alfa and Edu-link will be considered an advantage
- English language proficiency corresponding at least to level B2 according to CEFR
- Good command of Microsoft Office tools.

The requested experience and abilities will be assessed on the basis of the evidence provided by the applicants as indicated in point 5. In order to facilitate the selection process, additional information may be requested by the project coordinating institution.