



VirtuEU

Virtual Exchanges for Active Citizens

VirtuEU

“Virtual Exchanges of Active Citizens”

Request for Proposals

External Evaluator Services for VirtuEU project

Project number: 101111907 – VirtuEU – ERASMUS-EDU-2022-VIRT-EXCH



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1. Background

1.1 The project

VirtuEU focuses on Promoting European and universal values of democracy, peace, freedom, solidarity, and collaboration among young people in Europe and Western Balkans, strengthening their identity as active citizens and residents of Europe and providing with adequate skills that will improve their employability chances. The project focuses on young people, who study in HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) in European and Western Balkan countries through online and offline non-formal educational activities. 2,500 students will participate in the Virtual Exchanges, 75 experienced facilitators will be trained on the curriculum, approximately 10,000 other students will be informed regarding the project activities and materials. A final online event will be held attended by students, HEI staff, researchers, educators, trainers, youth leaders, students, young learners and stakeholders interested in the active citizenship and civic participation with an expected 250 participants.

The activities will take place in Belgium & Germany (EVBB – VET umbrella organisation), Greece (Metropolitan College), Albania (European Education Initiative, Albanian University, University Metropolitan Tirana), Kosovo (International Business College Mitrovica, Universum College), Montenegro (Mediterranean University) but will also benefit indirectly all the countries within and outside the European Union with which partner Member States' due to the established strong network the partners have while EVBB being the umbrella organisations for VET in EU.

Activities

The objectives of VirtuEU will be achieved through:

WP2: Dissemination & Exploitation Activities

WP3: Development of the Active Citizenship Curriculum and establishment of a Train the Facilitators Scheme

WP4: Implementation of Virtual Exchanges

Beneficiaries: 2,500 students will participate in the Virtual Exchanges, 250 experienced facilitators will be trained on the curriculum, approximately 10,000 other students will be informed regarding the project activities and materials.

The **objectives** of VirtuEU project could be summarised as follows:

S.O.1. to provide new teaching and learning approaches within the framework of virtual education and training to HEI's

S.O.2. to increase engagement of youth at all levels of civic participation, and become able to embrace their role as the main driver group of social change

S.O.3. to strengthen universal and European values, promote at the same time the European way of thinking and living among citizens of Europe and Western Balkan Countries

S.O.4. to provide young people with opportunities and means to express themselves and their opinions, become active and contribute to the community

S.O.5. to ensure equal participation in multicultural extra-curriculum activities of youth regardless their demographics, social background and/or any socio-economic obstacles

S.O.6. To increase capacity and collaboration among education actors (HEIs) in order to achieve their role as shapers of young people in more than one dimension (academic, civic, societal, individual)

Target Group 1: *Young learners and virtual exchange young participants* in the 18-30 age range, who are going to engage in virtual exchange activities, virtual orientation sessions, as well as in virtual exchanging circles, including citizenship courses and cultural activities. They will also participate in virtual deliberations and debates regarding active citizenship. The participants are going to reinforce their soft skills, transmitting the core and fundamental ideas to their social environment, as well as they are going to upskill themselves on how to becoming more aware of the dangers rooted from fake news and disinformation.

Target Group 2: *Trainers and facilitators (HEI academic, professors, faculty, staff, teachers and educators)* who are going:

- To moderate the virtual exchanges groups, participating in the active citizenship curriculum, in validation workshops, in monitoring groups and open facilitated discussions. Trainers and facilitators are going to be benefited from the new teaching and assessment methodologies, whereas they will be able to explore the educational needs of the new learning environment, based on current digital needs.
- To use the training materials of **VirtuEu** curriculum in the framework of the establishment of a training facilitators scheme. They will be trained on how to use innovative digital tools and virtual collaborations, through the use of e-learning platforms, where they will have access to new methodologies in teaching and learning. They will acquire also new skills and they will gain new knowledge tailored to current market needs.

1.2 The partnership

The VirtuEU partnership is comprised of the following **10 partners**:

1. Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal – Coordinator
2. Kolegji Profesional i Tiranës, Albania – Beneficiary
3. European University of Tirana, Albania – Beneficiary
4. Albanian University, Albania – Beneficiary
5. Universiteti Metropolitan Tirana, Albania – Beneficiary
6. International Business College Mitrovica, Kosovo – Beneficiary
7. Universum College, Kosovo – Beneficiary
8. Mediterranean University UNIM, Montenegro – Beneficiary

9. European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training, Germany – Beneficiary
10. Mitropolitiko College Anoymi Epka, Greece – Beneficiary

1.3 The organization

EVBB, as a beneficiary partner of the Project and as the Lead Partner of the Quality Assurance Task, is an umbrella association gathering an heterogeneous range of educational providers in the common interest of enhancing, upgrading and harmonising Vocational Education and Training (VET) at European level. In accordance with its Statutes, the duty of the European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training promotes youths and adults alike in the following areas:

- Providing a liberal education in terms of social, economic and sociopolitical issues taking particular consideration of European policies and policies towards the developing world based on a socially binding, liberal economic and social order, promoting technical, vocational or industrial qualification, continuing education and advanced training in addition to retraining, providing scientific education,
- Providing education regarding personal or family issues, promoting qualification, continuing education and advanced training in the fields of geriatric care, work with the disabled and nursing services, developing media and its use, promoting environmental qualification.

EVBB mission lies in breaking down traditional hierarchies between VET and higher education and promoting the qualitative improvement of vocational schools and training and in promoting VET as a first choice. EVBB has more than 80 members from all over the world coming from both the private and the public sector and the number is still growing. It covers all fields related to initial, advanced and further education and training. Beyond that, the European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training (EVBB) has set the following tasks for itself:

- It takes a stand on the fundamental questions of vocational training and encourages the advancement of positions at EU level. It represents the common interests of its members and the European institutes in public and in front of national and supranational authorities, the European Parliament, the European Commission, European institutes and national institutes and authorities.
- It promotes cooperation among its members and encourages building networks between them, organizing vocational education in the member states and at a European level.
- It sets up quality criteria for the work in vocational education to which all members are bound

- It organizes national and international specialist conferences at which the prospects for vocational education and training are worked out, positions and points of view and the examples for successful projects in national or European policies are presented as good practice.

Workshops, courses and seminars are conducted within the scope of the EVBB's own European projects and those of its members. Together with the Adalbert Kitsche Foundation, the EVBB awards at its annual conference the "DIE EUROPA" Prize for innovative projects to promote disadvantaged youths. Neither politically nor denominationally affiliated, EVBB strives for a borderless, pluralistic and fulfilling education as an essential means to shape our democracy and society.

2. The Assignment

2.1 The purpose

The purpose of the assignment is to establish all the actions, procedures, measures, indicators, and systems that will secure the quality of the outputs and processes, allowing their close and continuous monitoring and reviewing during VirtuEU lifespan. The Evaluation mechanism optimises the internal communication procedures of the consortium, to ensure the quality of project outputs and deliverables.

The evaluation is linked to all Work Packages (WPs) of the VirtuEU project and acts as a complementary source to the Project Management throughout the whole project lifespan, while also creating a collaborative environment among the project partners. In particular, external evaluation ensures the project quality in all project life circles, meaning from planning to implementation and evaluation.

2.2 The Tasks

The assignment includes the following tasks:

Task 1: Establishment of the evaluation methodology and quality assessment plan

The External Evaluator being contracted will focus on:

- The evaluation of the **predefined expectations of the project**
- The evaluation of the **ongoing implementation of the project**
- The evaluation of the **cooperation process within the partnership**

According to the above-mentioned methodology, the Contractor will develop the evaluation methodology of the VirtuEU project, which will include the **forthcoming evaluation criteria** that will be used for the contribution to the quality assessment:

1. Relevance

(relevance of objectives for the attainment of the project's objectives, selection/documentation of the best strategy or approach to be applied for the project delivery)

2. Coherence

(what the project wants to attain and what it provides to this)

3. Effectiveness

(the level of quality which a task is carried out with and the capacity of the team to accomplish the project's objectives over time)

4. Performance

(adequate use of resources in comparison with the objectives, results and outputs performed)

5. Sustainability

(level of results' continuity after the end of the project)

6. Usefulness

(evaluation of project's impact)

Task 2: Conduction of ongoing and final evaluation

During the VirtuEU project lifespan, two (2) evaluations will be conducted. The interim evaluation report is of high importance in order to identify possible areas of improvements. The interim evaluation report aims to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of project's implementation. In this context, we are going to create a clear set of SMART indicators aiming to measure the achievement level of the planned expectations. What is more, a satisfaction survey will be delivered case by case having both qualitative and quantitative tools for the training courses.

The External Evaluator will be responsible for the **mid-term and final evaluation**.

The following Deliverables are going to be asked to be prepared and submitted within this assignment:

- Evaluation methodology (Deliverable 1)
- Mid-Term Evaluation (Deliverable 2) and
- Final Evaluation (Deliverable 3).

The reports will include 3 sections focusing on:

- *Process Evaluation*, referring to the internal processes of the project and launched with the use of survey questionnaires addressed to project partners to measure level of cooperation, project management, ownership of the project, quality of communication.
- *Tasks and Outputs Evaluation*, addressing the implementation of Tasks and assessing if and to which extent they meet the objectives of the project or bring the expected results.
- *Impact Evaluation*, demonstrating the impressions of end users, stakeholders and policy makers about the project and its results and assessing their level of satisfaction, their interest and their consideration on the responsiveness of the produced materials.

2.3 Timeline

The overall duration of this assignment is 18 months and the timeline for the delivery submission of the deliverables in the following:

- Deliverable 1: Quality Assurance Plan and Evaluation methodology (30 September 2024)
- Deliverable 2: Mid-Term Evaluation (1st December 2024)
- Deliverable 3: Final Evaluation (30th June 2026)

In case the VirtuEU project needs extension due to the decision of the partnership and/or the European Commission, this assignment will be extended for the same duration without any increase of its budget, while some deliverable will be submitted at a new deadline being agreed at a partnership level and being announced at least 1 month before the final day of the VirtuEU project implementation to the Contractor.

3 Value of the External Evaluation Assignment and Payments

According to the final grant agreement between the European Commission and the project Consortium including Task Leader, EVBB, a maximum total of 16,000.00 Euros is available for the purpose of this project for the tasks described above including all taxes (e.g. VAT, costs for attending meetings, etc.). The final amount will be paid depending on the contractor's preliminary experience regarding the above-mentioned tasks and the financial offer submitted.

Payment of the assignment will be made in three installments as listed below:

- The first installment* is **40%** (6.400€) of the contract. The amount will be transferred when the service agreement is signed.
- The second installment* is **40%** (6.400€) of the contract. The amount will be transferred when EVBB will receive the 2nd pre-financing of VirtuEU from EACEA.
- The third and final payment* of **20%** (3.200€) of the contract. The amount will be transferred when EVBB will receive the balance payment from EACEA

Payments will be done by bank transfers to a bank account which the Contractor will communicate the full details of.

4 Who can apply?

Any individual or legal entity interested in this tender should cover the following requirements:



Requirement	Type of requirement	Proof of fulfilment <i>(One Reference can fulfil more than one requirement)</i>
Experience in independent evaluation services and/or quality assurance services, including evaluation methodologies and data collection	Essential	Having at least 1 contract of similar services successfully completed or currently under implementation during the last 5 years
Experience of multi-stakeholder EU-funded projects	Essential	Having at least 2 project references during the last 5 years either as consortium partner for EU funded projects or as contractor of a consortium implementing an EU funded project
Strong writing skills in English	Essential	Having completed successfully at least 2 projects during the last 5 years with reports in English or Lead Expert with a C1 English Diploma
Additional knowledge of European languages, such as German or Greek, is warmly welcome.	Preferable	Having completed successfully at least 2 projects during the last 5 years with reports in German or Greek.
Experience in conducting surveys / interviews in the education sector	Preferable	Having participated to at least 1 project involving educational aspects, having educational stakeholders either as partners or as contractors.

5 Content and presentation of the bids

The proposals should contain a detailed explanation of the qualifications and expertise of the potential contractor/external evaluator, e.g. information on references from the contractor on similar project(s) already managed, to demonstrate their experience and

capability to succeed in performing the tasks as set out in the section 2.2 of this Request for Proposals.

In detail, potential Contractors, should submit the following documents:

- *Business presentation* – max 5 pages (in the case of legal entities) and/or *Europass CV* (in the case of individuals) presenting the activities and profile of the tenderer (max 3 pages)
- *Motivation letter* (maximum 450 words) explaining the suitability of the tenderer to undertake the evaluation based on the criteria mentioned above
- *List of references* for proving fulfilment of the requirements described under Chapter 0 of this Request for Proposals
- *A technical proposal*, including a detailed description of the methodology and tools applied (max 5 pages)
- *Financial Proposal*, indicating that all costs are being included in the price indicated in the proposal. (max 1 page)

6 Deadline for submission

The deadline for the submission of Tenders is **15th July 2024**. All Tenders must be sent via email to Ms. Diana Nitu. Signed pages should be scanned.

Email: diana.nitu@evbb.eu

Subject: “External Quality Assurance and Evaluation Services for the VirtuEU Project – Bid for Tender”.

7 Assessment process – Award Criteria

Aside from the above stated criteria, the selection process will be based:

- 1) on acceptance of the tender offering the best price/quality ratio and
- 2) on the availability during the project duration for the requested tasks.

The External Evaluator will be selected based on their level of expertise in the evaluation of similar projects that focus on teachers’ and students’ Training. The External Evaluator will be an expert on devising and implementing a robust evaluation methodology, collection and analysis of data. Aside from the above stated requirements, the main selection criteria are the expertise and capacity to deliver the work tendered for, the price quality relation, the methodological quality and the tenderer’s work experience. It should be noted that the contract will not be awarded to a tenderer who receives **less than 70%** on the award criteria.

In particular, the following criteria will be considered:

- Evidence on scientific research experience and extensive knowledge of Digital Education and Civic Engagement
- Proficient capacity of the English language (additional European languages such as German are an asset)
- Understanding of the nature of the assignment



- Capacity to work in a team project
- Ability to meet deadlines
- Ability to meet budget allowance
- Availability to attend meetings

Within this context, the evaluation process is comprised of the following steps:

- The submission date and time of all tenders is checked, and all tenders having been submitted after the submission deadline are rejected.
- The requirements of Section 0 are checked and any tender that does not fulfil the essential requirements is rejected.
- The technical proposal (methodology and tools used) is assessed
- The following score system is going to be used for the evaluation of the Tenders:

Evaluation Criteria	Max Score
Understanding of the Assignment	30
Overall Quality of Technical Proposal Submitted	40
Profile of the Senior Expert / Evaluator of the Contractor/External Evaluator	20
Additional services included	10
Total	100

- The Financial Offers for all evaluated tenders are opened.
- The final ranking of all offers is prepared by using the following formula: 70% X the score under technical requirements / 30% the score under the financial proposal.
- The most preferred candidate is contacted and asked to sign the contract.
- All other candidates are informed about the evaluation results, if requested when submitting the offer.

Note: when signing the contract, additional statements may be required to avoid incompatibility or conflict of interest.

8 Applicable Law

The contractual agreement is based upon and regulated by the European Commission's rules, provisions and requirements as set out in the project agreement with the European Commission, DG EAC and applicable German Law. The Contractor is obliged to fulfil the described tasks and duties of work to receive the final payment according to the contract.

EVBB has the right, based on German Law, to terminate the contract when the Contractor cannot perform the agreed tasks and duties accordingly.

Any conflicts of interests or disputes concerning the validity of this arrangement, the construction of its terms, and the interpretation of the rights and duties of the parties in the contract shall be governed by German Law.

The contract may not be transferred without the parties' written agreement.

9 Data Protection

The contracting party accepts that the contractor is free to use the data collected and the reports written in this project as part of their own academic reports and articles, if they include the relevant references to the project.

However, to fulfil or respect the modernized Convention 108 (the regulation No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000) and EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on the protection of individuals regarding the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data:

- The Contractor must process personal data under the agreement in compliance with applicable EU and national law on data protection (including authorizations or notification requirements).
- The Contractor may grant its personnel access only to data that is strictly necessary for implementing, managing, and monitoring the agreement.
- The Contractor must adopt appropriate technical and organizational security measures having regard to the risks inherent in the processing and to the nature of the personal data concerned