



EUROPEAN UNION SUPPORT TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE ASEAN REGION

Draft Terms of Reference

"Design and Development of Digital Credit Transfer System Platform Within the SHARE AECTS Framework"

Description of the Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To build a digital credit transfer system platform within the SHARE AECTS framework; • To provide capacity building trainings for SHARE partner universities. • To produce user guidelines for the platform. • To conduct the pilot testing of the first version of digitalised credit transfer system in ASEAN with SHARE Partner Universities.
Location of assignment	online
ToR No.	10/SHARE RA3-TOR/VIII/2021
Time of assignment	November 2021 – October 2022
Anticipated Budget	EUR 100,000

1. PROJECT INFORMATION / BACKGROUND

The European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region (SHARE) Programme is the European Union's flagship higher education programme with ASEAN. The SHARE Programme resumed with effect from 27 February 2021 for an extension until the end of 2022. The SHARE Consortium is comprised of the British Council, the DAAD, ENQA, and Nuffic. The SHARE Extension will see the programme continue its support of the ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN stakeholders to enable greater harmonisation and internationalisation of ASEAN higher education. It aims to catalyse the transfer of ownership of programme outcomes to ASEAN entities and nominated organisations to be embedded within sustainable ASEAN-led structures and processes.

In the first phase of SHARE, the ASEAN-EU Credit Transfer System (AECTS) was developed and tested through the SHARE Scholarship by student awardees and SHARE Partner Universities to facilitate student mobility in the ASEAN region. The SHARE AECTS platform was able to provide mutual recognition between ASEAN HEIs and EU HEIs. At the same time, it is compatible with the diversity of ASEAN HEIs and the existing CTS mechanisms in the region. Throughout batches 1-5 (2016 – 2019), SHARE has awarded 592 scholarships. The programme's extension allows for a further total of 300 scholarships to be available to ASEAN students to participate in intra-ASEAN mobility.

The ongoing pandemic has significantly disrupted student mobility since the possibility of implementing physical mobility is severely restricted. It had forced educational institutions to adopt new technologies and realign processes with limited time by adapting their learning methodologies to digital forms. This provides the opportunity for mobility innovation and digital transformation to learner-centric focus, from paper-based documents to digitalised data. The digitalisation process allows speed, flexibility, security, reliability, sustainability, and inclusion. Additionally, a digitalised credit transfer process through an online platform which will benefit universities in providing a seamless credit transfer process. The platform will offer students a transparent process of credit transfer and greater control of data on their credentials which can subsequently be shared with education providers and employers.

2. OBJECTIVES

SHARE intends to contract a service provider (consultancy) to design and develop the technology architecture for the digital credit transfer system within the SHARE AECTS framework, as well as participate in subsequent capacity building trainings and pilot testing. The study and implementation will draw on a study commissioned by SHARE entitled "Mapping and Identification Study of Digital AECTS Needs in the ASEAN region", and a subsequent series of workshops on "Developing Digital Credentials".

The DCTS (Digitalised Credit Transfer System) platform will be tested by SHARE partner universities who will be trained in the use of the platform. This will result in a report with actions to build a version that can be used on a broader scale by universities in ASEAN. In addition, the service will be required to be fully integrated with a virtual exchange scheme to support initiatives towards establishing an ASEAN Higher Education Space.



Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service



3. CONTEXTS OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The project on “Design and Development of Digital Credit Transfer System Platform within the SHARE AECTS Framework” will be executed by one service provider (consultancy), following an open tender procedure to provide the service of IT architecture design and develop the technology architecture for the digital credit transfer system and digital credentials into the SHARE AECTS platform, as well as participate in subsequent capacity building trainings and pilot testing.

3.1. Duties and Responsibilities

The service provider will develop the infrastructure of the SHARE AECTS Platform towards digital credit transfer system, which entails the development, user capacity building, and pilot testing.

The tasks in delivery of the project include the following:

- Propose the implementation approach and project schedule (including the infrastructure development, training, and piloting) based on desk research of existing CTS platforms in the region, including the study Mapping and Identification of Digital AECTS Needs in ASEAN.
- Build three versions of the digital credit transfer system in the SHARE ECTS platform:
 - a demo of the beta version, used for capacity building trainings and preparation of the pilot phase;
 - a beta version to for live testing of the platform with ASEAN HEIs;
 - a final version of the platform that includes all improvements suggested in the pilot phase.
- Deliver Digital Credit Transfer System Platform capacity training workshops to train SHARE staff and SHARE Partner Universities in the use of the platform, and specifically for the planned student exchange periods. To this end, produce a demo of the platform and a set of user guidelines to utilise the platform;
- Build and use a beta version of the platform for the digital exchange of credits and other student data as part of SHARE student exchanges periods;
- Develop and conduct a survey among the end users (institutions and students) to evaluate the platform against pre-set standards by the SHARE consortium. Produce an outcome report with an analysis of areas for improvement and platform maintenance based on a learner-centered design paradigm and discuss this with the SHARE Team Leader and team;
- Produce the final version of the platform based on all the recommendations in the outcome report;
- Produce a final set of user guidelines and a short video tutorial that institutions can use to start using the platform independently.

3.2. Expected result / key deliverable of the assignment.

Key deliverables:

- Desk research and project proposal;
- A demo, a beta- and a final version of the digitalised SHARE AECTS platform that is fully integrated with digital credit transfer system and digital credentials;
- A minimum of 4 capacity building workshops for SHARE and partners universities; 1 workshop of platform desk for SHARE team, 2 workshops for universities



IRO/university credential for using the platform, and 1 workshop for IT universities' staffs.

- A set of user guidelines and other training materials for the end users (institutions and students) how to use the beta version of the platform, to support the capacity building training;
- Pilot: Use of the SHARE DCTS platform for the student exchange periods within the programme
- A survey among all end users (participating institutions and students) based on pre-set standards by the project coordinator to evaluate the beta version of the platform in the pilot phase;
- A survey outcome report with the analysis of results and main recommendations for improvements;
- A final version of the SHARE DCTS platform that includes solutions to the identified points for improvement in the pilot phase;
- A final set of hands-on guidelines and a video tutorial for future users of the platform how to fully engage with the platform.

The final version of the platform should at a minimum meet the following requirements:

a) A technology architecture that allows for:

- Interoperability with other systems to support interregional student mobility (i.e., with Europe);
- System integration to better optimise adoption of the AECTS platform with the existing student information system by using open standards to enable interoperability and scale;
- System that leaves no one behind by considering the variety of IT readiness and IT ecosystem availability at universities in the ASEAN region;
- Integrate the platform with a Sign-On System, Student Information, Financial System, Course Catalogue, or Mobility systems as required;
- Data security/privacy that complies with the appropriate laws and regulations at a regional, national and university level;
- Consideration of the viability of introducing the digital wallet components for learners;
- Consideration of making use of similar or existing solutions or models of digital credit transfer and digital credentials available in Europe;
- Maintenance of the platform and ensuring a gated workflow process, which provides a digital CTS experience that promotes a sustainable ecosystem for all actors, ensuring continuity and iterative improvement.

b) A user-friendly interface for all interacting actors.

c) Enhance the SHARE AECTS mobility tools by adding features and applications based on the Study and Workshops of Digital Credentials in the ASEAN Region to support digital credit transfer and digital credentials, including defining baseline data formats for the exchange of documents.

3.3. Target Group

The digitalised AECTS platform is initially intended to support credit transfer between the existing 32 SHARE partner universities and eventually to support the wider ASEAN higher education community following completion of the SHARE extension Programme in December 2022.



4. Expertise Required Criteria

SHARE intends to contract one service provider (consultancy) which includes individuals with at least five (5) years of professional experience with the following requirements:

- a) Experience in developing and/or administering a digital credentials and digitalised credit transfer platforms,
- b) Expertise in credit transfer and student mobility platforms;
- c) Experience in providing secure access of data;
- d) Ability to provide portfolio of previous digital credentials platforms and/or digital credit transfer platform developed;
- e) Understand of broader context of digital credit transfer system and digital credentials.

5. Scheduled Timeline

The assignment is expected to take place throughout a duration of twelve (12) months, from November 2021 to October 2022, with the following tentative schedule to be further discussed and agreed upon between the service provider and SHARE:

Timeline	Steps
24 September 2021	Call for proposal
8 October 2021	Deadline for clarification (Q&A)
20 October 2021	Deadline to submit applications
25 October 2021	Applications shortlist announcement
29 October – 5 November 2021	Interview with the panelist
10 - 12 November 2021	Announcement of the winning bidder
15 – 19 November 2021	Meeting between external contractors and SHARE to discuss preliminary details
November 2021 – March 2022	Demo platform and user guidelines development process ready by January Beta/Pilot Platform ready for use in March
January 2022 – February 2022	Capacity Building Workshops with SHARE Team and SHARE Partner Universities
March 2022 – May 2022	Pilot Testing of the Beta Platform
May 2022 – September 2022	Maintenance and modifications of the Beta Platform based on inputs from the Capacity Building Workshops and Pilot Testing
October 2022	Submission of the final Platform and User Guidelines

6. Technicalities and Reporting

The service provider and experts shall report to the SHARE Team Leader and Result Area 3 Programme Manager throughout the process. The Programme Manager deems the project complete once the products of contribution have undergone the final quality assurance check by the SHARE Team Leader.

7. Budget

The duration of the work will be twelve (12) months with a total budget of € 100,000.

Payment Schedule and Deliverables		
Phases	Deliverables	Payment (%)
Inception	Upon submission of the demo version of the platform and training for SHARE Partner Universities	30%
Interim	Upon submission of the Beta version of the platform and completion of the pilot testing	30%
Reporting	Upon submission of the final version of the platform and user guidelines	40%

8. Selection of Proposals

The selection of proposals will follow a two-stage evaluation process, as follows:

Stages of Selection	Items of Evaluation	Selection Timeline
Stage 1 Evaluation of documents submitted by the applying project team	A comprehensive proposal to address the expected outputs as further listed above, comprising of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Form 1: Proposal Submission Form ○ Form 2: Technical Proposal (Description of Approach, Methodology and Work Plan for Performing the Assignment_ ○ Form 3: Team Composition and Task Assignments Form ○ Form 4: Financial Proposal ○ Form 5: Declaration of Objectivity and Confidentiality ○ Curriculum Vitae (CVs) of Lead Expert(s) and Company Profile 	End October 2021
Stage 2 Presentation of proposals	Shortlisted applicants present their proposal to a selection panel.	End October 2021

The successful application will be announced following the completion of the two selection stages as described above.

Composition	Item of Evaluation	Weight
Applicant profiles	CVs of Lead Expert(s) and Company Profiles	10%
Cost Efficiency	Financial proposal (cost breakdown)	30%
Project Proposal	Project design	60%
	Feasibility of the work plan	
	Evidence from previous relevant projects	
Total Score		100%

9. Transferred Deliverables

All documents and other materials produced as a result of these Terms of Reference including but not limited to strategies, reports, application forms, report forms etc. are Transferred Deliverables and ownership of Intellectual Property Rights is to be assigned to the SHARE Programme without exception. This also includes the software licensing rights to the Digital Credit Transfer System platform developed as a result of these Terms of Reference.