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Solidarity Fund for Innovative Project (FSPI) for the benefit of the employability of students of the National University of Vanuatu

Terms of reference – Consultancy to coordinate the implementation of a University Diploma in the field of Information & Communication Technology

CONTEXT

Established by the Act No. 34 of 2019 gazetted on January 24, 2020, the National University of Vanuatu (NUV) is the first national university in the country. Its mission is to ensure advancement in higher education and lifelong learning through academic and professional excellence through training, teaching and learning in the two official languages that are the English and French, as well as through research and international cooperation. The NUV has two faculties: the Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences comprising five schools and the Faculty of Science and Technology, which also has five schools. It aims to integrate the key national technical and vocational training institutions, generally referred to as national Post-School Education and Training (PSET) providers in the country. In the long term and under the text of the act which created the National University of Vanuatu, six institutions should be merged to the university. Today, this issue is crucial for the rapid growth and development of this highest national institution of teaching and learning in the country.

The issue of student employability is at the heart of the University's development and strategic priorities, whether it relates to existing program qualifications enabling easy access to the labor market and preparing them for more professional development; or with regard to recently integrated establishments such as the VITE which became the NUV School of Education on 15 March, 2021 and expected integration of other national training establishments, starting with the Vanuatu Institute of Technology (VIT), Vanuatu Agriculture College (VAC) and Vanuatu College of Nursing Education (VCNE) - these three institutions are best positioned to join NUV in the near future.

The Solidarity Fund for Innovative Projects, Civil Societies, Francophonie and Human Development (FSPI) enables French embassies to carry out innovative actions in the field with rapid impact and high visibility for the benefit of local populations. Vanuatu was no longer eligible for the FSPI since 2009 but thanks to effective lobbying by the French Embassy in Port-Vila, Vanuatu became eligible again for the year 2021 and the project "Employability of students of the National University of Vanuatu" could thus be presented and endorsed. The present project acts a new catalyst to qualify Vanuatu again for this special funding from France.

This FSPI project is mainly based on Vanuatu's National Sustainable Development Plan for the years 2016-2030 which provides the framework for Vanuatu's priorities based on three pillars: society, environment, economy. Objective 2.4 aims to "Increase opportunities for higher education, including training and technical and vocational skills".

The main objective is to improve the employability of the country's students after they graduate from the schools of NUV. This objective cannot be achieved with the sole recourse of the FSPI which will constitute only one element of a set of bundles contributing to the achievement of this objective, whether they are related initiatives of the NUV in this same perspective, initiatives brought within the framework of the skills defined as priorities by the National Human Resources Development Plan 2020-2030, or initiatives carried by other donors.

During the first phase of the project, the National University of Vanuatu requested a feasibility study that was conducted by a team of local IT and Communication specialists for the design of a Diploma Program in Information & Communication Technology (ICT) and for the purpose of increasing employability of students of the National University of Vanuatu in these areas of extreme importance for Vanuatu. The recommendations given in the ICT Training Needs Assessment consultancy report resulted from consultations with key stakeholders of the ICT sector in Vanuatu including Government institutions, banks and telecommunications players and are listed below:

1. The university diploma should offer a path to a bachelor's in computer science
2. The university diploma should give the students ICT foundations to be efficient in a working environment, but the specialization should be done in the working environment through on-the-job learning, training and courses.
3. Networking & Security, Database and Programming should be the three areas of focus of the university diploma.
4. The university diploma should provide qualified candidates for full stack developer, network technician, user support specialist (including web, database, application, mobile development and management of website and database) and technician support.
5. After the university diploma in ICT, students should be comfortable working in an English-speaking professional environment. The bilingualism (English and French) would be a considerable advantage.
6. The university diploma should include an internship in a related ICT field to validate the diploma.
7. The university diploma in ICT should be recognized locally and internationally and be accredited. The required documents will be provided to the National University of Vanuatu. The National University of Vanuatu will need to apply for accreditations.
8. The university diploma should offer pathways for people who are already in the working force and wish to develop their knowledge and/or acquire a recognized diploma.
9. The university diploma in ICT should focus on Networking & Security, Database and Programming but also include interpersonal and development skills like communication, teamwork, analytical skills and project management.

The proposed two-year Diploma program is divided into four semesters, where the final semester is wholly dedicated to a compulsory internship. The various courses proposed are as follows:

A. Courses covering core professional skills

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| • Computer Hardware | • Databases |
| • Computer Networks 1 | • Discrete Mathematics |
| • Introduction to Programming | • Server Administration |
| • Introduction to Mathematics for IT | • Computer Networks 3 |
| • Operating Systems & Application Software | • Front-end & Back-end Development |
| • Computer Networks 2 | • Cloud Computing |
| • Object-oriented Programming & Software Development | • Introduction to Statistics |

B. Courses covering language skills

- English & French in IT 1, 2 and 3 (1 per semester in year one, and semester 1 in year 2)

C. Courses covering personal development, communication and related skills

- Effective Communication & Teamwork
- Law & Ethics in IT
- Logic & Critical Thinking
- Negotiation

D. Internships – work-based learning

- Internships 1 and 2 (the second one going through all of semester 2, year 2)

SCOPE OF THE CONSULTANCY

The NUV requests the service of a consultant in charge of coordinating all aspects of the implementation of this new Diploma which is supposed to start from next academic year.

Main activities can be listed as follows (not exhaustive):

- Review the design overview and lead the presentation to the NUV Senate under NUV framework for endorsement;
- Propose an outline for individual course write-ups in alignment with NUV graduate profile and Accreditation procedures
- Prepare the courses' academic supports in order to provide documentation for the lecturers involved in the program;
- Propose a detailed budget including all implementation costs;
- In collaboration with the NUV HR Manager and the Office of the Vice-Chancellor, proceed with the recruitment of all academics who are necessary to deliver Diploma Program in 2023;
- In collaboration with the NUV communication officer, prepare all the documentation needed to advertise the Diploma widely;
- Organize trainings/workshops for the academics who are going to be recruited;
- Seek for funding from various stakeholders who could be interested to support the delivery of this new program.

Each step will need to be endorsed by the leadership of NUV requiring formal approval to continue. Carrying out this consultancy requires the mobilization of high-level expertise, having knowledge of the Vanuatu context and the NUV interlocutors.

SKILLS REQUIRED

- Proven skills in the instruction and setting up of Higher Education programs;
- Knowledge of program and course design;
- Proven skills in course design and write-up
- In-depth knowledge of latest technologies and ICT-related matters and subjects
- PhD or Master and experience as a lecturer in a recognized university including in program design;
- Excellent analytical and synthesis skills;
- Some knowledge of the Vanuatu context
- Excellent written and oral communication skills;
- Ability to work with multidisciplinary and intercultural teams;
- Oral and written fluency in English and/or French as well as Bislama.

DURATION AND PLACE OF THE SERVICE

- Duration: 7 months (part-time) starting in September
- Location: Vanuatu
- Final deliverables to be provided in French and English to comply with NUV regulations

BUDGET AND FINANCIAL MODALITIES

Budget allocated: 3,800,000 VT to be divided by activities.

This budget includes all the expenses necessary to carry out the consultancy.

CONTACTS

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Deadline to submit an Expression of interest: 20 October 2022