



Call for Proposals

Evaluation of ASEM Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum (ARC)

Overview

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) established the ASEM Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum (ARC) in 2008 in response to the 1st ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME1) in Berlin in the same year. Since then, it has been running this high-level platform for inter-regional dialogue for the 53 Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) partners. The past editions of ARC have brought together hundreds of Asian and European university leaders for solution-oriented discussions on emerging higher education issues concerning both regions.

Call for Proposals

ASEF is seeking an independent consultant or consulting company to undertake an evaluation of its ASEM Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum (ARC) project series with a view to:

- Assess the results and strengths of the ASEM Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum (ARC) so far
- Identify ways to strengthen the future strategy and operation of the project series
- Provide recommendations on how to increase the impact of the project series and ensure its long-term sustainability

The evaluation is planned to start at the beginning of April 2016 and be finalised by mid-June 2016. For details of the scope of the evaluation, please refer to the annex below.

Candidate Requirements

- Citizens of an ASEM country (for individual evaluators) and/or companies located in an ASEM country (for consultancy companies).¹
- Experience in conducting research, designing and conducting evaluations of international cooperation programmes;
- Graduate qualifications preferably in Social Sciences, particularly Asian/European studies or related fields;
- Experience in report writing required;
- Familiarity with the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process, higher education policy in the ASEM context, and Asia-Europe relations in general;
- Experience of working for inter-governmental organisations and/or NGOs would be a plus;

¹ The **Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)** is an intergovernmental forum for dialogue and cooperation established in 1996 to deepen relations between Asia and Europe, which addresses political, economic and socio-cultural issues of common concern. The 53 ASEM Members are Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, the Lao PDR, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Kingdom, Viet Nam, the European Union and the ASEAN Secretariat. For more information, please visit www.aseminfoboard.org

- Excellent writing skills with the experience of responding to different audience requirements;
- Strong communication and inter-personal skills including tact and cultural sensitivity;
- Fluency in written and spoken English;
- Proactive and flexible; able to work without detailed supervision.

Expressions of Interest

Expressions of Interest (Eols) should consist of

- Covering letter expressing interest in participating in the evaluation of the ASEM Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum and confirming that the information submitted in the Eol dossier is "true and correct".
- CV for individual evaluators and profile for companies (the profile of key staff undertaking the work must be included). Relevant experience must be highlighted, as also the nationality of proposed evaluators and the country of incorporation for companies.
- Evaluation proposal, with the details of the objectives, methodology, deliverables and timelines for the proposed evaluation (no more than 3 pages). It must be clearly stated what the objectives of the evaluation proposal are, how the objectives will be met, their relevance in the context of the objectives of the Call. The proposal must be short and precise.
- Quotation with your proposed fee (please indicate in Singapore Dollars)
- The Eol must be submitted as a single PDF document (no more than 1 MB) and the file name must indicate the name of individual evaluator or the company.
- Contact details (email and phone with international dialling code) of the individual evaluator. For companies, the name, designation and contact details of the designated contact must be included.
- All documents must be in English.

Deadline and Contact Details

Queries, CVs and cover letters should be emailed to Ms Lieke BOS (E: lieke.bos@asef.org). Expressions of interest must be received by **Friday, 25 March 2016, 12:00 midnight** (Singapore time).

Annex I: Evaluation of ASEM Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum (ARC)

Role:	Independent Evaluator/s (individual or company)
Start date:	Beginning of April 2016
Location:	Home based in Europe or Asia, with 1-2 trips to Singapore as required
Time frame:	Up to 65 days, April – mid-June 2016
Reporting to:	Ms Leonie NAGARAJAN, Director, Education Department, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)
Coordination:	Ms Lieke BOS, Project Officer, Education Department, supported by Ms Linyan XUE, Project Fund Manager, Executive Office, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

1. Background

The ASEM Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum (ARC) is recognised as an Official Dialogue Partner of the ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME). It is also one of the initial commitments to the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), the successor to the United Nations Decade of ESD (2005-2014).

The 1st ASEM Rectors' Conference (ARC1) took place in 2008 in response to the ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEM ME) launched in the same year. Since then, ARC has been held biennially in Asia and Europe alternatively. As a high-level platform for inter-regional dialogue, the past editions of ARC have brought together hundreds of Asian and European university leaders for solution-oriented discussions on emerging higher education issues concerning both regions.

An integral part of ARC is the Students' Forum that takes place in conjunction with the Rectors' Conference under an identical theme from the perspective of youth. Selected student representatives have an opportunity to present the results of their discussions face-to-face to the Rectors.

2. Evaluation Objectives

ASEF would like to review the uniqueness and strengths of the ARC project series, assess its current project framework and learn how its impact can be further increased. The results will help ASEF and its partners to consider how to best allocate the resources for the future. The independent evaluation shall be carried out in the first half of 2016 to assess the project series from 2008 to 2016.

The overall purpose of the exercise will be to:

- Assess the relevance, evolution, perception, visibility and impact of the ASEM Rectors'

Conference and Students' Forum (ARC) thus far with ASEF as its implementing body

- Evaluate the existing framework and working methods to identify good practices and lessons learned, while providing recommendations to strengthen the project series' future strategy, operations and long-term sustainability

2.1 Evaluation Questions

The overall evaluation questions to be answered by the report are the following:

2.1.1 Assess the relevance, evolution, perception, visibility and impact of the ASEM Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum (ARC) thus far with ASEF as its implementing body

- a) How relevant is the contribution of ARC to establishing and strengthening the multi-stakeholder dialogue within the ASEM Education Process?
- b) What has been the impact of ARC on the various stakeholders (rectors, students, academics, higher education institutions, Ministries of Education, education agencies, business with a link to education)?

2.1.2 Evaluate the existing framework and working methods to identify good practices and lessons learned, while providing recommendations to strengthen the project series' future strategy, operations and long-term sustainability

- a) What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the ARC project series?
- b) In which areas can the engagement of its various stakeholders be maximised towards the overall objectives of ARC?
- c) What measures need to be taken to strengthen the branding of ARC and increase its visibility and reputation as one effective bi-regional higher education multi-stakeholder platform?
- d) How can human and financial resources be optimised to ensure a responsible investment that brings sufficient benefits to all stakeholders?

In assessing progress towards objectives, the evaluator will focus on the outcomes where ASEF *can reasonably be expected to have positive effects*. In making recommendations for future programming, the evaluator will strive to ensure that the exercise is as beneficial as possible in practical terms.

2.2 Scope

The evaluation will cover the project series from 2008 to 2016.

3. Existing Sources of Information

- Project documentation (project proposals, project reports, participant feedback forms, budget plans, participants' lists etc.)
- ASEF website and ASEM InfoBoard
- Media clippings, videos, social media
- Relevant ASEM documents (Chairs' statements, official minutes of meetings etc.)

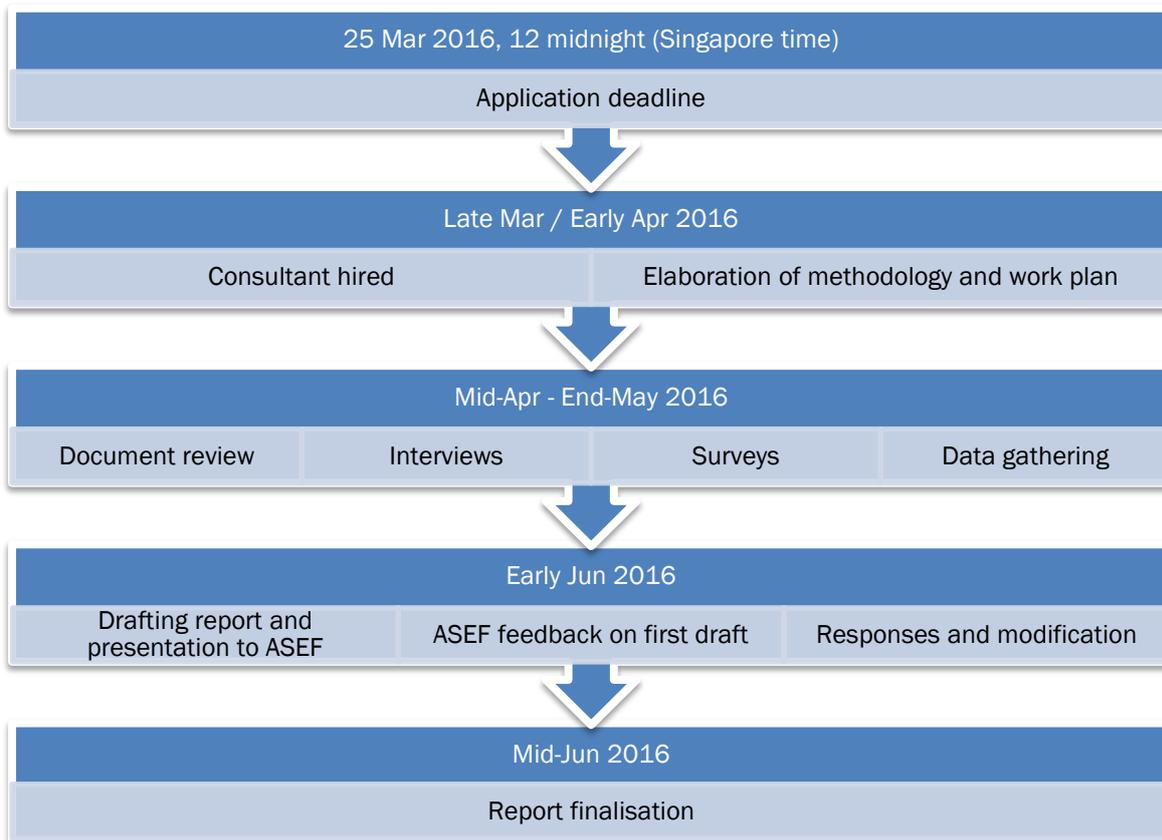
4. Methodology

The ideal methodology will be one that is logically structured while also providing some flexibility for the context of the project's structure and evolution.

A detailed methodology for the evaluation will be proposed by the evaluator and finalised in consultation and agreement with ASEF. The potential methods to be used by the evaluator may include:

- Document review
- Interviews of selected ASEF staff and key stakeholders, e.g. partner organisation/s
- Survey to previous participants
- Any other methods to be used

5. Timeline



6. Procedures and Logistics

ASEF will provide documentation to the evaluator as well as facilitate contacts with stakeholders. A detailed work plan including travel to Singapore and review meetings will be set up with the evaluator.

7. Outputs

Evaluation report of the project series:

- First draft of evaluation report to be delivered by end of May 2016;
- Responses by ASEF in early June 2016;
- Final evaluation report to be presented by mid-June 2016.

8. Contracting Arrangements

ASEF is commissioning the evaluation and will contract the evaluator and coordinate with all relevant stakeholders.

9. Confidentiality

The evaluation report is confidential and sharing with a third party is forbidden. ASEF will retain full copyright to the evaluation, its findings, data and the report.

10. Time required

It is expected that the evaluation will require up to 65 days work over the months of April – June 2016, including 1-2 trips to Singapore (included in fee).