Request for Information

For

Access Control System

American University in Bulgaria

February 2025

I.   Overview

1. American University in Bulgaria

The American University in Bulgaria www.aubg.edu ("AUBG") is a top-quality liberal arts university accredited in both the U.S. and in Bulgaria. The 2022 Bulgarian university rankings rated AUBG as No 1 in the country in Business Administration, Political Science, and Journalism and Mass communication. Furthermore, we take the first place in Prestige for Business Administration, Economics, Political Science, and Journalism and Mass Communication, and we are first for all fields in Welfare and Administrative Services. Business Administration, Economics, Political Science, and Journalism and Mass Communication rank first in Highest Income and Lowest unemployment rate indicators. Education is delivered entirely in English and students obtain both a U.S. and a European diploma. AUBG welcomes bright young minds from 40 + countries and attracts distinguished international faculty. AUBG also provides the best student facilities in the region: from comfortable residents' halls to the award-winning building of the ABF Student Center, and the largest English-language library in Southeast Europe, students enjoy a safe, world-class residential campus. AUBG alumni have a reputation for career success and have been a driving force behind the establishing of the entrepreneurship ecosystem in the region. They top global success rankings with 99.8% employed or enrolled in grad school within a few months of graduation. For more information, you can visit www.aubg.edu.

2. The goals of this RFI

The American University in Bulgaria ("AUBG") is issuing a Request for Information (RFI) for Upgrade/Replacement and enhancing the functionalities of the currently available system for Access Control that is incorporated and works with other systems in the University such as the students' Payment/deposit system, the AUBG Library system, meal plan, etc.

The American University in Bulgaria has several buildings in Blagoevgrad and we are looking for a solution that can fit to all existing, the one that is in construction and potential expansion in the future. The estimated access points are around 500, including parking barriers, building entrances, common space, room doors in dormitory and specific premises access.

Our target timeline of installations is prepared in few stages. The phase that is fixed and **can not** be changed is the new dormitory under construction. This phase is set for installation and cables to start in Sept 2025 and the final hardware implementation to be done till Mar-2026. The other phases are more flexible and depend on the students' holidays and are subject of negotiations.

With this RFI we are targeting to understand the market trends and technologies, what are the possible solutions that fit to our organization are, as well as expected budget and possible project timeframe. After completion of the RFI process, based on the information gathered, we will launched Request for Proposal, targeting to choose offer and partner for our project.

3. **Current status:**

The currently used system has the following parameters:

- **Access control functionality** – the current system is built on dedicated network infrastructure (throughput/network speed at 1 Gbps) and covers all Blagoevgrad based buildings (Main building - Georgi Izmirliev 1. Sq. and all Skaptopara buildings – Svoboda Bachvarova str. 2,4,6,8,12). The cards used are 125KHz RFID plastic cards with PSK modulation (IDTECK format). The printer used to print the cards is AUNG own one and is Evolis Primacy. The design of the cards is created as separate picture in JPG format and finished in One Card System (https://www.touchnet.com/id-management/onecard-campus-id)
- **Payments/Deposits functionality** – the system that serves these needs (meal plan deposit, bookstore purchases) is **One Card** (https://www.touchnet.com/id-management/onecard-campus-id)
- **Library access and identification** – the system **Virtua** (https://www.iii.com/products/virtua/) is used to process library activities. Barcode readers are used for fast user recognition. The barcodes printed on the card are Type code 39.
  Note: The described above are separate systems integrated by used RFID cards with RFID chip, Magnetic stripe and barcode printed on the card. The access cards with all the data are provided to our students, faculty and staff on their initial entrance / start in the University from our Security office, placed in Main Building in Blagoevgrad.

- **Our current pain points are** lack of reliability, integration problems, outdated technology in terms of hardware and software.

  II. **Details of the expectations**
  1. Our main goal is to enhance/renew currently used RFID card and Access control systems to optimize use and implement desired system features such as:
  ▪ Physical mean of identification – such as chip, card**,** printed on AUBG network printers/copy machines, authentication against AUBG Active Directory and other innovative identification methods/techniques);
  ▪ Biometric Authentication (fingerprint, face recognition, etc.);
  ▪ Mobile Credentials (smartphones, Bluetooth, etc.);
  ▪ Cloud Integration (for remote monitoring and control);
  ▪ Real-time Reporting (access logs, alarms, etc.);
  ▪ Visitor Management and Temporary Access (for guests, contractors, etc.);
  ▪ Payment option - integration with cashier /fiscal system in use at AUBG ((dWare https://dware.bg/).

  2. Technical Requirements
  ▪ Hardware Requirements: we are open to see any proposals that fit our other requirements, answering to the following: total number of readers is approximately 500 or more, the total number of controllers is approximately 250, parking barriers – 10, with possibility easy to adjust these numbers.
  ▪ Software Requirements: the necessary software feature is centralized management, still possible to have different levels to administrate the buildings separately. As mentioned, for us it is crucial to have the ability to identify the students, faculty and

staff in Library, currently using printed unique barcode number, given to each by the university; as well as to have integration with the fiscal system used in the University dWare https://dware.bg/; to manage easily access and data on our own.

- Scalability: the system to be able to grow with additional buildings or increasing number of users / readers / controllers.
- Network Infrastructure: we are open to see different options of the network and infrastructure possibilities - wireless or wired etc. Please note that the existing is wired.
- Data Storage: local and / or cloud according all legislation requirements for protecting personal data
- Redundancy and support requirements: our access control system is crucial for the normal life of the University and we would like to see what are the possible system reliability and time for reaction in case of different problems on site and software issues.

3. Security and Compliance
- Data Privacy: Compliant with GDPR for handling personal data of students, faculty, staff, and visitors.
- System Security: requiring high level of cybersecurity standards or protocols to prevent unauthorized access or tampering with the system.
- Audit Trails: we would like to have the ability to maintain and review audit trails of access events.

4. System future-proofing: targeting to have at least 10 years life cycle, we are focused to understand more on the following topics:
- End-of-Life (EOL) Policies: how the product end-of-life, including timelines for discontinuing hardware, software, and services would be handled. We would like to discuss an offer for the system with a commitment for support and maintenance (hardware and software) for at least 10 years from the date of installation.
- Software Updates and Patches: what are the plans for providing regular software updates, including security patches, for a minimum of 10 years. What are the practices implemented?
- Warranty and Spare Parts Availability: we are expecting warranty periods of at least 5 years and would like to know what are the guarantees of the availability of spare parts and components for the next decade.
- Service Agreement for support and availability of the system. Reaction time.

III.   Content of the proposals and expected documents

The participants' proposal documentation and any exhibits must be prepared in English. Proposals must include:

1. **Vendor Qualifications**

- Company Overview: Brief company profile, including years of operation, key personnel, and certifications.
- References: Customer references for at least 3 similar projects – in education sector, if possible with payment / deposit option.
- Vendor must specify if they intend to use subcontractors for any part of the services and/or deliverables under this potential engagement. AUBG reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to approve any subcontractor, which bidders propose prior to the project kick-off.

2. **Implementation and Support**
- Implementation Plan: high level of the timeline for deployment, including key milestones such as installation, system testing, and training.
- Support and Maintenance: information of the support, warranty, and maintenance services (e.g., system updates, troubleshooting, and 24/7 support).
- System Upgrades: how future upgrades or expansions can be handled.

3. **Budget and cost:**
- Cost Breakdown: Pricing for hardware, software, installation, and any ongoing costs (e.g., subscription or licensing fees).
- Payment Terms: Preferred payment structures or milestones for payments.
- Cost of Future Expansions: Pricing for future building expansions or additional access points / controllers if needed.

4. **Additional documents:**
- Conflict of Interest statement.
- Financial statements for the FY 2023.

IV. **Schedule and stages**
1. RFI issuing – 07.02.2025
2. Site visits and meetings – latest 25.02.2025
3. Questions – latest 04.03.2025
4. Answers – latest 10.03.2025
5. Deadline to submit the information sets – 14.03.2025
6. Presentations and feedback on the proposals – until 26.03.2025
7. RFP starts – 03.04.2025

AUBG will respond to the questions sent by participating companies by emails and does not undertake to answer questions asked otherwise. AUBG will collect all the questions

from all participants and will send their answers to all participants, the names of those who asked the questions will not be disclosed.

V. **Contacts –** please use for all your questions and comments the following email: Purchasing@aubg.edu

Regards,

Snezhana Karabasheva

Head of Procurement

American University in Bulgaria