

Call for Proposals

**Evaluation of DW Akademie's projects
in Southern Africa,
funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation
and Development (BMZ)**

DW Akademie is calling for proposals for the evaluation of its **Southern Africa program** funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). DW Akademie invites interested and qualified persons to submit proposals. These Terms of Reference are to be taken as the basis for the evaluation.

Tender information

Title: Evaluation of Southern Africa program with a focus on regionalization

Type of contract: service contract

Start Date: 02 November 2023

Duration of assignment: The contract will be effective for 6 months from date of signing

1. Introducing DW Akademie

DW Akademie is Deutsche Welle's center for international media development, journalism training and knowledge transfer. Our projects strengthen the human right to freedom of expression and unhindered access to information. DW Akademie empowers people worldwide to make independent decisions based on reliable facts and constructive dialogue. DW Akademie is a strategic partner of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. We also receive funding from the Federal Foreign Office and the European Union and are active in more than 70 developing countries and emerging economies.

DW Akademie strengthens the human right to freedom of expression. It enables people throughout the world to make decisions based on independent information, reliable facts and constructive dialogue. We stand for free media, free expression and free societies worldwide.

We are journalists, consultants and experts in media and education. Together with our partners, we work to promote free expression, human rights and the development of functioning media systems worldwide. We believe that journalism, education and culture improve people's lives. Powerful stories support positive social dialogue. People need reliable facts, independent analysis, unbiased presentation and universal access to knowledge.

Our work centers on Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which proclaims freedom of expression and access to information as a basic human right. Free expression is the prerequisite for people to use reliable information and exchange ideas with others.

In Africa, DW Akademie and its partners are implementing BMZ-funded projects in East Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda with a regional component), West Africa (Ghana, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire with regional components) as well as the Southern Africa program (Namibia, Malawi, Lesotho, Zambia and Zimbabwe). A regional Innovation Initiative has been implemented through project activities in these countries and will be one focus of this evaluation. In addition, the regional project "Displacement and Crisis Preparedness" was implemented.

2. The BMZ-funded Southern Africa program

a) Context and project summary

DW Akademie's Southern Africa program is currently being implemented over a three-year period from January 2022 to December 2024. During the last year of the project, an evaluation is scheduled to take place in time to provide actionable information for any subsequent proposals.

The focal points of the activities are as follows:

DW Akademie's **Southern Africa program** is being implemented across the region, in **Namibia, Malawi, Lesotho, Zambia and Zimbabwe**. The program improves the resilience of the media sector through journalistic skills training and newsroom innovation by strengthening media and journalism training centers in the region. Media and information literacy work with young people, as well as with educational institutions, is equipping media users to resist misinformation and disinformation. Support for a coalition of media NGOs ensures robust legal frameworks for freedom of expression and solidarity for media freedom activists across the region.

Furthermore, the regional "Innovation Initiative" encompasses all country projects and is thus part of the regional evaluation. In Southern Africa, the **regional innovation project** strengthens the ability of media outlets and civil society to innovate and thereby promote the freedom of expression of disadvantaged groups with a focus on vernacular languages. It consists of two instruments: Idea Development and an Innovation Fund to make resources available for the testing and improvement of a prototype tailored to the information needs of the audience in question.

b) Project aims

The theory of change of our projects includes inputs (activities), outputs (deliverables) and outcomes (project aims).

The expected outcomes of the **Southern Africa program** are as follows:

Namibia and Southern Africa: "Media and civil society organizations are able to strengthen the resilience of information ecosystems as well as promote a diverse and inclusive civic dialogue in Southern Africa."

Innovation Initiative: "The media and civil society are strengthened in their ability to innovate toward greater freedom of expression for disadvantaged groups."

The projects in Southern Africa contribute to a common overall regional objective for Africa (at impact level):

“African media actors are able to design inclusive communication structures that support access to information, constructive dialogue and the strengthening of African media culture. As managers of socio-political dialogue formats, they are able to promote knowledge transfer and societal understanding, as well as establish media systems as a motor for democratic processes, social development and political stability.”

3. Principles and criteria of the evaluation

All evaluations of DW Akademie projects are based on principles that both the contracting authority and the contractor must adhere to. These principles stem from the OECD/DAC and the German Association of Evaluators (DeGEval): impartiality and independence, credibility, usefulness, participation, feasibility, fairness, and accuracy.

Regional approaches are the overarching theme of this year’s evaluation cycle.

The DAC criteria are used as a basis for the evaluation design. In terms of knowledge requirements, however, the focus is on the **efficiency** and **relevance** of the Innovation Initiative. For the country projects and the regional components, the emphasis is on **effectiveness**, as this evaluation design is particularly focused on the achievement of the expected objectives (outcome, output). In addition, **coherence** is used as a criterion to examine the coherence of the "regionalized" measures at the country level.

| Evaluation | Regional | Criteria | Countries | Criteria |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Regional Southern Africa | Innovation Initiative | Efficiency Relevance Coherence | Namibia (incl. regional components in Malawi, Lesotho, Zambia and Zimbabwe) | Effectiveness Coherence |

In particular, insights into the overarching issues of regionalization should emerge:

- Is regionalization a sensible and targeted approach to respond to the strategic / thematic challenges and requirements of the regions?
- How should regional projects be designed and set up to realize the expected gains in efficiency?
- Can the relevance for the target groups be increased in projects with an open call for proposals?
- How does a regional approach affect the relevance and coherence of a program, compared to a country focus?

From these larger questions, specific guiding questions, assigned to the identified focus criteria, have been formulated by DW Akademie; these will be shared with the selected evaluators.

The evaluation results will be used to shape the regional project lines and projects for the upcoming project cycle (2024-2026) and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of regional programs in comparison to country-focused programs.

4. Evaluation process

All proposals received will be assessed according to an internal set of criteria. Following contract clarification, DW Akademie will provide the contractor with the detailed project information. In a kick-off workshop with the project team, the exact procedures and focus of the evaluation will be determined, including agreeing on how DW Akademie staff can support the evaluator(s) in scheduling and organizing (remote or face-to-face) interviews in various locations.

Based on the decisions made during the kick-off workshop, the evaluator(s) will produce an inception report detailing the evaluation questions, interview partners, methodology and work schedule (a template will be provided).

A data collection trip may be conducted to meet project partners. The trip will be planned in cooperation with DW Akademie and independently conducted by the evaluator(s). For the data collection phase, proposals can be submitted detailing how and where the team(s) plan to conduct face-to-face interviews and for how many days. It should be noted however that, building on the experience of remote evaluations in previous years, the evaluation should include as many remote elements as possible (especially fewer flights).

At the end of the evaluation process, an independently written report detailing the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation is to be submitted by the evaluator(s), based on a template provided by DW Akademie. A draft version of the report will be discussed in a so-called change workshop with the project team, after which the final version of the report is to be prepared by the evaluator(s).

5. Deliverables

The following services are to be rendered on assignment:

- Participation in the kick-off workshop with the project team and evaluation consultant from DW Akademie's Research and Evaluation Unit (REVAL), carried out online or in-person (to be determined)
- Inception report (max. six pages, plus appendix)

- Data collection phase – including the preparation and execution of interviews (online or face-to-face)
- Presentation of the findings of the evaluation
- Participation in a change workshop at the end of the evaluation, during which the results and recommendations will be presented and discussed with the same participants invited to the kick-off workshop (carried out online or in-person - to be determined)
- Final evaluation report of max. 20 pages (plus appendix) in English. Additionally, an executive summary in English and (ideally) in German of two to three pages (each), should be submitted, as well as an appendix containing any additional information that supports the understanding of the evaluation results. This includes research tools such as questionnaires, interview guidelines, and a list of interviewees. DW Akademie will be responsible for the proof-reading of the executive summary in English, which will be edited by DW Akademie and then published on the DW Akademie website.

6. Application requirements

a) Applicant's profile

Applicants should have experience in designing and carrying out evaluations in the field of international development (including OECD/DAC criteria). They should be proficient in information and data collection and analysis, as well as have excellent analytical skills. Experience in the media sector and in international development cooperation / media development, as well as relevant regional and in-countries expertise, will be preferred. The applicant – or, if applying as a team, at least one of the applicants – should have extensive knowledge of the region, including any relevant language skills. Ideally, at least one of the applicants should be based in the region. Please note that the project documentation is mainly in German; however, the main documents can be provided in English.

b) Format of the proposal

Interested applicants should outline a coherent proposal for the design of the evaluation. The proposal is mainly intended to assess the competence and motivation of the candidates and will not necessarily be used as a basis for the evaluation itself. The final methodology and procedures will be discussed and agreed upon by the contracted evaluator(s) and DW Akademie at the kick-off workshop.

Furthermore, the applicant's own evaluation expertise as well as the context of the project region, evaluation objectives, methodology, and evaluation design should be described. The specific documents to be submitted are listed below (6 c).

Overall, each applicant can only be contracted for one evaluation. Each evaluation will be awarded separately as they will all be conducted at the same time. Submitting a proposal does not constitute an entitlement to the conclusion of a contract.

c) Budget & documents

The budget for the evaluation is **22,000 Euros** net, including any travel expenses. This amount should not be exceeded.

The following documents should be included in the proposal:

- Cover letter, detailing the suitability of the applicant(s) for the specific evaluation
- CV(s) of evaluator(s), documenting relevant experience, including contact details for two references
- Proposal (max. 6 pages) detailing the proposed evaluation design, including a draft schedule and budget, indicating the honorarium for the entire team, the number of anticipated working days, and any travel expenses.

7. Timetable and deadlines

- Deadline for all proposals: **10 September 2023**.
- Evaluators will be selected by **29 September 2023**.
- Evaluation contract begins on **2 November 2023**.
- Kick-Off Workshop: between **mid-November and mid-December 2023**.
- Data collection is scheduled for **February 2024**.
- Draft evaluation report should be available by **early March 2024**.
- Change Workshop is scheduled for **March 2024**.
- Final evaluation report is due by **mid-April 2024** at the latest.

Evaluation proposals should be emailed to Laura Moore (laura.moore@dw.com), with Andrea Gellert (andrea.gellert@dw.com) and Anja Weber (anja.weber@dw.com) cc'd. Only electronic formats will be accepted.

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