

## **Call for Proposals/Terms of Reference**

### **Evaluation of DW Akademie's projects in Georgia with South Caucasus and Moldova, funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)**

DW Akademie is calling for proposals for the evaluation of its projects in Georgia with South Caucasus and Moldova 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 DW Akademie's projects in Georgia with South Caucasus and Moldova based on the OECD/DAC-criteria, with a particular focus on the criteria relevance and effectiveness.

**Type of contract:** service contract

**Start Date:** 01 November 2024

**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 Eastern Europe, DW Akademie and its partners are implementing BMZ-funded projects in the Western Balkans, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.

## 2. The BMZ-funded projects in Georgia and Moldova

### a) Context and project summaries

DW Akademie's projects in Georgia with South Caucasus and Moldova are currently being implemented over a three-year period from January 2023 to December 2025. 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 projects are as follows:

In **Georgia and South Caucasus**, DW Akademie works with three target groups with the aim of developing counter-strategies to propaganda and disinformation. Firstly, journalists from independent media are trained in constructive and conflict-sensitive journalism. In this way, they improve their reporting on topics that affect members of minorities, as well as on national and international issues. In addition, alumni of the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs from the fields of journalism and media management are given the opportunity to gain more practical experience in paid internships lasting several months with local media. At the same time, they support the work of these media outlets. Finally, multipliers from Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan learn fact-checking skills and publish the results of their research. In order to strengthen the impact of the individual project lines, all project partners network and exchange information about fact-checking and their projects against propaganda and disinformation.

The multi-ethnic population in **Moldova** remains deeply divided despite the pro-European course of the government in Chişinău. Russian-speaking national minorities in particular are being targeted by Russian disinformation, which is further polarizing the political discourse in the shadow of the war in Ukraine. Moldovan media are still owned by the oligarchs. The few independent media lack qualified journalists who are able to provide relevant and credible information. The population feels inadequately informed and turns to social media. Children and young people in particular are exposed to propaganda and hate speech.

DW Akademie's project aims to improve quality journalism in the country and the Moldovan population's resilience to disinformation through innovative education and training for media professionals and emerging media users.

DW Akademie supports the Moldova School of Journalism in establishing itself as an innovation center for quality journalism. The innovation center will offer needs-based training in multimedia journalism for media professionals and create space for media innovation in times of crisis. Together with the project partner Independent Journalism Center, DW Akademie is expanding the capacities of schools in order to pilot integrative teaching of media skills, which is particularly effective for Russian-speaking children and young people.

## **b) Project aims**

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

The expected outcome of the project in **Georgia with South Caucasus** is as follows:

Independent media and multipliers have successfully developed counter-strategies to propaganda and disinformation for Georgia and population groups in the South Caucasus.

The expected outcome of the project in **Moldova** is as follows:

As innovation centers, educational institutions in Moldova strengthen the quality of reporting by independent media professionals and the resilience of children and young people to disinformation.

The projects in Georgia and Moldova contribute to a common overall regional objective for Eastern Europe (at the impact level):

People in war and crisis regions who are exposed to massive disinformation have access to relevant and reliable information provided by resilient and independent media in order to be able to make self-determined decisions.

## **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. In addition to accountability to the BMZ, the evaluation focuses on mutual learning for future project work.

The OECD/DAC criteria are used as the basis for the evaluation design. All OECD/DAC criteria are to be examined (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability).

The evaluation should take a particular look at the criteria relevance and effectiveness. In both Moldova and Georgia, the target groups and their needs in the Media and Journalism Education and Media Viability lines should be examined more closely. In Moldova, the target group are individual journalists, while in Georgia the project is working with small local media outlets. Associated questions in the relevance criterion should be:

- What are the specific needs of the target groups (individual journalists vs. media outlets)?
- Did the project cater for those specific needs?
- Are there other relevant target groups that might have benefitted more from capacity development efforts?

The specific focus on target groups also has consequences for the effectiveness criterion:

- How effectively did the projects help the core partners / organizations involved develop their own capacities in catering for the needs of their target groups?
- What modes of delivery / kinds of support can make the project more effective (e.g. introducing or modifying fund / grant approaches)?
- What is missing in terms of effective support, also at the regional level (e.g. exchange with other institutions, organizations, individuals)?

Additionally, the evaluation serves to find out what efforts the project has undertaken to counter the spread of (Russian) mis- and disinformation in Georgia and Moldova. This is in line with DW Akademie's regional strategy for Eastern Europe and the Balkans. This leads to the following additional questions under the relevance criterion:

- How relevant is the topic of disinformation in the current project? How relevant do the partners see the problem?
- In what way has the project addressed countering disinformation?

It is important to note that the key questions formulated above are not necessarily meant to guide a comparison between the two country projects in Moldova and Georgia. Rather, a comparative perspective may be chosen where the evaluators expect it to produce valuable insights for the project teams, but it is not required throughout.

#### **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 (face-to-face and remote) 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. The particular arrangements in this regard will be clarified at the Kick-Off.

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.
- Inception report (max. six pages, plus appendix)
- Data collection phase – including the preparation and execution of evaluation interviews (face-to-face or online)
- 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.
- Final evaluation report of max. 20 pages (plus appendix) in English or German. Additionally, an executive summary in English or German of about four pages 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 summaries in German and 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 having 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. Fluent English language skills are a prerequisite. Ideally, at least one of the applicants should have long-term experience in

local media market(s). 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 **24.000 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: **15 September 2024**.
- Evaluators will be selected by **30 September 2024**.
- Evaluation contract begins on **01 November 2024**.
- Kick-Off Workshop: between **mid Nov – mid Dec 2024**.
- Data collection is scheduled for **February 2025**.
- Draft evaluation report should be available by **early March 2025**.
- Change Workshop is scheduled for **March 2025**.
- Final evaluation report is due by **mid-April 2025** at the latest.

Evaluation proposals should be emailed to Laura Moore ([laura.moore@dw.com](mailto:laura.moore@dw.com)), with Andrea Gellert ([andrea.gellert@dw.com](mailto:andrea.gellert@dw.com)) and Dennis Reineck ([dennis.reineck@dw.com](mailto:dennis.reineck@dw.com)) cc'd. Only electronic formats will be accepted.

Laura Moore  
Head of Research and Evaluation  
Policy and Learning  
DW Akademie  
[laura.moore@dw.com](mailto:laura.moore@dw.com)  
[www.dw-akademie.com](http://www.dw-akademie.com)