

Call for Proposals/Terms of Reference

Evaluation of DW Akademie's project in Ukraine, funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

DW Akademie is calling for proposals for the evaluation of its project in Ukraine 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 project in Ukraine based on the OECD/DAC-criteria, with a particular focus on the criteria effectiveness and impact of media and journalism education.

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 project in Ukraine

a) Context and project summaries

DW Akademie's project in Ukraine is 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 project are as follows:

Russia is spreading targeted disinformation and propaganda via digital channels in Ukraine. Seniors (60+), who lack the digital skills to check the truthfulness of information, are particularly susceptible to this. As a result, these people are particularly likely to fall victim to disinformation. DW Akademie is supporting the project partner Ukrainian Institute for Media and Communication (UIMK) in the development of training formats with the aim of increasing the media and digital skills of older people and breaking down old, rigid thought patterns. An accompanying study is analyzing the needs and investigating how the target group can be reached. The aim is to enable seniors - also across generations - to participate better in social discourse and contribute to transformation processes.

Training at journalism faculties at universities in Ukraine is methodologically and didactically outdated and not very practice-oriented. The Ukrainian Institute for Media and Communication (UIMK), as the project partner, offers further training via the Journalism Teachers Academy (JTA) so that media companies can draw on better-trained journalists as junior staff. In addition to academic training, the project partner Educational Center Nakypilo continues to offer practice-oriented trainings at the School for Universal Editors (SUR). DW Akademie supports these efforts through financial consulting and organizational development of SUR.

Local media houses enjoy a very high level of trust among the Ukrainian population - over 80 % of Ukrainians trust the local media - and strengthen the resilience of communities against Russian aggression. Since the outbreak of the war, the advertising revenues of local media have plummeted. Many are in crisis - and not just financially. As part of the project to support local media, DW Akademie offers two retreats a year for journalists and editors from local Ukrainian media in Germany and conducts various tailor-made qualification measures - both online and offline (in cooperation with the Educational Center Nakypilo). DW Akademie also supports the Ukrainian Media Business Academy (UMBA) of the NGO "Maje Sens" with fundraising training for local media outlets.

b) Project aims

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

The expected outcomes of the project in Ukraine are as follows:

- (1) The foundations have been laid for the long-term, effective strengthening of media skills among seniors (over 60) in the war and post-war context.
- (2) Better trained and resilient young journalists are continuously available to local independent media companies.

The project in Ukraine contributes 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).

A specific focus of the evaluation is on the criteria effectiveness and impact, assessing the modes of delivery used in the past to find out which advantages and successes, but also which drawbacks and challenges were associated with them. In this regard, the evaluation should particularly analyse the Media and Journalism Education project lines. The project has supported two media schools (School for Universal Editors (SUR) and Journalism Teachers' Academy (JTA)) 2020-2024 and would like to take stock of that support and compare it with other modes of capacity development. The following key questions can be derived from these evaluation aims for the effectiveness criterion:

- How successful has the support of media schools been in developing capacities of Ukrainian journalists / journalism teachers in comparison to other forms of capacity development of the local media in the project?

- What factors were beneficial or detrimental to these efforts?
- How effective is the focus on a school-based, classic method of training a broad target group (all Ukrainian journalists or journalism teachers) in comparison to more flexible and agile approaches focusing on selected media outlets / editorial teams?

For the media schools, impact questions that arise include:

- To what extent have the journalists / journalism teachers trained by these schools put their new skills into practice?
- What factors have been beneficial or detrimental to putting the skills into practice?
- To what extent have the efforts of the media schools contributed to better informed Ukrainian citizens?

Additionally, the evaluation serves to find out what efforts the project has undertaken to counter the spread of (Russian) mis- and disinformation in Ukraine. 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 Ukraine project? How relevant do the partners see the problem?
- In what way has the project addressed countering disinformation?

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. Any decisions about whether travel for on-site interviews can take place will be made by the end of 2024 and will depend on the assessment of DW Akademie's security management, the project team, and the assigned evaluator(s). 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 the team(s) plan to conduct interviews and for how many days.

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 be based in the region itself. 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 **13.000 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), with Andrea Gellert (andrea.gellert@dw.com) and Dennis Reineck (dennis.reineck@dw.com) cc'd. Only electronic formats will be accepted.

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