

Call for Proposals/Terms of Reference

**Evaluation of DW Akademie's program "International Media
Studies",
funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation
and Development (BMZ)**

DW Akademie is calling for proposals for the evaluation of its program “International Media Studies” 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 program “International Media Studies” according to the OECD/DAC-criteria

Type of contract: service contract

Start Date: 01 August 2026

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 60 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.

2. The BMZ-funded program „International Media Studies“

a) Context and project summaries

The Master's program "International Media Studies" (IMS) aims to provide media professionals with training that meets international standards and is completed in the partner countries, thereby strengthening the role of graduates as change agents in those contexts.

IMS is an internationally oriented, practice-based, full-time postgraduate program lasting four semesters. The program is primarily aimed at media professionals from partner countries of DW Akademie's media development cooperation in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe.

In addition to the English-language program, which enrolls approximately 30 students per year, a French-language program admitting an initial cohort of 10 students per year was launched in the winter semester 2024/25.

Both programs are regionally anchored and based on strong local institutional partnerships. Cooperation with partner universities is consolidated and expanded. The French-language program as well as the English-language program establish new partnerships with universities and media organizations.

Capacity-building measures initiated during the previous funding period continue, as does the mentoring program for visiting lecturers. These activities are complemented by new exchange formats, both in-person and digital. Where possible, graduates of the IMS program in the partner countries participate in these initiatives. The knowledge-transfer platform is further developed and continues to support regionalization and closer integration with the country projects of the Media Development Department (MDEV) of DW Akademie. In addition, participants are specifically connected with the project partners of MDEV to enhance the employability of future graduates.

b) Project aims

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

The expected outcome of the program **International Media Studies** is as follows:

Skilled media professionals equipped with the necessary expertise and empowered instructors are connected with other professionals and continue to shape sustainable media ecosystems in the partner countries as agents of change.

It contributes to a common overall objective (at the impact level):

Improved journalism education enhances the credibility of media reporting and, as a result, strengthens trust in democratic processes and societal participation.

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.

One focus of the evaluation should be the extent to which students are successfully reintegrated into the labor market. In addition, the evaluation should examine to what extent partner programs and universities are strengthened (capacity-building). It should also be assessed to what extent partnerships with MDEV partners and countries are being implemented.

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).

At this stage, it is assumed that one on-site visit to Bonn will be required to conduct face-to-face interviews. All further interviews are planned to be conducted remotely. 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).

Please note that information obtained by the contractual partner during this evaluation, including but not limited to contracts, documents, writings, notes, digital records, and oral communications concerning the affairs of DW and third parties, may not be processed using general artificial intelligence. This prohibition extends to the use of such information in aggregated or anonymized form if it can be traced back to the original data of DW or the respective third party.

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) – online or in person, to be determined.
- Inception report (max. five pages, plus appendix)
- Data collection phase – including the preparation and execution of evaluation interviews or application of other evaluation methods (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 – online or in person, to be determined.
- Final evaluation report of max. 15 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, academic education and in the field of development cooperation/media will be preferred. Fluent English language skills are a prerequisite. Preference will be given to candidates who are fluent in both English and French. Experience in or familiarity with the higher education context is considered an asset. 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 evaluation and media development expertise, evaluation objectives, methodology, and evaluation design should be described. The specific documents to be submitted are listed below (6 c).

Submitting a proposal does not constitute an entitlement to the conclusion of a contract.

c) Budget & documents

The budget for the evaluation is **21.000 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: **25 May 2026**.
- Evaluators will be selected by **1 June 2026**.
- Evaluation contract begins on **01 August 2026**.
- Kick-Off Workshop: between **mid-August – mid September 2026**.
- Data collection is scheduled for **mid-October – November 2026**.
- Draft evaluation report should be available by **early December 2026**.
- Change Workshop is scheduled for **December 2026 or January 2027**.
- Final evaluation report is due by **end-January 2027** at the latest.

Evaluation proposals should be addressed to Laura Moore and emailed to **dw-akademie.evaluations@dw.com**. Only electronic formats will be accepted.

Laura Moore
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Policy and Learning
DW Akademie
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