

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Kick-off Facilitator (s)

Project	Freedom of Expression and Media Development in Eastern Europe: Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, South Caucasus, Western Balkans (Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia)
Contract period	August 2026
Approx. working days	Up to 4 days (including preparation)
Place of assignment	Copenhagen, Denmark
Application deadline	13 July 2026

About DW Akademie

DW Akademie is Deutsche Welle's centre 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.

Background

DW Akademie is building a network of AI and media innovation experts who will work across Eastern Europe over the course of 2026-2027. The network brings together practitioners from Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, and the Western Balkans to co-develop AI-driven solutions and mentor local newsrooms.

To launch this network, DW Akademie is organising a 3 day kick-off and a study trip in Copenhagen in late August 2026. The trip serves two goals: building cohesion among the expert cohort and providing cross-sector inspiration that the group can carry into their first design sprint and collaboration. The programme will also include visits to media organisations, civic tech teams, innovation studios, and cultural institutions, deliberately mixing sectors to broaden how the experts think about the problems they will be solving.

We are looking for a skilled facilitator (s) to design and lead the group sessions during the kick-off, ensuring the experience is productive, connected, and energising rather than another conference.

1. Deliverables

Preparation

- Review background materials on the network, its members, and the programme goals.
- Co-design the facilitated session content together with the DW Akademie project team.

- Prepare facilitation materials, session guides, and any relevant templates or tools.
- Contribute to the design of the whole programme (kick-off activities and study visits)
- Participate in at least one preparatory call with the project team prior to the trip.

On-site facilitation

- Facilitate a 2,5-day teambuilding session which aims at liaising members of the Network, will be a good energetic and creative start of their cooperation, will be individual-centered and group-driven
- Coordinate and facilitate study visits (briefing and debrief)
- Manage energy and group dynamics across up to 2 days, ensuring all voices are heard and the group moves from knowing each other to actually working together.
- Adapt facilitation approach in real time based on what the group needs.

2. Qualifications

Essential

- Proven experience facilitating group processes for international, mixed-background cohorts.
- Strong understanding of design thinking, participatory methods, and group dynamics.
- Experience working with or designing programmes for media, civil society, or innovation communities.
- Ability to hold space for a group that comes from high-pressure, politically sensitive contexts.
- Fluency in English (working language of the network).
- Comfortable working in an adaptive facilitation style.

Desirable

- Familiarity with AI, media development.
- Experience working with participants from Eastern Europe or the Western Balkans.

3. Working Framework

- On-site facilitation.

- Preparatory and debrief work conducted remotely.
- Contract period: August 2026.
- Estimated scope: up to 4 working days (1 day preparation, up to 2,5 days on-site).
- The facilitator will work closely with the DW Akademie project team throughout.

Note on transfer of rights and withholding tax

This ToR does not foresee transfer of intellectual property rights. Withholding tax (WHT) is not expected to apply. However, applicants should flag in their financial offer if any local tax obligations apply to their situation. All applicable taxes must be included in the financial offer.

4. Application Instructions

Please submit the following documents in English:

- CV
- Short motivation letter or statement of approach (max 0,5 page) describing your facilitation philosophy and why this engagement is a good fit
- Financial offer: daily rate and total estimated cost (lump sum or daily fee with number of working days), inclusive of all applicable taxes

Please send your application to: dw-akademie.ai-innovations-europe@dw.com

Subject line: Application for Kick-off Facilitator – AI & Innovation Network

Application deadline: 13 July

Please note that any commitment is subject to project funding approval.

For more information about DW Akademie's work in Europe, visit: <https://akademie.dw.com/en/europe-central-asia/s-12139>