

Call for Proposals/ Terms of Reference

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

DW Akademie is calling for proposals for the evaluation of its project in Kenya 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 Kenya based on the OECD/DAC-criteria, with a specific prioritization of selected criteria and focusing on key questions as identified during the inception phase.

Type of contract: Service contract

Start Date: 01 November 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. Its work is based on the conviction that freedom of expression and access to reliable information are fundamental human rights. DW Akademie empowers people around the world to make informed decisions based on independent information, verified facts, and constructive dialogue.

As a team of journalists, consultants, and media development experts, DW Akademie collaborates with partners worldwide to promote freedom of expression, strengthen human rights, and support the development of independent and sustainable media systems. DW Akademie is guided by the belief that journalism, education, and culture contribute to more informed, inclusive, and resilient societies.

DW Akademie's work is guided by Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees freedom of expression and access to information. It stands for free media, free expression, and open societies, recognizing that access to trustworthy information and diverse perspectives is essential for democratic participation and social progress.

DW Akademie is a strategic partner of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). We also receive funding from the German Federal Foreign Office and the European Union and are active in around 60 developing and emerging countries worldwide.

In Africa, DW Akademie and its partners are implementing BMZ-funded projects in Ghana, Kenya, Namibia and Southern Africa, francophone Western Africa (via the program Sahel +, including Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, and Senegal) and Uganda (with regional component Tanzania).

2. The BMZ-funded project in Kenya

a) Context and project summary

DW Akademie's projects in Africa are currently being implemented over a three-year period from January 2025 to December 2027. During the last year of the projects, 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:

The information ecosystem in Kenya (as well as in other East African countries) is characterized by unequal access to high-quality information and the dissemination of false or discriminatory content. Reporting is affected by gender bias, as media outlets insufficiently reflect the needs and realities of women and gender minorities. Coverage of gender-based violence is inadequate and shaped by stereotypes. Overall, public trust in the media is steadily declining. At the same time, the sector lacks diversified revenue streams to ensure higher quality journalism. Artificial intelligence (AI) poses additional challenges to the Kenyan media landscape, as it has the potential to further exacerbate these issues. Women and gender minorities, in particular, are frequently targeted by AI-generated hate speech. Moreover, trust in the media may decline further if media professionals and media organizations do not communicate transparently how they use AI. There is a lack of ethical guidelines for the use of AI in reporting. At the same time, artificial intelligence also offers the potential to address these challenges. For example, the technology could enable new business models and improve the quality of reporting.

The objective of the project is to develop, test, and implement concepts and solutions for the gender-sensitive and ethical use of AI in collaboration with the partner organizations Africa Uncensored and the Africa Women Journalism Project, as well as with Kenyan media professionals and media organizations.

The approaches developed on this basis are intended to be applied beyond Kenya in the longer term, particularly in Ethiopia.

Furthermore, DW Akademie continues to work towards improving access to information and dialogue in the context of displacement and migration. The information and communication service *Sikika* in the Kakuma refugee camp, the Kalobeyei integrated settlement, and the surrounding area will be continued. DW Akademie trains refugees and members of host communities to prepare information in the languages of the target groups and to disseminate it through listener groups.

b) Project aims

DW Akademie's projects follow a results chain that links activities, outputs, and outcomes. Activities include training, mentoring, dialogue formats, and other interventions implemented by DW Akademie and its partners. These activities generate tangible outputs, such as trained media professionals, learning materials, professional networks, or media content. Together, these outputs contribute to the project outcome, which describes the intended change among the project's target groups.

For the Kenya project, the intended outcomes are:

- (1) Media organizations and media professionals in Kenya implement AI application concepts and journalistic standards for gender-sensitive reporting in the age of artificial intelligence.
- (2) People affected by displacement and forced migration have improved access to relevant information and are able to participate in the discourse on addressing the crises that affect them.

These outcomes contribute to a broader regional objective (impact level) shared across DW Akademie's Africa portfolio:

Key actors in Africa strengthen local media ecosystems to promote freedom of expression, social cohesion, and democratic participation. They contribute to diverse and resilient media landscapes that counter disinformation and hate speech through sustainable, high-quality journalism and constructive dialogue, while fostering the inclusive participation of all population groups.

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 for 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).

During the inception phase, particularly at the kick-off workshop, the project team and the evaluators will review and prioritize the six evaluation criteria, refine the proposed evaluation questions, and formulate additional guiding questions where necessary.

Particular emphasis should be placed on identifying overarching strategic questions that are relevant across all evaluations within the Africa portfolio conducted during the current evaluation cycle. These cross-cutting questions will provide a common analytical framework,

facilitate comparison across projects, and generate evidence to inform the strategic design of follow-up interventions.

The evaluation findings should contribute to strengthening knowledge management and methodological learning across the Africa department, while also helping to further clarify and sharpen DW Akademie's unique selling point and impact within its fields of work.

Under the impact criterion, the evaluators are requested to identify impact stories which describe our impact on the ground and are suitable to present it to a wider audience.

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).

Data collection trips shall be conducted to meet project partners. The trips 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.

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 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 Project and Capacity Development Unit (PCD), 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 in a 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, 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. Moreover, 2 – 4 impact stories identified under the impact criterion shall be presented in the annex of the evaluation report.
- Additionally, an executive summary in English or German of about four pages, should be submitted. DW Akademie will be responsible for the proof-reading of the executive summaries in English and German, 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, is required. We are looking for teams consisting of experts with extensive knowledge of the region, including any relevant language skills. Fluent English language skills are a prerequisite. Ideally, at least one team member of the applicant's team should have long-term experience in the respective local media market(s). Please note that the project documentation is partly 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 **21,800 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: **30 August 2026**.
- Evaluators will be selected by **10 September 2026**.
- Evaluation contract begins on **1 November 2026**.
- Kick-off Workshop: Between **mid-November and mid-December 2026**.
- Data collection is scheduled for **February 2027**.
- Draft evaluation report should be available by **early March 2027**.
- Change Workshop is scheduled for **March 2027**.
- Final evaluation report is due by **mid-April 2027** at the latest.

Questions regarding this call for proposals may be submitted until August 16. Answers to all questions received by the deadline will be compiled and shared in the form of an FAQ document. No further questions will be answered after August 16. The FAQ document will be made available upon request via email until August 28, 14:00 (Friday).

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

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