

Call for Proposals

Evaluation of the DW Akademie project in Serbia and the Western Balkans, 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 Serbia and the Western Balkans, funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Due to the special conditions caused by the Corona pandemic, the evaluation will be conducted either remotely or, where possible, will include data collection in the project country. The decision on this will be taken together with DW security management, the project team and the contracted evaluators. DW Akademie invites interested and qualified persons to submit proposals.

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 approximately 50 developing countries and emerging economies.

We believe that independent media and responsible journalism are essential worldwide. Given Germany's history, we believe that people should be able to freely express their views and have access to independent sources of information. We consider this to be an important prerequisite for peace and democracy.

We support the development of independent, transparent media systems, quality journalism and media expertise. We help rebuild media in post-crisis and post-conflict environments and contribute internationally to the professional training of media workers. We respect the cultural identity of our partners and work closely together in designing our projects. It is important for us that these projects are always practice-oriented, interactive and innovative. We consider our work to be successful when our partners seek change and are able to follow through with reforms. Human rights are the basis of our work.

Our strategies are aimed at structural and sustainable changes to support and enhance free, independent and plural media landscapes. For this, four fields are covered: Political and Legal Frameworks; Qualification; Professionalism and Economic Viability of the Media Sector; and Participation in Society. The interplay of these diverse approaches enables the creation of sustainable structures, which are a prerequisite for freedom of expression and access to information.

In Eastern Europe, DW Akademie and its partners are implementing BMZ projects in Georgia, Serbia, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova.

2. The BMZ Project

a) Context and project summary

DW Akademie's project in Serbia and the Western Balkans is implemented over a three-year period and will end in December 2022. During the last year of the project, an evaluation is scheduled to take place in time to provide important information for any potential subsequent proposals.

In Serbia and the Western Balkans, DW Akademie helps children and young people to speak up through the media. Furthermore, it supports media outlets in reaching young target groups and improving their position in the media market.

DW Akademie's partners bring together young people and media representatives through events and workshops where they jointly produce innovative digital media content. Local partners consult NGO's, schools, local and national institutions on the participatory inclusion of children and young people, as well as Media & Information Literacy (MIL). DW Akademie also closely cooperates with established social media influencers as well as with the Press Council in advancing MIL. In regional "Young Media Labs", DW Akademie fosters networks between media that cater for children and young people and supports transnational cooperation. The annual Brave New Media Forum has also been established as an international and transgenerational event to promote discussion and exchange where media producers, NGO representatives and young people meet with experts.

b) Project aims

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

The expected outcome of the country project in Serbia and the Western Balkans is as follows:

“Media outlets are connected within the region and offer innovative, digital and participatory content to young people up to the age of 30.”

As part of the Eastern Europe regional program, the country project contributes to a common overall regional objective (at impact level):

“The people in Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, the Caucasus, and the Balkans, youth and minorities in particular, receive balanced and reliable information from a variety of independent and economically sustainable media. They are competent media consumers, who speak out on social media about issues that concern them.”

3. Principles and criteria of the evaluation

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.

The criteria guiding the evaluation are based on criteria developed by the OECD/DAC: Relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

This evaluation will pay particular attention to the efficiency and collaborative relationship between DW Akademie and its local partners.

In the kick-off meeting, the project teams and the evaluators will find consensus on what guiding questions will be pursued and which project partners they want to include in the survey / evaluation. The focus of the evaluation is on collecting lessons learned for future project work.

4. Evaluation process

All received proposals will be judged according to an internal set of criteria. Based on this appraisal, one evaluator will be chosen for each project. Following the clarification of the contract, DW Akademie will provide contractors with detailed project information. In a kick-off workshop with the project team, the exact procedure and focus of the evaluation are determined. This also includes deciding on how the evaluator will receive local support to conduct interviews - remotely or in person. Evaluators are supported during the data collection phase, either by DW Akademie staff or by experts based in the project region as co-evaluators.

On the basis of this information, the evaluator will produce an Inception Report.

The decision whether travel to or within the project country and personal interviews can take place on site will depend on the assessment of DW security management, the project team and the assigned evaluator by the end of 2021. If the pandemic and general security situation allow, an evaluation trip of approximately 5-7 working days may be conducted for further data collection in the field. The trip will be planned in cooperation with DW Akademie and independently conducted by the evaluators. DW Akademie will take care of travel arrangements and reimburse the travel expenses. Per diems will not be paid.

If travel to or within the project country and in-person interviews cannot take place due to the pandemic and/or general security situation, the evaluation must be conducted remotely.

At the end of the evaluation process, the evaluator delivers an independently written report, which will be the subject of discussion with the project team at the change workshop. The workshop also serves to discuss the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation.

5. Deliverables

The following services are to be rendered on assignment:

- Participation in the following workshops (to be carried out online or in person):
Kick-off Workshop with project team; Change Workshop with project team;
- Inception report (max. five pages);
- Preparation and execution of evaluation interviews - online and/or face-to-face.
- Final evaluation report of approx. 18 pages (plus appendix) in German or English. This will be accompanied by an executive summary in German and English, consisting of two to three pages, as well as an appendix containing additional information that support the understanding of the evaluation results. This includes research tools such as questionnaires, interview guidelines, and a precise list of the activities carried out for the evaluation.

DW Akademie will be responsible for the proof-reading of the executive summaries in English, which will be 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. They should have proficient knowledge in information and data collection and analysis, as well as excellent analytical skills. Experience in the media sector and in international development cooperation/media development, as well as relevant in-country and regional expertise, will be preferred, as will be experience with remote evaluations. Applications from lead evaluators based in the project region are encouraged. Please note that the project documentation is mainly in German.

Proposals from co-evaluators who wish to provide technical support for the work of a lead evaluator in the data collection phase—as well as proposals of evaluator tandems—are possible. Co-evaluators should also have expertise in the development or media development field. Apart from technical support, they are primarily expected to also provide their expertise and actively participate in the discussions.

b) Format of the proposal

Interested applicants should outline a coherent proposal for the design of the evaluation—both for a remote evaluation as well as for an evaluation with the possibility of personal interviews on site. The proposal should explain the extent to which the OECD/DAC criteria will be applied in the project context. This proposal is mainly intended to assess the competence and motivation of candidates and will not automatically be used as a basis for the upcoming evaluation. The final methodology and procedure will be discussed and agreed between the contracted evaluator and DW Akademie at the beginning of the contract period.

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 exact documents to be submitted are listed below (6 c).

In the cover letter, applicants are invited to indicate whether they would also be interested in carrying out an evaluation of one of the other projects that will be evaluated in Latin America, Middle East/North Africa or Eastern Europe, giving a short overview of their respective expertise.

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. There is no claim to conclusion of the contract.

c) Documents

The following documents should be included in the proposal:

1. Cover letter, detailing the motivation and eligibility of the applicant for the specific evaluation;
2. CV documenting relevant experience as detailed above, including contact details of two referees;
3. Proposal for a possible evaluation design (max. 6 pages), including a draft time schedule and a financial offer, also indicating the honorarium for a total of 25 working days (without travel).
4. Proposals from co-evaluators should include a cover letter, CV (see points 1 and 2), and a fee proposal for a total of 12 days' work.

7. Timetable, working days and deadlines

The deadline for all proposals is **September 19, 2021**.

- The evaluators will be selected by **October 6, 2021**.
- The actual evaluation assignment begins on **November 2, 2021**.
A total of 25 working days are planned. If travel is possible, the number of working days will be increased accordingly by arrangement.
Co-evaluators will be contracted for a total of 12 days.
- The **Kick-Off Workshop** will take place between **mid-November and mid-December 2021**.
- The **data collection phase** is scheduled for **February 2022**.
- The first version of the evaluation report should be available by **early March 2022**.
- The **Change Workshop** is scheduled for **March 2022**;
- the **final version of the evaluation report** should be handed in by **mid-April 2022** at the latest.

Evaluation proposals should be submitted in electronic form only to Nadine Jurrat (nadine.jurrat@dw.com), with Anja Weber (anja.weber@dw.com) and Andrea Gellert (andrea.gellert@dw.com) in cc.

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