

Call for Proposals

Evaluation of DW Akademie's project

Stable independent media and quality reporting for Myanmar

(Stabile unabhängige Medien und Qualitätsberichterstattung
für Myanmar),

funded by the German Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt)

DW Akademie is calling for proposals for the evaluation of its project in Myanmar, funded by the German Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt – AA). The evaluation will include data collection in Thailand. 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. These Terms of Reference are to be taken as the basis for the evaluation.

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.

2. The Project

a) Context and project summary

DW Akademie's project with the Myanmar media is being implemented over 22 months from March 6, 2023 through December 31, 2024. During the last year of the project, an evaluation is scheduled to take place in time to provide actionable information for any potential subsequent proposals.

On 1 February 2021, the military seized power in Myanmar, denying the democratic aspirations of Myanmar's people. A military campaign of intimidation and censorship, and the arrest, detention and killing of journalists is aimed at preventing independent media reporting on the junta's crimes and abuses. But most media have continued reporting and distributing information to audiences in Myanmar from various locations in exile.

b) Project aims

The project aims to further stabilize the independent Myanmar media and enable 7 partner media organisations to produce more in-depth quality reporting about the conflict in Myanmar. The names of partner organizations are withheld at this stage for security reasons.

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

The expected impact to which the project shall contribute in Myanmar is as follows:

“Myanmar's independent media are able to provide reliable and relevant information about the conflict.”

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.

In addition to accountability to the German Foreign Office, the evaluation focuses on mutual learning for future project work.

Subject to agreement reached in the inception workshop, research questions/issues for the evaluation may include:

- the level of ownership demonstrated by media partners;
- design and implementation of interventions to strengthen journalistic quality and networking between media outlets;

- potential for sustainable change within media houses;
- possible responses to the limitation of total external funding in the independent media sector;
- in how far does the work of independent media houses and their financial supporters meet the information needs of the public in Myanmar.

Possible guiding questions, assigned to the relevant DAC criteria, have been formulated by DW Akademie; these will be shared with the selected evaluators. In the kick-off meeting, the project teams and the evaluators are expected to find a consensus on what guiding questions will be pursued and which project partners they want to include in the evaluation.

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 the interviews.

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 the end of the evaluation process, an independently written report detailing the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation is to be submitted by the evaluators, 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 the final version of the report is to be prepared by the evaluator(s). All workshops will take place virtually.

Any decisions about whether travel to Bonn, Berlin or further locations for on-site interviews can take place will be made in the course of drafting the inception report, and will depend on the assessment of DW Akademie's security management, the project team, and the assigned evaluator. If the general security situation allows, a data collection trip of approximately 7-9 working days to Thailand should be conducted, most probably at the end of April / beginning of May 2024. The trip will be planned in cooperation with DW Akademie, but conducted independently by the evaluator. Applicants will be asked to offer their services for a lump sum, which shall include travel expenses. Per diems will not be paid. DW Akademie will provide a translator for conducting interviews with Burmese speakers.

In the unlikely case traveling for in-person interviews cannot take place, the evaluation must be conducted remotely. In either case, DW Akademie staff will support data collection.

5. Deliverables

The following services are to be rendered on assignment:

- participation in the kick-off workshop with the project team and evaluation consultant at the beginning of the evaluation (carried out online)
- inception report (max. five pages, plus appendix)
- data collection, including the preparation and execution of evaluation interviews (online and if possible face-to-face)
- final evaluation report, approx. 18 pages (plus appendix), in German or English. The report consists of the following elements:
 - main report covering the conclusions and recommendations for the evaluation criteria;
 - an executive summary in English and (ideally) in German, two to three pages each;
 - 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 all interviewees. DW Akademie will be responsible for proofreading the executive summaries in English, which may be published on the DW Akademie website after consideration of security concerns.
- Participation in a change workshop at the end of the evaluation, during which the draft evaluation report will be presented and discussed with the same participants invited to the kick-off workshop (online).

6. Application Requirements

a) Applicant's profile

Applicants should have experience in designing and carrying out evaluations in the field of international development, including in conflict settings. 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-country expertise, is preferred. Applications from evaluators based outside Germany or without German language skills are welcome. Please note that the project documentation is mainly in German. However, the main documents can be provided in English.

Proposals from individuals, as well as evaluator teams comprising evaluator and co-evaluator(s) are possible. Co-evaluators should also have expertise in the development or media development field. Apart from technical support, they are 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. The proposal should include a proposed evaluation design (max. 3 pages) explaining the extent to which the OECD/DAC criteria will be applied in the project context. The 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 procedures will be discussed and agreed upon by the contracted evaluator and DW Akademie at the beginning of the assignment.

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).

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

c) Budget & documents

The budget for the evaluation is **20,000 Euros** net, including any travel expenses. This amount should not be exceeded.

The following documents should be included in the proposal:

1. Cover letter, detailing the motivation and suitability of the applicant for this specific evaluation;
2. CVs for each team member, documenting relevant experience, including contact details for two references;
3. Proposal for an evaluation design (max. 3 pages), plus draft timetable and a budget quote, indicating the honorarium for the entire team, the number of anticipated working days, and any travel expenses. For the calculation of travel expenses we expect one trip to Chiang Mai, Thailand, with a possible detour to Mae Sot.

7. Timetable, working days and deadlines

- Deadline for all proposals: **31 December 2023**.
- Evaluators will be selected by **12 January 2024**.
- Evaluation contract begins on **14 February 2024**.
- Kick-Off Workshop: between **late February and beginning of March 2024**.
- Data collection is scheduled for end of **April or early May 2024**.
- Draft evaluation report should be available by **late May 2024**.
- Change Workshop is scheduled for **early June 2024**.
- Final evaluation report is due by **mid-June 2024** at the latest.

Evaluation proposals should be emailed to Thomas Bärthlein (thomas.baerthlein@dw.com), with Andrea Gellert (andrea.gellert@dw.com) and Stefan Elsing (stefan.elsing@dw.com) cc'd. Only electronic formats will be accepted.

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