

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Upskilling of Albanian ITC Company Employees

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1. Overview of DSAA e.V.

The Digital Skills Accelerator Africa e.V. (DSAA) is an independent non-profit association of ITO and BPO companies. In collaboration with member companies and funding partners, the DSAA implements programs that foster job creation across the African continent in the ITO and BPO sectors. In its current projects, the association collaborates with the Special Initiative “Decent Work for a Just Transition” of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Corporation and Development (BMZ), which is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) among others.

The DSAA functions as a catalyst for emerging digital markets, supporting skill development with a focus on future-oriented IT and Global Business Services (GBS). Training formats vary in duration and scope, designed to address the evolving needs of the digital economy and enhance employment opportunities with the members of the DSAA or their local hiring partners. A major focus of the DSAA’s projects co-funded by the Special Initiative is strengthening inclusive work environments for all.

2. Context

Building upon extensive experience in Africa, the DSAA is expanding its efforts to the Western Balkans.

The region has great potential for positioning itself as a global business service destination. The high level of education offers the opportunity to support technically sophisticated projects and counteract the brain drain. The high demand for IT services in Germany and Europe, coupled with existing links through a well-established diaspora, offer promising preconditions and points of contact.

To harness these opportunities, the DSAA e.V. aims to support the Albanian IT sector in expanding and specialising in high-quality technical IT services (e.g. artificial intelligence, cyber security, cloud solutions, and big data platforms) for international customers. The project is being implemented in collaboration with a GIZ pilot project around strengthening innovation and promoting exports of the Albanian economy. The GIZ’s project partners of this proposal are “Partners in Transformation”, “ProSEED 2.0” and the EU co-financing programme “EU4Innovation”.

The contractor is to provide training support services aimed at upskilling employees and fostering workforce expansion within ICT service providers. The training will support companies in hiring new employees, expanding into new markets, securing new contracts, or upskilling staff for client-specific needs. The goal is to strengthen business operations, particularly in the German market.

The fund grant can be used for the following:

- In-house training programs (facilitated by the company’s internal trainers or experts).
- External training providers (industry-recognized institutions or consultants).
- Certification programs that enhance workforce skills for international contracts.

3. Tasks to be performed by the contractor

The contractor is responsible for providing the following services:

3.1 Scope of Services The contractor will be responsible for:

- Delivering structured training programs tailored to ICT service providers.
- Ensuring alignment with the hiring and upskilling needs of participating companies.
- Providing training through in-house programs or accredited external providers.
- Offering guidance on market entry strategies and workforce development.

3.2 Eligibility Criteria for Companies

Companies applying for training support must meet at least one of the following conditions:

3.2.1 Place of Performance

While the procurement notice refers to Tirana (AL022, 1001) as the indicative location for statistical purposes, companies located in other regions of Albania are equally eligible to apply and perform the services, provided they meet the criteria set forth in this document.

3.2.2 Growing their Team with New Hires or Interns

- The company must plan to hire new employees or interns as a direct result of the training.
- Roles can include developers, IT support specialists, cybersecurity analysts, or similar positions.
- Companies should aim to hire at least four (4) new employees or interns within six months post-training.
- The number of trainees is up to the bidder's discretion.

3.3.2 Expanding to a New Market and Creating Jobs

- The company should have a clear strategy for entering or expanding in the German market.
- A growth projection should outline job creation expectations over the next three to nine (3-9) months.
- Companies should aim to hire at least four (4) new employees or interns within six months post-training.

3.2.3 Securing New Clients and Outsourcing Contracts

- The company must demonstrate a training need to support newly acquired service contracts with German customers.
- Evidence of past clients or ongoing discussions with potential German partners must be provided.
- Preference will be given to companies with existing German clients.
- Companies should aim to hire at least four (4) new employees or interns within six months post-training.

3.3.4 Upskilling the Team for a New Contract or Client

- The training must directly contribute to upskilling employees to meet the requirements of a new contract or client.
- The company must provide evidence that securing this new client or contract will lead to team growth and new employment opportunities.
- Supporting documents such as potential agreements, client interest letters, or identified skill gaps must be submitted.
- Companies should aim to hire at least four (4) new employees or interns within six months post-training.

4. Training Delivery Options

Companies may opt to conduct training in-house or outsource to an accredited training provider.

5. Additional Requirements

- The company must be an ICT service provider with at least two years of operational experience.
- A background in outsourcing, software development, or digital services is required.
- Existing business relations or an active interest in the German market are necessary.
- Priority will be given to companies already exporting ICT services to Germany or having active partnerships with German companies.

6. Milestones and Timeline

- The training programs should be implemented within four (4) months.
- Key milestones include training content finalisation, training commencement, completion, and job placement verification.
- Regular progress reports must be submitted to track training effectiveness and job creation outcomes.
- The milestones to be included in the bid are as follows:
 - Month 1-2: Finalization of training content and modules
 - Month 2-6: Delivery of training (approx. 60–100 hours, depending on format)
 - Month 6-9: Confirmed onboarding of new hires or interns

7. Responsibilities and Reporting

- The contractor will ensure the quality and effectiveness of the training provided.
- Regular reporting on the progress and impact of the training must be submitted.
- Collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including industry partners and German market representatives, is expected.

8. Period of Performance

The contractor shall be required to provide the services for a period of nine (9) months, starting from the date of contract signature or as specified in the commencement notice issued by the contracting authority. The expected period of performance is from early June 2025 to early March 2026, subject to final confirmation.

The following milestones are to be achieved within the specified timeframe and, where applicable, at designated locations. Responsibilities are also assigned accordingly:

Milestone	Deadline / Responsible Party / Location
Finalisation of training content	Within 2 months after contract signature
Commencement of training activities	Within 2 months after contract signature
Completion of training activities	Within 6 months after contract signature
Achievement of hiring targets	Within 9 months after contract signature

The total grant of up to 16.806,00€ is disbursed against proof of expenditure according to the following model:

- 30% upon the start of training activities
- 40% upon completion of training activities
- 30% upon verified proof of hiring

9. Concept

The bidder is required to prove in their proposal that they have the required expertise to fulfil the deliverables outlined above. This includes but is not limited to previous experience in the delivery of upskilling projects. Evidence of further technical knowledge required for the tender, including the qualifications of the experts or selected training providers, needs to be submitted.

Technical-methodological concept

Training content and conception (1.1): The bidder should discuss the training content and the training concept in detail and provide a curriculum.

Practical relevance of the training (1.2): The bidder should discuss the extent to which the training content upskills their employees in the areas outlined above and leads to the realization of the project objectives.

International application of the training (1.3): The contractor shall outline how the training program equips participants with internationally recognized skills and facilitates connections with global companies and institutions to enhance market expansion and strengthen client relationships.

Method of target achievement (1.4): The bidder explains in detail how set targets for training and employment creation are to be achieved, drawing on their business model,

existing client base, outreach strategy, and market assessment (in particular the German market).

Monitoring and communications concept (1.5): The bidder should present and explain their general approach and their approach to steering the activities with the project partners and their contribution to impact monitoring. A plan for the transmission of status updates and materials for communication (images, project progress, statistics) needs to be outlined.

10. Proposal Requirements

The structure of the bidder's offer must correspond to the structure of these Terms of Reference (work packages). The entire offer should not exceed 5 pages. There is no contractual entitlement to fully exhaust the days, trips, workshops or budgets. The number of days/travel/workshops and the budget amount shall be agreed in the contract as "up to" amounts. The structure of the concept (Chapter 4) should correspond to the structure of the weighted (and not set to zero) criteria of the evaluation scheme. The offer must be clearly legible (font size 11 and larger) and written in an understandable manner. The language of the offer is English.

Please submit your proposal by 2 June 2025. Late submissions will not be considered.

11. Number of Contracts to be Awarded

The contracting authority reserves the right to award the contract to up to two different contractors, depending on the quality and relevance of the submitted proposals.

The services described in these Terms of Reference are identical for both contractors and shall be implemented in parallel. Each selected contractor may receive a maximum funding amount of €16,806, disbursed according to the payment model outlined in Section 8.

12. Exclusion Criteria

In accordance with Directive 2014/24/EU, the contracting authority will exclude any applicant or tenderer who is in one of the situations referred to in Article 57(1) and (4) of the Directive.

Applicants shall be excluded from participation in the procurement procedure if:

1. They have been the subject of a final judgment for participation in a criminal organisation, corruption, fraud, or money laundering;
2. They are insolvent, have suspended business activities, or are subject to proceedings for a declaration of insolvency;
3. They have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can demonstrate;
4. They have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or taxes.

The applicant must confirm, by submitting a signed declaration (Annex 2: Declaration on Exclusion Criteria), that none of the exclusion criteria apply. The contracting authority reserves the right to request supporting documents at any time.

13. Annex

Annex 1: Evaluation Matrix

Annex 2: Declaration on Exclusion Criteria