Award by Invitation

Improve and boost of quality use of MesoVet.al Platform in VET schools in Albania

Location	Tirana (with travel to different regions of Albania)
Type of Contract	Service Contract (output-based)
Services Requested	Improve and boost of quality use of MesoVet.al Platform in VET schools in Albania
Reference number	23-05-S4J
Issue date of the call	31 March 2023
Number of potential successful offerors	1 (one)
Eligible applicants	Registered entities
Submission Deadline	**07 April 2023**
Deadline for submitting questions & receiving answers	Questions can be sent at manjola.martiri@swisscontact.org by **4 April 2023** end of business day. Answers will be provided by **5 April 2023**, end of business day.
Tentative starting date of service	**14 April 2023**
Estimated contract timeframe	April – June 2023
Service providers report to	Intervention line 3 manager
Where to send applications	All offers will be submitted in hard-copy, sealed in a covering envelope which MUST contain the title of the applied call (as per instruction provided in this documents), to the Swisscontact Albania office: Rr. Skenderbej, Vila 49, Tiranë.

1. Background

'Skills for Jobs' (S4J) is a project mandated by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by Swisscontact Albania. It is part of the Economic Development Domain of the Swiss Cooperation Strategy for Albania (2018-2021), with specific focus on promotion of employment opportunities and skills development.

S4J was designed to address main Vocational Education and Training (VET) challenges, such as: low quality and status, insufficient financing, weak labour market orientation, and poor private sector engagement. The project addresses these challenges by focusing on ensuring systemic change, capacity development and empowerment of key actors in VET.

The project is in its second phase, S4J2, which started in May 2019 and will last until June 2023. During this phase, the project aims at supporting 10 000 students (6 360 more compared to S4J1) and 6 000 trainees (1 500 more compared to S4J1). It aims for improved access to gainful employment and income for young women and men by offering them relevant training opportunities based on new ways of inclusive learning and in cooperation with the private sector.

10 VET providers (9 vocational education schools and 1 vocational training center) in six selected regions benefit from the project, namely: the vocational 'Hamdi Bushati' school in Shkodra; the vocational 'Kolin Gjoka' school in Lezha; the electro-technical 'Gjergj Canco' school in Tirana; the Technical-Economic school in Tirana; the vocational 'Ali Myftiu' school in Elbasan; the vocational 'Salih Ceka' school in Elbasan; the vocational 'Kristo Isak' school in Berat; the Commercial school in Vlora; the industrial 'Pavarësia' school in Vlora; and the Vocational Training Centre in Vlora.

S4J2 supports partner VET providers in Albania in terms of:

1. Employers' and partners relations
S4J1 promoted a new approach to employers' relations and partners' relations through creating a network around each VET provider. VET providers assumed their role as network focal points, and under S4J2 they will strengthen this network by structuring and formalizing it, and by adding non-company partners including the organized private sector, local and national governmental actors, and parents. Furthermore,

the 1:1 approach will be further developed at the regional level by establishing regional VET platforms that shall bring together all relevant stakeholders to further develop VET in the region.

2. Diversification of VET offer
S4J2 will facilitate the development of VET offers that are labour-market oriented and gender-sensitized. Such offers will be developed in close collaboration with local and regional employers. Apart from directions, profiles or courses, the project will also support VET providers in adding other relevant elements to their offer, namely streamlining entrepreneurship and soft skills learning packages and labour market-relevant extra-curricular activities.

3. New Ways of Inclusive Learning and Quality
S4J supports VET providers in shifting towards 'doing school' the new ways, using a combination of new IT-based learning methods – including use of smartphones, tablets, internet-resources where most appropriate – in combination with up-to-date non-digitized learning. This translates into a blended learning approach that contributes to the attractiveness of VET offers and makes VET offers more accessible at the same time. Furthermore, it promotes and supports industry-led re-skilling trainings for VET teachers.

4. Work-Based Learning (WBL) in cooperation with employers

S4J project will continue to strengthen and broaden its successful WBL initiatives, supporting the partner providers to consolidate, grow and streamline the chosen WBL approach including gradual skills development schemes, internships and apprenticeship solutions. Companies will also receive the needed support – training and instruments – to provide quality intern- and apprenticeships, including in-company mentors training.

5. Provider management / organisational development (OD)

S4J will support VET providers to perform better internally, to be organized and prepared for the new functions as defined by the VET law and developed with project support in S4J1. Important elements include strategic planning, IT-based management functionalities, implementation of all seven functions attributed to the Development Units, and provider-wide and specific quality assurance and development.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

Context of the assignment

Skills for Jobs (S4J) project started piloting in 2018 MesoVET.al – enabling the virtual environment to help parents, teachers, schools, and schools' administrators facilitate student learning and new methodologies for teachers. MesoVET is an open-source learning management system that facilitates blended and virtual learning for Vocational Education. The platform is user-friendly, Moodle based VLP 4.0 version, available in Albanian language and accessible as a mobile app from any device. MesoVET makes use of bult in features and external collaborative tools such as forums, wikis, games, quizzes, surveys, chats and blogs. Functionalities such as sharing interactive materials (lesson, book, H5P), collaboration, assessment, documentation facilitating blended learning and online learning offerings. Operating in Moodle and easy customizable, users can register and enrol, or active autoenrollment on specific courses. Multimedia and hosting YouTube videos make possible for students to catch up on lectures they missed or learn from a "how to" screencast.

MesoVET.al allows teachers to design and deliver online courses, as well as provide assessments, quizzes, and other learning activities. MesoVET can be used to support a variety of teaching and learning approaches, including blended learning, flipped classrooms, and fully online courses. To achieve learning outcomes through MesoVET, teachers need to ensure that the course content and activities align with the learning objectives. This means designing assessments and activities that measure the intended learning outcomes and providing students with clear guidance on how to achieve these outcomes. One of the benefits of MesoVET is that it allows for a variety of assessment types, such as quizzes, assignments, and discussion forums, which can be designed to measure different types of learning outcomes. Moodle also allows for ongoing assessment and feedback, which can help students stay engaged and motivated, and identify areas where they need to improve. In order to achieve learning outcomes through MesoVET, it is important to ensure that the course is well-designed and that students have access to the resources and support they need to be successful. This may include providing additional resources, such as videos or tutorials, and offering opportunities for student collaboration and interaction.

MesoVET enables a virtual learning environment with quality teaching materials, hosting innovative teaching methods and ensuring 100% online courses. Through MesoVET a wider audience is reached and enabled the ability to update and redeploy teaching and learning in a short time, with very low

costs and self-paced. Students are enabled courses and subjects at any time, transparency of information regarding the course organization and schedule. Teachers are authors of the digital content, designing and translating the typical subject structure into an attractive content.

MesoVET targets all teachers and students in Vocational Education. The platform is supporting 10 VET partner providers in 6 different cities in Albania. The final intended impact is to scale-up MesoVET in a system level, enabling online teaching and learning for teachers and students in Vocational Education in the country. The implementing project is working in close coordination with the National Agency of Vocational and Education Training to endorse MesoVET as a final product.

Awareness raising campaigns have been conducted while implementing a demand generation approach for MesoVET. Campaigns have been designed on a two-face approach: on-site and online. Teachers and students from VE providers have been introduced to MesoVET through tailored sessions on how to use the platform, the typology of available content, digital solutions on how to make materials relevant and benefits of using the platform to implement blended learning. Online campaigns reached a wider audience while updating teachers and students' network, bot not only, through video tutorials and techniques on developing digital content.

The overall strategy of implementing blended learning through MesoVET is seen in four ways: (i) introduce the online platform to all operating VE institutions in the country (ii) capacitate teachers in using the platform while understanding the benefits of blended/online learning (iii) bring VE providers onboard to make use of the platform (iv) ongoing capacitation of teachers to develop digital learning materials and digital pedagogies

The platform so far has reached more than 13,000 users. More than 500 teachers are trained and mentored in using the platform, create courses, manage registrations, and use all available functionalities that foster interaction. In parallel, around 400 teaching materials/subjects covering 9 main vocational directions have been developed and made available in the platform. Content materials are adapted through a pedagogical approach and uploaded, making use of platform features to be more instructive and attractive using the logic of learning through games. A high interest is noticed in teacher getting involved in using the platform in order to combine their face-to-face teaching process in schools.

Being available also offline and as a mobile app MesoVET contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 4, in specific target 4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university. MesoVET offers a free open education, offering easy access to quality education in VE, removing time and geographical barriers and promoting community of practices. The digital content will enrich the educational development of the individual, both in theoretical and practical aspects.

The S4J project during these years has offered a continuous assistance to all Mesolect platform users to use it to its full potential. However, to boost the quality of use and effectiveness of MesoVet, it is important to have clear action plan, tailored plans for each partner provider as well as it is necessary to identify and coach the champions in every partner providers who can share their experience and show case to peers how to improve the teaching process through MesoVET in practice. This will allow teachers to gain hands-on experience with the platform and develop best practices for using it in their classrooms. An important step will be the continues professional development if teachers in the field of digital pedagogy through flexible and inclusive online training in order to support teachers to tap all the potential of technology. Overall, the effective use of modern information and communication technologies (ICT) can help teachers and vocational education institutions to enhance the quality of

education, improve learner outcomes and skills, and prepare learners for the demands of the modern workforce.

Tasks

The main tasks of the consultancy are:

- Development and detailing of a master Action Plan for boosting the use of MesoVET in VET partner providers;
- Detailing specific working plan per each school (8 S4J partner providers)
- Preparation of statistical reports on the Mesovet usage for each school.
- Identification of at least 24 and up to 32 teachers (3-4 teachers per 8 schools) based on selected directions to engage in experience sharing among peers
- Detail a calendar for the organization of 32 Open Lectures by selected teachers in 8 schools;
- Pedagogical assistance and coaching for teachers in order to prepare them to deliver open lectures;
- Assist teachers to develop detailed teaching plans for the open lectures.
- Conduct coaching sessions for teachers led by a pedagogical expert, focusing on effective use of the Mesovet platform and student-centered teaching strategies.
- Observe and report with recommendations during delivery of open lectures
- Document and capitalize on the experience.
- Develop a Best Cases document for Blended Learning and Learning Management System
- Preparation of at least 3 online training on pedagogical aspects of using MesoVet
- Preparation of at least 10 video tutorials on effective use of Mesovet
- Establish a community of practice of teachers in mesovet with the theme on digital aspects of teaching

Deliverables

The consultant should provide the followings:

No.	Deliverable	Time frame
1.	- Detailed master action plan - Specific Working Plan per each school - Deliver coaching sessions for all teachers from the pedagogical expert - Work plan per every open lecture - Dissemination of at least 24 and up to 32 open lectures in 8 VET schools - Template for observation during open hours - Report on observations from each open lecture and set of recommendations	April
2.	- Best Cases - 3 online training on pedagogical aspects of using MesoVet - 10 video tutorials on effective use of Mesovet - Established Community of Practice	June

The consultant will report to the IL3 who will regularly communicate with the consultant and provide feedback and guidance on his/her performance and all other necessary support so to achieve objectives of the consultancy, as well as remain aware of any upcoming issues related to consultant's performance and quality of work.

3. Eligibility Criteria

The applicants shall be officially registered in National Business Center .

4. Documents to be submitted

The interested company should send the application file as indicated in the cover page, containing:

1. **Copy of NUIS certificate and Extract from NBC**
2. **Technical proposal**

The technical proposals describing the planned support that will be given to S4J team in successfully delivering the services. The technical proposals must comply with the specifications required under the deliverables sections:

2.1. *Company profile*;

2.2. Workplan and milestones, describing the implementation of the tasks listed above;

2.3. *Proposed Trainers*: CVs of trainers indicating respective expertise & profile.

3. **Financial proposal**

Financial Proposal must be submitted in a detailed description of items and prices per unit. Lump Sums will not be accepted. Prices shall be provided in ALL or CHF and the total amount shall comprise VAT if applicable.

The application MUST contain all required documentation, otherwise may be automatically eliminated by Swisscontact without a further request for clarification and/or completion.

5. Evaluation Process

An evaluation panel, consisting of no less than 3 (three) members, will evaluate the applications as per the following criteria:

- **Technical proposal:**   **70%**
  - o   Company Profile   10%
  - o   Workplan and milestones   30%
  - o   CVs of proposed trainers   30%
- **Financial Proposal:**   **30%**

Swisscontact reserves the right to cancel a bidding process, accept or reject bids without notifying the reasons to the bidders. It also has the right to ask one or more of the applicants for clarifications regarding the bid.

6. Submission instruction:

The deadline of submission is **07 April 2023, EOB.** Please note that in case your offer will be sent later than the deadline for submission, Swisscontact may decide to disqualify your submission and not consider this eligible for further phases of evaluation.

All applications will be submitted in hard-copy, sealed in a covering envelope, to the Swisscontact Albania office: Rr. Skenderbej, Vila 49, Tirane by the deadline above mentioned**.** The outside of the envelope must clearly note the Award by Invitation reference number and title: 23-05-S4J *Improve and boost of quality use of MesoVet.al Platform in VET schools in Albania.* All documents should be duly filled, signed and stamped.

The application MUST contain all required documentation, otherwise may be automatically eliminated by Swisscontact without a further request for clarification and/or completion.

7. Communication with the bidders:

Any communication between SC-ALB and the bidders that might compromise the transparency and fairness of the bidding process must be avoided. Communication has to be documented in writing. The interested applicants can send their questions to manjola.martiri@swisscontact.org by *04 April 2023, EOB*. The deadline for submitting responses will be *05 April 2023, EOB*. Responses to requests for clarification by one bidder must be shared with all bidders in BCC mode of email or the response to be uploaded on the website.