



## **Terms of Reference (ToR)**

### **Assessment of public VET schools and development of a strategic roadmap for optimizing the public VET schools in Kosovo**

Implementation country: Kosovo

Swisscontact MSJ project reference number: 8917019

Project name: Matching Skills to Jobs (MSJ)

Project timeframe: 1 December 2024 – 30 November 2029

Name of partner organization: Swisscontact (Swiss Foundation for Technical Cooperation)

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## 1. Context

This document provides the Terms of Reference (ToR) for contracting services for conducting an **Assessment of public Vocational Education and Training (VET) schools and development of a strategic roadmap for optimizing the public VET schools in Kosovo.**

This ToR provides background information about the Swisscontact - Matching Skills to Jobs (MSJ) project, the purpose of the assessment, its objectives and scope, the assessment process, as well as qualifications and selection criteria for the Service Provider (SP).

The assessment is planned to be conducted from April to December 2025.

## 2. Project background

The "**Matching Skills to Jobs**" (MSJ) project, implemented by Swisscontact and funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), aims to improve the governance of the VET system and strengthen private sector involvement in skills development in Kosovo. The goal is to ensure that all Kosovars, including disadvantaged groups, benefit from a responsive labor market supported by an industry-aligned VET system.

The project focuses on two outcomes: (1) Improving VET governing institutions' capacity to deliver high-quality, market-relevant education in partnership with the private sector, and (2) Boosting labor productivity by offering advanced, industry-driven training programs. To achieve these outcomes, the MSJ project will focus on strengthening VET governing institutions through governance reforms, including policy reform, strategic planning, and capacity building, to deliver market-relevant education. It will also foster structured collaboration between VET institutions and the private sector to develop specialized training and enhance companies' managerial capacities.

In its first year, MSJ will initiate seven interventions targeting governance improvements and the private sector's skills needs, ensuring gender-sensitive and socially inclusive approaches to benefit marginalized groups. Under Outcome 1, key interventions include:

- 1) Policy reform: Supporting the drafting of a new VET law through evidence-based analysis and inclusive stakeholder consultations.
- 2) Institutional capacity building: Assessing the VET schools, assessing and piloting development units in selected schools, and creating a strategic roadmap for optimizing resources.
- 3) Public-Private cooperation: Organizing stakeholder forums, facilitating knowledge exchange initiatives, and facilitate the introduction, establishment and operation of the Sector Skills Bodies.

**The project's stakeholders and partners under Outcome 1 include:**

- Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI).
- Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETAE).
- National Qualifications Authority (NQA).
- Employment Agency of Republic of Kosovo (EARK).

- Association of Kosovo Municipalities-Collegium for Education (Municipal Education Departments -MEDs).
- VET providers.
- Vocational Training Centers.
- Private sector representatives.

### **3. Background, purpose and objectives of the assessment**

According to the results of the 2024 Population, Households and Housing Census, the resident population of Kosovo is 1,585,566 inhabitants. Out of a total of 38 municipalities, 9 have recorded population growth, while 29 have experienced a population decline, reflecting a trend of depopulation in certain areas. These demographic changes have been influenced by factors such as internal and external migration, as well as changes in the economic and social structure of the different regions. These demographic realities pose significant challenges to the education system, education financing methodologies, particularly in VET.

Recent years have witnessed a growing interest among young individuals in initial VET programmes, with 55% of learners in upper secondary education attending VET schools. In the school year 2024/25, statistics indicate that out of 63,551 learners enrolled in upper secondary education, 34,929 learners are pursuing vocational education, surpassing the 28,622 learners in gymnasiums. Despite this increase in VET enrolment, vocational schools often remain a secondary choice, especially for learners unable to enrol in gymnasiums. The data indicates that there is a gender disparity in the enrolment of learners in vocational education schools, with boys being more likely to enrol compared to girls, in particular for some qualification areas that are traditionally male-oriented. About 47.8% of learners enrolled in vocational education are girls. An analysis of gender-based orientation in vocational education reveals that girls tend to gravitate towards profiles related to health and well-being (44%), as well as business, administration and law (24%). In contrast, boys tend to lean towards profiles related to engineering, manufacturing and construction (42%), as well as information technology and communication (16%). The rate of orientation of girls in technical profiles such as engineering, manufacturing and construction is only 13.6%.

VET governance in Kosovo is mostly centralised. As such, it represents a shared responsibility between two key ministries, namely the MESTI and Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers (MFLT). While the initial vocational education falls under the education system managed by MESTI, vocational training is provided by both public Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) and private entities, including companies. As per the VET Law, the AVETAE is tasked with the administration and governance of public VET schools, regarding financial matters, human resources and infrastructure. AVETAE currently manages only six VET schools (known as Centres of Competences – CoCs), while the remaining 62 VET schools operate under the authority of the local municipal authorities. The number of VET schools is deemed excessive, with many of the public vocational schools undersized, inadequately resourced, equipped with outdated teaching labs and materials, and unable to address the country’s economic and demographic needs.

In terms of administration, the Kosovo Education System is highly decentralised, with most responsibilities devolved to municipalities, whereas there are no lines of authority leading from municipal to central level. Municipalities bear the responsibility for the operation of public educational institutions, including vocational schools. Their duties include constructing education facilities, student enrolment, employment of teaching and management staff,

training, supervision and more. Municipalities have education directorates and directors are appointed by mayors. Governing structures and quality assurance mechanisms are weak, with critical areas such as accreditation of providers, teacher training, curriculum development, and cooperation with private sector lacking consistent oversight.

The Education Strategy 2022-2026 recognizes the need for the reorganization of the vocational education and training institutions in accordance with the needs of the labour market and at the level of the seven main regions of Kosovo (See Specific Objective 3.1). Many analyses and studies have pointed out this necessity over the last 15 years.

The assessment of the VET schools in Kosovo is a critical step in aligning the VET system with the country's socio-economic development needs. The VET school network, as it currently stands, faces challenges in ensuring equitable access to quality education and efficient use of resources, as well as pressing challenges in terms of harmonised governing rules.

**The purpose of this assignment is to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the Kosovo public VET schools, focusing on both institutional functionality and labour market alignment and development of a strategic roadmap to lay the groundwork for optimizing public VET schools and qualifications.** Conducting a comprehensive assessment will provide evidence-based insights that are essential for driving meaningful reforms by the VET governing institutions.

This assessment shall be a joint effort between the Swisscontact MSJ project and government institutions at both central and local levels, taking into consideration the implications for schools' human and financial resources planning. Insights gained from these activities will contribute to the VET reform process led by government institutions at central and local level, with the goal of strengthening the governance of the VET system by public authorities.

This assignment is commissioned by the Swisscontact, under the MSJ project, in line with the project's description of the Yearly Plan of Operations (YPO) for 2025.

#### **4. Scope**

The scope of this assignment is to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the Kosovo public VET schools, focusing on both institutional functionality and labour market alignment and development of a strategic roadmap to lay the groundwork for optimizing public VET schools and qualifications.

#### **5. Specific objectives**

- To assess the existing VET providers in Kosovo, in terms of their capacities and existing resources for an adequate supply of qualifications and skills and an inclusive and quality vocational education offer.
- To understand the skills needs at regional level, which will allow to understand the type and level of demand by the labor market and private sector operators, in particular in emerging/growing economic areas and sectors.
- To define a roadmap with concrete suggestions for optimizing public VET providers in Kosovo, considering the demographic, societal and economic trends.

- To engage in wide consultations with private sector representatives, and government institutions, in the policy directions and main steps for carrying out the implementation of the roadmap.

## 6. Tasks

The Service Provider will be responsible for carrying out the following key tasks:

- **Assessing public VET providers:** Conducting a baseline study to assess overall effectiveness in delivering VET by all existing VET providers<sup>1</sup> using latest data and information from 2024/25. This includes analyzing their geographic distribution and accessibility, infrastructure (premises and equipment), institutional capacities and human and financial resources, qualifications/curriculum alignment with labor market demands, and targeted populations (students of all ages, students with special needs, ethnic minorities) according to the different types of programs offered.
- **Skills needs analysis and engaging with businesses:** Facilitating focus group discussions with businesses and private sector actors (professional associations, chambers of commerce and industry, others) across Kosovo's seven main economic regions to gather insights into regional economic potential, labor market needs, emerging sectors and workforce needs.
- **Developing a strategic roadmap:** Developing a comprehensive roadmap aimed at proposing an optimization of the VET schools. The roadmap should focus on practical strategies for improving the functionality, quality, and sustainability of the VET system as a whole, with a particular focus on the VET public providers alignment with labor market needs.
- **Validation workshop:** Organizing workshop with relevant stakeholders to present findings, validate results, and collect feedback to inform the finalization of the assessment report and roadmap.

## 7. Methodological approach

To ensure comprehensive insights, a mixed-methods approach will be employed, drawing from both qualitative and quantitative methods. This approach strengthens internal validity by using data and method triangulation, improving the reliability of the evaluation outcomes. The assessment must be conducted in a gender-sensitive and inclusive manner, respecting the principle of "do no harm" throughout the process.

A broad range of data sources and collection methods will be employed to ensure reliability, minimize bias, and promote impartiality, ensuring that findings are rooted in relevant and robust information. Likely methods include:

- Desk review of relevant studies, analysis and legal documents, including national VET policies, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> A baseline study to define the level and type of optimization needed for Kosovo's VET school should include a comprehensive mapping of all types of providers, such as VET schools, CoCs, VTCs, and private training providers. While the primary focus of the roadmap will be on optimizing public VET schools, it must also take into account the broader providers in each region (the supply side) and the regional skills demands (the demand side).

- Processing statistical data, including school enrollment statistics, employment trends, etc.
- Key informant interviews with project stakeholders.
- Analyses of the existing skills need analysis surveys.
- Focus group discussions with VET providers and businesses representatives and other key interest groups.
- Field visit and direct observations.

The detailed methodology should be included as part of the Service Provider's technical proposal.

## **8. Processes, Deliverables and Timetable**

### **8.1. Process**

The assessment will unfold in five phases: inception, field-work, analysis, synthesis, and recommendations, each with specific deliverables:

- 1) **Inception phase:** Detailed planning of the assignment, including the methodological approach refinement and selection of data sources, and main methods and techniques to be applied (Deliverable: Inception report).
- 2) **Field-work phase:** Info gathering and data collection through the methods and techniques identified (Deliverable: Structured and systematic data and information collection).
- 3) **Analysis phase:** Analysis of data collected and preliminary findings (Deliverable: Interim report).
- 4) **Synthesis phase:** Final analysis of the data and info, reporting, and validation of findings and conclusions (Deliverable: Final report).
- 5) **Recommendations phase:** Development of the strategic roadmap (Deliverable: Roadmap).

Throughout the phases, MSJ project team will be actively included and feedback from the project team will be incorporated to review and finalize the draft and final assessment reports, as well as the strategic roadmap. This iterative approach ensures that the assessment process remains dynamic and responsive to insights gathered at each stage.

Formal feedback loops will be applied to review and finalize draft analysis products, such as the inception and interim and final assessment reports, as well as the strategic roadmap. A minimum of 5 working days is required for Swisscontact MSJ project to review and provide feedback. Only fully completed drafts, inclusive of necessary annexes, will be submitted for formal feedback.

### **Inception phase**

The **inception phase** begins with a kick-off meeting and concludes with the approval of the inception report by the MSJ project team. Upon signing the contract, a date and time for the kick-off meeting will be arranged between the successful bidder and Swisscontact MSJ project team and selected project stakeholders. In preparation, the Swisscontact MSJ project team will

provide the Service Provider team with key relevant documents. The kick-off meeting will serve as a critical introduction to the project's background, allowing the Service Provider to understand its context and status. It will also provide an opportunity to discuss data availability, logistics, and potential challenges or limitations for this assignment. Additionally, the meeting will be essential for clarifying expectations and agreeing on a timeline set for subsequent steps.

The **Inception Report** is the first key deliverable for the Service Provider. In this report, the Service Provider must present a detailed plan for the assignment, outlining the methodological approach to be used for the assessment of the VET providers considering the objectives of the assignment, and specifying how information will be gathered and analyzed, and its adequacy for the assessment design. Exploratory interviews may be conducted during this phase to inform the assessment design. The work plan outlined in the Inception Report should be feasible and aligned with the assignment objectives.

### **Field-work phase**

The **field-work phase** encompasses both data and information collection. Following the approval of the inception report, data collection will commence through desk research and field-work in Kosovo public VET providers. The data collection and analysis should focus on, but not be limited to, the following key elements:

- Mapping the public VET providers, including analyzing geographic distribution, demographic trends and student enrollment trends, with a disaggregation at regional and municipal levels.
- Assessing public VET providers resources, including:
  - Institutional capacities, including human resources, teacher's qualifications, staffing patterns and workload distribution, and financial resources;
  - Availability and adequacy of school infrastructure, such as classrooms, workshops, laboratories, equipment, IT infrastructure and other learning resources;
  - Management structures and capacities, including cooperation with municipal and national authorities, and private sector partners.
- Assessing the alignment of VET qualifications with labor market needs and national economic priorities, by also conducting seven focus group discussions with employers and industry representatives across Kosovo's main regions to gather insights.

Once the data collection is complete, a debriefing with the Swisscontact MSJ project team will be scheduled to update the project team on progress and discuss the way the data collected may be structured and systematized for the purposes of further use and presentations, highlighting any encountered challenges or data gaps, and agree on follow-up steps if necessary. Additional data collection or key informant interviews may be organized as needed.

### **Analysis phase**

After data and information collection is completed and structured/organized in an agreed model, preliminary results and findings deriving for the analysis will be presented to Swisscontact MSJ project team and selected project stakeholders, in the format of **an interim**



**report.** This interim discussion will allow the Swisscontact MSJ project team to review initial results, provide feedback, and guide further analysis.

### **Synthesis phase**

The **synthesis phase** involves drafting, reviewing, and finalizing the assessment. The phase consists of the following key elements:

- Identifying overlaps, redundancies, missing provision by VET providers and improve resource allocation.
- Identifying and analyzing key skills gaps in VET schools, including resources, alignment with labor market needs, and operational efficiency.

Feedback from the Swisscontact MSJ project team and project stakeholders will be integrated into the draft reports through reviews, with final approval marking the completion of the assessment. The **final report** with the analysis of the VET providers and the skills needs at municipality/regional levels is the key outcome of this phase.

### **Recommendations phase**

The **recommendations phase** involves the preparation of a strategic roadmap for the optimization of the public VET providers in Kosovo. The phase consists of the following key elements:

- Developing a roadmap for implementation that outlines specific steps, priorities and scenarios for public VET providers optimization in each Kosovo municipality/region, and their justification behind. This should include providing a municipality-specific approach that ensures that each region's economic and educational landscape is considered. The roadmap should also define milestones, timelines, and responsible entities for the successful implementation of the roadmap.
- Organizing a validation workshop with relevant stakeholders to validate the findings from the assessment report and roadmap for implementation and gather feedback and additional insights.

The recommendations phase concludes with the Swisscontact MSJ project written approval of the final assessment report and roadmap for implementation.

## **8.2. Deliverables**

**The Service Provider is expected to provide the following 6 deliverables:**

- Inception report: A draft and final inception report, 10-15 pages in length, outlining assessment methodology and work plan (not including annexes).
- Data and information collected (structured as per the agreed format with MSJ project team).
- Interim report: A comprehensive draft report, with a main body of 45-50 pages (not including annexes).

- Final report: A comprehensive assessment report, in its final version, with a main body of 45-50 pages (not including annexes).
- Strategic Roadmap: A draft and final roadmap detailing actionable steps of public VET providers optimization, 30-35 pages in length (not including annexes).
- Presentation: Up to 10-page infographic summarizing the assessment facts and results, to be submitted alongside the final assessment report and roadmap for implementation, and to be used in the validation workshop.

All deliverables must be in English.

### 8.3. Tentative Timetable

The assignment is planned to take place between April and December 2025. It is important to note that the school year in Kosovo ends on June 5, 2025, which may affect data collection activities and the scheduling of meetings with school representatives.

The estimated total effort required is approximately 94 working days for local experts and 30 working days for senior expert.

| No.                     | Tasks  | Tentative Timeline                   | Estimated working days of SP |               |
|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
|                         |  |                                      | Local Experts                | Senior Expert |
| <b>Inception Phase</b>  |  |                                      |                              |               |
| 1                       | Kick-Off meeting (preparation, conduct)  | End-April 2025                       | 9                            | 4             |
| 2                       | Desk Review (Document and info collection and review)  | End-April to mid-May 2025            |                              |               |
| 3                       | Exploratory interviews with MSJ project team members   | End-April to mid-May 2025            |                              |               |
| 4                       | Drafting of Inception report, including data collection tools, submission of complete draft of the Inception report          | Mid-May 2025                         |                              |               |
| 5                       | Feedback to draft Inception report   | Mid-May 2025                         |                              |               |
| 6                       | Inclusion of feedback in draft Inception report, submission of revised Inception report                                      | End-May 2025                         |                              |               |
| 7                       | Approval of final Inception Report   | End-May 2025                         |                              |               |
| <b>Field-work Phase</b> |  |                                      |                              |               |
| 8                       | Data collection in Kosovo including preparation and debriefing with MSJ project team   | May to beginning-September 2025      | 45                           | 3             |
| 9                       | Organize seven focus group discussions with businesses in regions of Kosovo  | Mid-June to beginning-September 2025 |                              |               |
| <b>Analysis Phase</b>   |  |                                      |                              |               |
| 10                      | Data analysis, preparation and presentation of preliminary findings to MSJ project team members, if needed, final interviews | Beginning-September 2025             | 15                           | 3             |
| <b>Synthesis Phase</b>  |  |                                      |                              |               |
| 11                      | Drafting of Assessment report, submission of completed draft Assessment report   | End-October 2025                     |                              |               |

|                              |  |                         |           |           |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 12                           | Feedback on draft Assessment report  | Mid-November 2025       | 13        | 10        |
| 13                           | Inclusion of feedback in draft Assessment report, submission of revised Assessment report, possible second feedback loop | End-November 2025       |           |           |
| 14                           | Approval of final Assessment report, including strategic recommendations   | End-November 2025       |           |           |
| <b>Recommendations Phase</b> |  |                         |           |           |
| 15                           | Drafting of Roadmap for implementation, submission of completed draft Roadmap  | Mid-October 2025        | 12        | 10        |
| 16                           | Feedback to draft Roadmap  | Mid-November 2025       |           |           |
| 17                           | Organizing of validation workshop with relevant stakeholders   | Beginning-December 2025 |           |           |
| 18                           | Inclusion of feedback and insights from validation in draft Roadmap, submission of revised Roadmap                       | Mid-December 2025       |           |           |
| 19                           | Approval of Roadmap for implementation   | Mid-December 2025       |           |           |
| <b>Total:</b>                |  |                         | <b>94</b> | <b>30</b> |

## 9. Assessment team

The assessment team of Service Provider should consist of four multidisciplinary members, with one designated as the team leader. The team must be gender-diverse and possess the following qualifications:

- Academic background: Each team member must hold a relevant academic degree.
- Assessment experience: All team members must have a minimum of three years of experience in designing and conducting assessments in VET, labor market and socio-economic development sectors.
- Specialized expertise:
  - Education sector: At least one team member must have proven expertise in the education sector, including VET.
  - Labor market sector: At least one team member must have proven expertise in the labor market sector.
  - System thinking and development expert: At least one team member must have proven expertise in system thinking and development.
  - The senior expert must have proven regional/international experience in conducting similar complex assessments in the VET sector.
  - All team members must be familiar with multi-donor projects.
  - Cross-cutting issues: The team must have proven experience in gender equality, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion.
  - Social research methods: The team should be skilled in social research, including participatory methods.
- Language and communication skills:
  - Excellent written and spoken English skills are required for all team members.
  - The team must be able to conduct data collection in the local language.
  - Strong presentation skills for sharing findings and insights effectively.

Note: The proposed team members must not have been involved in any aspect of the design of the MSJ project.

## **10. Assessment locations, financial, and logistical arrangements**

### **10.1. Assessment management arrangements**

The assessment will include field-work planned across Kosovo. Field visits will cover various locations across Kosovo. Specific sites for these visits will be determined in consultation with the Swisscontact MSJ project team. The Service Provider is responsible for organizing field visits independently, including scheduling appointments with relevant schools and other stakeholders. The MSJ project team will support Service Provider in identifying relevant contacts within these institutions as necessary. The Swisscontact MSJ project team will also facilitate communication and information exchange.

All Service Provider activities will adhere to ethical standards and guiding principles, ensuring impartiality and independence throughout the process.

### **10.2. Budget and payments**

The Service Provider will receive a fixed remuneration.

Payments will be made in three instalments, contingent upon the completion, feedback, and acceptance of key deliverables by the Swisscontact MSJ project team. The final instalment will be disbursed upon delivery of the approved Final Assessment Report and Roadmap for Implementation. Payments will be processed within 10 working days following the submission, Swisscontact satisfactory review, and formal approval of the services as outlined in the Terms of Reference.

All associated costs of the Service Provider (such travel expenses, translation, etc) should be accounted for within the expert fees.

Payment breakdown:

- Inception Report: Based on actual expenses, up to a maximum of 20% of the contract sum.
- Draft Assessment Report: Based on actual expenses, up to a maximum of 40% of the contract sum.
- Final Assessment Report (including final Roadmap for Implementation): Based on actual expenses, up to a maximum of 40% of the contract sum. The final payment will be made upon the submission and approval of the Final Assessment Report and Roadmap for Implementation.

## **11. Coordination and responsibility**

### Support provided by the Swisscontact MSJ project team

The Swisscontact MSJ project team will work closely with the Service Provider, maintaining regular communication and providing feedback, guidance, and necessary support to ensure the

successful achievement of the assignment objectives. This ongoing engagement will ensure that any potential issues related to performance and work quality are promptly addressed.

## **12. Technical and financial offers**

The applicant is required to submit a technical and financial offer, including the following components:

Technical offer (maximum 10 pages not including annexes), including:

- Understanding of the Assignment: Overview of the applicant's interpretation of the assignment's objectives and requirements.
- Assessment approach and methods: Description of the suggested approach and methodology.
- Assessment plan, covering:
  - Team Structure: Outline of team roles and responsibilities.
  - Operational Work Plan: Detailed plan with estimated working days per task and team member.
  - Timeframe: Proposed timeline for the assessment.
- Capacity and past performance: Institutional relevant experience to the assignment, proven track records.
- Assessment team CVs: Curriculum vitae for each member of the assessment team (in Annexes).
- Assessment report samples: At least two examples of previous assessment reports authored by the team members (in Annexes).

Financial offer:

- Budget: A detailed budget in EUR (excluding VAT), including detailed costs associated with each deliverable (including validation workshop and seven focus group discussions) in the form of the budget proposal.
- Company Identification: Organization Identification Number.

Swisscontact MSJ project will score bids based on both the **technical (70%) and financial (30%)** components of the offer.

Financial proposal requirements:

- Fee and expense breakdown: Include a detailed breakdown of fees and itemized expenses.

All technical assessment team members are required to use their own laptops and submit deliverables digitally. The Service Provider is responsible for planning the team's workspace, telecommunication, printing, and other essential resources to fulfill the contract activities.

### 13. Evaluation criteria and rating

The selection will be based on the following criteria and scoring:

| <b>Criteria description</b>  | <b>Rating</b> |
|--|---------------|
| <b>Operational plan and timeframe</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Clear and efficient team composition and work plan</li><li>▪ Definition of roles and responsibilities</li><li>▪ Comprehensive and feasible timeframe</li></ul> | 20%           |
| <b>Experience and capacity of the assessment team</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Assessment of team qualifications</li><li>▪ Relevant CVs and past assessments</li></ul>  | 20%           |
| <b>Assessment plan, methodologies and approaches</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Suitability and clarity of methodologies and approaches</li></ul>   | 30%           |
| <b>Financial offer</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Professional fees and position-based rates</li></ul>  | 30%           |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>100%</b>   |

In the final scoring, a comprehensive approach will ensure that each proposal is evaluated based on the alignment of its technical and financial offers with Swisscontact MSJ project requirements and goals for this assessment.

### 14. Submission of proposal/application

Swisscontact MSJ project is conducting a direct contracting process to hire the assessment team. Several experts and companies will be invited to submit proposals. Additionally, a call for expressions of interest, including the Terms of Reference, will be published across various platforms and networks.

Data privacy: Personal data included in the proposals (such as CVs) will be stored and utilized internally by Swisscontact MSJ project during the proposal review process.

#### Submission guidelines:

Swisscontact MSJ project invites eligible and qualified organizations/companies to submit their non-binding proposals/applications in English, clearly indicating “MSJ VET School Optimization” in the subject line.

Proposals must be submitted via email to [msjinfo@swisscontact.org](mailto:msjinfo@swisscontact.org) by 09.04.2025 (CET).

Please note that any offers submitted in a different format or sent to an alternative email address will be excluded from the evaluation process.

Submissions should consist of two separates, signed and dated documents in PDF format:

- One clearly marked TECHNICAL PROPOSAL
- One clearly marked FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

Restrictions on submission: Proposals submitted via cloud-based services (e.g., WeTransfer) will not be considered eligible for evaluation. Only electronically submitted applications will be accepted.

Clarification inquiries: Questions regarding the proposal process can be directed to [msjinfo@swisscontact.org](mailto:msjinfo@swisscontact.org) prior to 21.03.2025 at 16:00 (CET). All responses to received questions will be published in <https://www.swisscontact.org/en/projects/matching-skills-to-jobs-msj> and accessible to everyone by 24.03.2025.

Rights reserved: Swisscontact reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to cancel, reschedule, or terminate the call for expressions of interest and/or tender at any point in time.

## **15. Other conditions**

### **15.1. Confidentiality**

All materials produced during the consultancy period will be treated as strictly confidential. The rights for distribution and publication will solely reside with Swisscontact MSJ project. The contractor is prohibited from using or republishing any materials without explicit permission.

### **15.2. Penalty clause**

The contract will include a penalty clause stipulating that Swisscontact MSJ project reserves the right to withhold payment or reduce the payable amount if one or more requirements established for this assignment are not met, or if deadlines for task completion are missed.

### **15.3. Contract duration**

The selected company will be awarded a contract that commences on the date of signature and concludes in December 2025.

### **15.4. Copyrights & utilization rights**

All materials produced during the assignment, whether raw or edited, will be the intellectual property of Swisscontact MSJ project.

### **15.5. Code of Conduct**

All consultants must adhere to the Swisscontact Code of Conduct throughout the consultancy period.