

Request for Proposal

Facilitating and Supporting Quality Dual VET Implementation in Albania: Enhancing Engagement of Apprentices and Strengthening School-Business Collaboration

Location	Albania (with intensive travelling in the following regions: Vlora, Gjirokastrë, Fier, Berat, Korce, Elbasan, Durres, Tirane, Lezhe, Shkoder, Diber)
Type of Contract	Service Contract (output-based)
Services Requested	Facilitating and Supporting Quality Dual VET Implementation in Albania: Enhancing Engagement of Apprentices and Strengthening School-Business Collaboration, which is organized into two distinct LOTS LOT 1: Supporting the Implementation of Dual VET in Albania – <i>Enhancing Engagement of Apprentices in the learning process</i> LOT 2: Facilitating Quality Implementation of Dual VET in Albania – <i>Strengthening Collaboration Between Schools and Businesses</i>
Reference number	26-11-S4J
Issue date of the call	August 6, 2026
Procurement Process	Request for Proposals One step process - only full proposals will be considered
Number of potential successful offerors	One per LOT or one for both LOTS. Applicants may apply for one LOT or both LOTS.
Eligible applicants	Registered entities. Consortia are allowed.
Submission Deadline	20 August 2026 , end of business hours
Deadline for submitting questions & receiving answers	Questions can be sent at al.info@swisscontact.org by 14 August 2026 end of business hours. Answers will be provided by 17 August 2026 , end of business hours.
Tentative starting date	31 August 2026
Estimated contract timeframe	31 August 2026 – 20 June 2027, with possibility for extension until March 20, 2028.
Service provider(s) report to	Dual VET Component Manager/PM
Package of Application	- Registration to Albanian Authorities document /Company NUIS certificate (copy)/ Extract from NBC - Technical proposal - Financial proposal
Where to send applications	All offers will be submitted in hard copy, sealed in a cover envelope which MUST contain: <i>i)</i> name of the applicant; <i>ii)</i> title of the applied call and <i>iii)</i> LOTS entity is applying for (as per instruction provided in this documents), to the Swisscontact Albania office: Rr. Skenderbej, Vila 49, Tiranë.

BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

[Swisscontact](#) is an independent, non-profit Swiss foundation dedicated to promoting economic, social, and environmental development. Swisscontact's development work focuses on private sector-led, sustainable economic development with improved quality of life for all in developing and emerging countries. A key focus is to strengthen the skills of individuals and foster the competitiveness of companies.

[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 (2026-2028), with specific focus on promotion of employment opportunities and skills development.

The overarching goal of S4J is to contribute to an improved inclusive Albanian Vocational Education and Training (VET) system and increased competitiveness of the Albanian economy, by facilitating access to gainful employment and income for young women and men from diverse backgrounds, as VET providers transition into multifunctional centres. The project actively promotes modern teaching and learning practices through fostering work-based and blended learning, leveraging digitalization as an instrument. S4J supports VET institutions in strengthening their internal processes and management, while also collaborating with industries and national authorities to update and diversify the VET offer, ensuring they align with labor market needs.

The project is in its third phase, S4J 3, which started in July 2023 and will last until March 2028. During this phase, the project aims to create training and employment opportunities for up to 29,400 Albanian women and men, including youth and special needs groups. S4J will facilitate the horizontal transfer of key **innovation objects**/processes previously promoted in the project's previous two phases, expanding their reach to other VET providers and companies, through capacitated and empowered **transfer agents**. This phase will focus on further consolidating and documenting these innovations to facilitate scaling, transfer, and institutionalization within the VET system, both in the public and private sector.

To achieve its objectives, the project has two primary areas of intervention:

Component 1: Access to quality VET offer

Services and interventions in this component focus on strengthening VET providers by: promoting modernization of VET and integrating digital solutions in the vocational teaching process; improving planning, internal monitoring, and other quality development processes; strengthening the development unit (DU) and improving its service provision capacities; and, designing and developing models for continuous professional development (CPD) of VET staff.

Component 2: Private sector engagement in VET

Services and interventions in this component focus on consolidating and improving the participation of the private sector in the governance, design and delivery of VET programmes in partnership with VET providers by: strengthening the cooperation between VET providers and companies; promoting and consolidating regional networks of companies and supporting Business Membership Organizations (BMOs) to engage in skills development; increasing capacities of companies and VET providers to design and deliver quality apprenticeships and in-company work-based learning; capacitating companies to contribute to the identification of skills needs, design and delivery of new professional qualifications and curricula.

Component 3: Dual VET

Interventions in this component focus on establishing a Dual VET system in Albania, supporting the Dual VET initiative launched by the Government of Albania in 2024. Since 2016, S4J has been promoting the dualization of VET in Albania and has quickly adapted to support its implementation. S4J will continue to assist the Albanian government in implementing this transformative initiative through a hands-on approach, including regulatory framework, supporting the development of new Dual VET qualifications, providing direct support to VET providers, and collaborating with private sector partners to deliver these programs.

Interventions implemented in this phase aim to build an enabling environment that promotes the **transferability** and long-term **sustainability** of these innovation processes within the Albanian VET system. S4J 3 focuses on consolidating the initiated innovation objects at both the provider and individual-company level by preparing VET institutions and companies to integrate the innovations throughout their organization – a process known as *vertical transfer* - and coaching these institutions to share and transfer the consolidated innovation processes to other selected providers and companies - *horizontal transfer*. S4J will provide tailored support to three groups of VET providers throughout the horizontal transfer process, senior partner VET providers, new providers, and the broader VET system. Each group will receive support through different modalities, designed to meet their specific needs and roles in the transfer process.

1. CONTEXT OF THE ASSIGNMENT/SERVICES REQUESTED

The Dual VET model was introduced in Albania in the academic year 2024/2025 with the support of the Skills for Jobs (S4J) project, implemented by Swisscontact Albania. S4J's assistance for implementing Dual VET is structured around four core areas:

1. Development of a regulatory framework (in close collaboration with NAES, NAVETQ, MEI and UNDP Albania);
2. Development of occupational and qualification standards and frame curricula;
3. Institutional capacity building for key stakeholders (NAES, NAVETQ, VET Providers, Companies); and
4. Hands-on support for vocational schools and training companies with an emphasis on support for Apprentices.

Following a pilot in the Academic Year 2024-2025, during the 2025–2026 academic year, dual vocational education qualifications were implemented in 14 professional schools across Albania, reaching 25 dual classes, 399 students, 243 business mentors, and 222 partner businesses. This represents a marked consolidation and expansion of the dual model compared to that pilot phase, extending into a broader range of sectors and geographic areas. Company-based level exams were successfully organized in 12 schools and 18 dual classes, with business mentors integrated into evaluation commissions and good practices documented to support wider promotion of the model. Parallel efforts strengthened the school–business–family partnership through coordinated visits by parents to partner companies, improving parents' understanding of workplace-based learning and enabling earlier identification of issues affecting student progress.

Progress also extended to curriculum development and quality monitoring. Sectoral consultations led by AKAFPK, with technical support from the project, resulted in five new dual-format qualifications spanning thermo-hydraulics, food technology, wood processing, textiles, and electronics; two of these (E-

Commerce and Programming) have been approved and published, with the remaining three in final approval and expected to be delivered by schools starting in 2026–2027 and another 3 in development process. In May 2026, a second consecutive round of experience-evaluation data collection was conducted across 13 schools, surveying 282 students, 77 business mentors, 23 responsible teachers, and 8 school directors, laying the groundwork for a comparative 2025–2026 report to inform continuous improvement of the dual education model.

Building on this momentum, the coming period offers an opportunity to deepen collaboration with government partners on several fronts that will help the dual education model scale sustainably. Continued joint work with relevant institutions could help streamline employer access to job-posting mechanisms on puna.gov.al, advance the revised teaching-norm directive for the dual system, and further adapt the regulatory and fiscal framework to support Level V dual qualifications, including clearer guidance on tax on income treatment. Strengthening school-level capacity to plan and budget for field monitoring by responsible teachers, along with structured guidance for schools considering new 3- and 4-year dual class blocks in 2026–2027, will also be valuable areas of focus. With continued support, newly onboarding schools and qualifications can transition smoothly into full implementation, building on the strong foundation established during 2025–2026 and positioning the dual education system for steady, well-coordinated growth.

As Dual VET enters its third year of implementation and expands to a wider network of schools and qualifications, sustained and well-coordinated technical support remains essential to consolidate the gains achieved so far and to ensure that newly onboarding schools, businesses, and apprentices are integrated smoothly into the system. To meet these needs and safeguard the quality, consistency, and timeliness of implementation across all participating institutions, Swisscontact is launching a competitive procurement process structured around two complementary LOTs. Each LOT is designed to provide targeted, hands-on support to schools and partner businesses at different stages of the Dual VET journey — from student engagement and apprenticeship readiness to the strengthening of school-business collaboration and quality assurance mechanisms — ensuring that both continuing and newly onboarding schools receive the guidance needed to deliver a high-quality, dual vocational education experience during the 2026–2027 academic year.

Subject to satisfactory performance, continued programmatic need, and availability of funding, Swisscontact may consider extending the resulting service contract(s) beyond the initial term to cover continued support for Dual VET implementation into the 2027–2028 academic year, up until 20 March 2028, in line with the overall duration of the S4J 3 project. Any such extension would be at Swisscontact's sole discretion and subject to a separate agreement between the parties; it does not constitute a commitment or guarantee of continued engagement beyond the scope defined in this RfP.

2. SCOPE OF WORK AND OBJECTIVES

The Skills for Jobs (S4J) project invites qualified entities or consortia to submit proposals for facilitating and supporting the effective implementation of Dual VET in Albania. The focus will be on enhancing Apprentices' engagement and strengthening collaboration between schools and businesses.

The services will be delivered from August 31, 2026 to June 20, 2027 under a Competitive National Tender, which is organized into two distinct LOTs. Applicants may apply for either one LOT or both LOTs.

The primary objective of this assignment is to support the rollout of Dual VET in Albania during the 2026–2027 academic year, ensuring a high-quality vocational education experience by:

- **Enhancing apprentice engagement to promote active learning and workplace readiness**
- **Strengthening school-business partnerships to enable the effective delivery of dual curricula**

The two LOTs are as follows:

- **LOT 1:** Supporting the Implementation of Dual VET in Albania – *Enhancing Apprentice Engagement*
- **LOT 2:** Facilitating Quality Implementation of Dual VET in Albania – *Strengthening Collaboration Between Schools and Businesses*

Implementation Timeline

All activities must be completed between August 31, 2026 and June 20, 2027. The assignment will be structured around four key milestones aligned with the academic calendar (see Work Organization section below); proposals should reflect this structure in their workplan and financial proposal instalments. Subject to satisfactory performance, this engagement may also be extended into the 2027–2028 academic year, up to 20 March 2028 (see Background section for details).

Work Organization

Proposals must structure their approach, workplan, and reporting/instalment schedule around four key milestones aligned with the Albanian academic calendar:

1. Initiation (pre-academic year start) – mobilization, planning, and stakeholder engagement with schools, companies, and apprentices ahead of the new academic year.
2. First Trimester – focus on initiation, planning, and launch of apprentice and business engagement processes.
3. Second Trimester – focus on monitoring, coaching, and assessment of ongoing Dual VET implementation.
4. Third Trimester – focus on final exams and preparation for summer apprenticeships.

Tasks

The selected contractor(s) will play a key role in supporting implementation of Dual VET in Albania for the 2026–2027 academic year, enhancing apprentice engagement and fostering collaboration between VET Providers and businesses to ensure a quality vocational education experience.

LOT 1: Supporting the Implementation of Dual VET in Albania: Enhancing Apprentice Engagement

The contractor(s) should ensure that their proposal(s) include the following elements:

1) Initiation (pre-academic year start)

- Support schools in attracting, selecting, and preparing apprentices for enrolment.
- Support the 20 dual VET schools (14 continuing, 6 newly onboarding) in developing annual work/learn plans on a class basis;

- Provide onboarding support to the 6 newly onboarding schools, including legal-framework orientation, provision of instruments and facilitate exchange with experienced peers;
- Assist schools with designing outreach activities and info sessions for prospective apprentices and parents.
- Maintain a database of interested apprentices, by school, programme, and location.
- Coach career orientation coordinators (within the Dus) to guide 400+ potential new apprentices toward apprenticeship readiness.
- Establish communication channels among schools, parents, and apprentices.
- Develop coaching materials for apprentices, based on an assessment of their training needs.

2) First Trimester

- Support apprentices in navigating their apprenticeship journey in companies.
- Guide 400+ apprentices on self-assessment, diaries, and understanding assessments.
- Deliver onboarding guides for apprentices starting placements in 220+ partner companies.
- Run info sessions on the legal framework and apprentices' rights and duties.
- Distribute guidance materials to apprentices and parents.
- Launch soft-skills and employability-skills training.
- Establish mentoring and peer-support systems.
- Pilot training materials and refine them based on feedback.

3) Second Trimester

- Support VET Providers in completing documentation and engage in reflection exercises to improve the planning for the academic year.
- Monitor and adjust soft-skills and mentoring support as needed.
- Support apprentices with diaries and ongoing self-assessment.
- Facilitate structured dialogue between mentors, apprentices and teachers responsible for the dual VET classes.

4) Third Trimester

- Support providers to raise awareness among apprentices on practical aspects of the final exam in companies.
- Ensure apprentice documentation and evaluation records meet quality standards.
- Accompany the company-based exams and facilitate discussions for lessons learnt.
- Support VET providers in pre-tracer system (i.e. data collection)
- Contribute to alumni monitoring systems.

LOT 2: Facilitating Dual VET Quality Implementation in Albania: Strengthening Collaboration Between Schools and Businesses

The contractor(s) should ensure that their proposal(s) include the following elements:

1) Initiation (pre-academic year start)

- Conduct initial meetings with 20 schools and 220+ businesses to map needs and expectations.
- Develop a work plan for company and school visits.
- Assist schools in aligning curricula with dual education requirements.

- Support the rollout of newly developed dual qualifications (E-Commerce, Programming, and others pending approval).
- Support the 6 newly onboarding schools in establishing initial school-business collaboration.

2) First Trimester

- Coordinate company visits to assess readiness for hosting apprentices.
- Facilitate placement agreements between schools and 220+ businesses.
- Facilitate individual apprenticeship contracts between apprentices and businesses.
- Provide tools and materials for schools and companies to supervise and mentor apprentices.
- Conduct coaching sessions with Dual VET providers on implementation principles.
- Develop tailored coaching materials for providers.
- Organize workshops with school leadership and teachers on responsibilities and monitoring.

3) Second Trimester

- Coordinate school visits to strengthen collaboration and monitor placement quality.
- Provide schools with tools to monitor and assess programme quality.
- Facilitate peer-learning workshops between schools and businesses.
- Provide follow-up coaching to address challenges.
- Support integration of practical and theoretical curriculum aspects.

4) Third Trimester

- Support schools and companies to organize company-based final exams
- Prepare progress report highlighting achievements, challenges, and recommendations.

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The applicants shall:

- Be an Albanian entity/s;
- Registered in the National Business Centre;

4. DOCUMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED

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

1. Copy of registration document/NUIS certificate/Extract from NBC

2. Technical proposal - Applicants must submit a technical proposal that fully responds to the specifications outlined under the Scope of Work and Tasks sections of this document. Each technical proposal must include the following:

- 2.1. *Entity profile* - A summary of the relevant experience of the applying entity (or entities, in the case of a consortium), highlighting previous similar assignments in Vocational Education and Training.
- 2.2. *CVs of experts* - Individual CVs of the proposed experts who have been contacted and agreed to engage in this assignment, highlighting their qualifications, professional background, and previous experience relevant to supporting the quality implementation of Dual VET.
- 2.3. *Approach and Methodology* - A narrative description outlining the approach and plan for facilitating and supporting the quality implementation of Dual VET in Albania, focusing on enhancing apprentice engagement and strengthening school-business collaboration. This should

clearly demonstrate how the applicant intends to organize and facilitate each process in accordance with the regulatory framework for Dual VET in Albania.

- 2.4. *Workplan and milestones, describing the implementation of the tasks listed above, structured around the four key milestones defined in the Work Organization section (Initiation, First Trimester, Second Trimester, Third Trimester).*

3. Financial proposal

Financial Proposal must be disaggregated by tasks and itemized. Lump Sums will not be accepted. Please submit the financial proposal in an excel format, with an electronic copy in USB. Prices shall be provided CHF. Please present your financial offer based on the recognition at 0% rate will be applied for VAT 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%**
 - Entity Profile 5%
 - CV of proposed experts 40%
 - Approach and Methodology 20%
 - Workplan and milestones 5%
- **Financial Proposal:** **30%**

The financial proposal will only be considered for review in the cases when the respective applicant has received at least 70% of the points designated to the technical proposal. Those applications now receiving this threshold will not be further considered.

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 for submission is **20 August 2026, 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 Request for Proposal reference number and title: 26 -11 - S4J / *Facilitating and Supporting Quality Dual VET Implementation in Albania: Enhancing Engagement of Apprentices and Strengthening School-Business Collaboration*, LOTs entity is applying and name of the applicant. All documents should be duly filled and signed.

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 al.info@swisscontact.org by **14 August 2026** – clarification questions deadline, EOB. The deadline for submitting responses will be **17 August 2026**, 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.