

Request for Proposal

Support Quality Work-Based Learning in Companies *Capacity-Building for in-company mentors for quality Work-Based Learning*

Location	Albania, with activities in Shkodra, Lezha, Dibra, Durres, Tirana, Elbasan, Berat, Vlora and Korca regions.
Type of Contract	Service Contract (output-based)
Services Requested	Support Quality Work-Based Learning in Companies – Capacity-Building for in-company mentors for quality Work-Based Learning
Reference number	26-14-S4J
Issue date of the call	26 August 2026
Procurement Process	Request for Proposals One step process - only full proposals will be considered
Number of potential successful offerors	One
Eligible applicants	Registered Albanian entities. Consortia are allowed.
Submission Deadline	14 September 2026, 15:00
Deadline for submitting questions & receiving answers	Questions can be sent at al.info@swisscontact.org by 7 September 2026 end of business hours (EoB). Answers will be provided by 8 September 2026, EoB .
Tentative starting date of service	24 September 2026
Estimated contract timeframe	25 September 2026 – 31 May 2027
Service provider(s) report to	Key Expert for Work-Based Learning
Package of Application	1. Registration to Albanian Authorities document /Company NUIS certificate (copy)/ Extract from NBC 2. Technical proposal 3. 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 (as per instruction provided in this documents), and <i>iii)</i> date of application, to the Swisscontact Albania office: Rr. Skenderbej, Vila 49, Tiranë.

1. 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 of the **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)** 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 June 2027. 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.

- **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 developing a comprehensive regulatory framework, supporting the development of 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.

2. CONTEXT OF THE ASSIGNMENT/SERVICES REQUESTED

One of the three key objectives of Skills for Jobs project since its start in 2016 was to bring businesses to schools and schools to businesses. It envisaged to achieve this objective by introducing an in-built labour-market insertion facility (the career center which later evolved in the Development Unit, introduced in the VET Law 2017) which would facilitate identify and engage companies to host learners in work-based learning, primarily through the long-term practical learning scheme (*Praktikat Profesionale Afatgjata - PPA*). The model was widely accepted by companies in the pilot regions and soon became the go-to solution for a number of VET providers in the country who entered in partnerships with local companies to host their students in year-long curriculum-based internships.

Four years later, Work-Based Learning (WBL) in companies within the public VET system in Albania was regulated via the regulation “*For the implementation of professional practical learning in company*”, approved on 16 September 2020 through Order No. 220 of the line ministry responsible for VET. This regulation is based on Articles 7, 15, and 22 of Law No. 15/2017 on Vocational Education and Training (as amended), and Law No. 10247 on the Albanian Qualifications Framework (as amended).

The regulation defines procedures for organizing and implementing professional practice in companies for students and trainees of Albanian VET institutions, including:

- the responsibilities of central institutions, social partners, public VET institutions, and private sector entities engaged in WBL;
- procedures for planning and implementing professional practice in companies;
- the instruments used for implementing professional practice in companies.

According to the definition included in the ministerial order, professional practice in companies enables learning through real work processes in order to produce goods and/or provide services in an authentic work environment, ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes for the respective professional qualification. Professional practice is an integral component of professional qualification curricula at AQF levels 2-5. It is carried out during the study period and/or school holidays, based on a standard contract signed between the VET provider, the company, and the student.

In this context, S4J continues to support quality improvements in VET by strengthening Work-Based Learning (WBL) within the Albanian VET system. Building on successful experiences with partner schools, S4J has developed and introduced tools and guidelines for WBL planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation throughout the WBL cycle in companies.

The quality of workplace learning depends both on effective cooperation between VET providers and companies and on the capacities of the company representatives responsible for guiding and supporting learners. **In-company mentors** therefore play a central role in the implementation of quality apprenticeships and other WBL schemes. Their responsibilities include:

- guiding apprentices in their daily workplace learning activities;
- connecting theoretical learning with practical workplace experience;
- providing coaching, constructive feedback, and ongoing learner support;
- contributing to the planning, monitoring, and assessment of workplace learning; and
- cooperating with VET providers and other relevant stakeholders.

As part of its support to WBL actors, S4J offered a capacity-building programme during the 2022–2023 academic year for 240 in-company mentors from companies offering curriculum-based WBL schemes. The programme focused on mentoring young learners, supporting quality apprenticeships, strengthening communication and cooperation with VET providers, and using digital tools to support workplace learning. This experience demonstrated the relevance of providing structured and practice-oriented capacity-building opportunities while taking into account mentors' professional commitments and workplace responsibilities.

Upon the request of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Qualifications (NAVETQ) and building on the previous intervention and the lessons learned from its implementation, S4J intends to offer a capacity-building programme for in-company mentors (about 250) responsible for WBL programmes in companies partnering with S4J partner VET providers (10) across the country. The intervention is to be implemented in close coordination with NAVETQ as per their mandate to support and promote quality VET processes and standards.

3. SCOPE OF WORK AND OBJECTIVES

The Skills for Jobs (S4J) project invites interested and qualified entities or consortia to submit proposals for designing and delivering a capacity-building programme for in-company mentors in host companies offering Work-Based Learning (*Praktika Profesionale Afatgjata*) to VET students from S4J Partner VET Providers in Shkodra, Lezha, Dibra, Durres, Tirana, Elbasan, Berat, Vlora and Korca regions. The services are to be delivered

between **September 2026 and May 2027**, under a *Competitive National Tender*. This call is organized into a sole LOT. The objective of the assignment is to strengthen the capacities of in-company mentors to effectively support VET students during workplace learning, by providing them with updated knowledge, practical tools, and mentoring approaches aligned with quality WBL implementation. The implementation of the capacity-building programme will require a close cooperation with S4J project team, NAVETQ technical staff and the management of S4J partner VET providers.

The successful bidder is expected to deliver:

a) Programme presentation and contextualization

- Present the proposed in-company mentor training programme, curriculum, and delivery modality, based on the bidder's own established methodology and prior experience delivering similar capacity-building interventions;
- Contextualize the training framework, syllabus, and learning outcomes to the Albanian VET regulatory framework and current apprenticeship/WBL implementation needs;
- Adapt training materials and learning activities (e.g., presentations, exercises, case studies, quizzes, practical assignments) to the profile and context of participating mentors and partner VET providers;
- Finalize the training materials and learning activities in line with the proposed delivery modality.

b) Expert mobilisation and technical coordination

- Engage and coordinate a group of qualified experts/trainers (up to two or three, depending on thematic areas and training modules);
- Organize preparatory and coordination meetings with S4J, NAVETQ, and the training team;
- Ensure consistency across modules in terms of content, methodology, terminology, assignments, and assessment;
- Coordinate the timely preparation and delivery of training materials, sessions, coaching, and participant support.

c) Delivery management and participant coordination

- Set up and manage the logistics and technical arrangements required for delivery of the programme, according to the modality proposed by the bidder and agreed with S4J and NAVETQ;
- Coordinate the enrolment of participating mentors and provide guidance on accessing and engaging with the training programme;
- Manage communication with participants regarding the training schedule, learning requirements, deadlines, and participation expectations;
- Facilitate delivery of the learning modules and coordinate interaction sessions between trainers and participants;
- Ensure participants receive technical and learning support throughout the training period;
- Monitor participant engagement, completion of learning activities, assignment submission, and participation in training sessions.

d) Monitoring and evaluation of the training programme

- Develop and implement a monitoring approach for tracking participant attendance, progress, engagement, and completion rates;
- Monitor participation in interaction sessions, discussions, and practical assignments;
- Assess mentors' learning outcomes against the training programme's defined outcomes, through quizzes, assignments, practical exercises, or other agreed evaluation tools;
- Prepare a summary of evaluation findings and recommendations for future mentor capacity-building initiatives.

e) Reporting and documentation

- Prepare a final technical report covering programme implementation, participation, completion, assessment results, challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations;
- Provide participant statistics;
- Submit the final curriculum, training materials, monitoring tools, datasets, reports, and supporting documentation in editable and final formats.

Timeline

All activities under this assignment shall be implemented between **September 2026 and 31 May 2027**. A detailed implementation timeline, including training dates and milestones for each mentor group, shall be agreed upon with S4J and NAVETQ during the contract negotiation and initiation phase.

Deliverables and Payment

Payments will be made against verified completion of the following deliverables:

- **Deliverable 1 — Final training package and list of trainers:** Submission of the finalized training programme and curriculum covering all groups of mentors, the finalized training materials, and the confirmed list of engaged trainers/experts — **22%** of the total contract amount.
- **Deliverable 2 — Completion of training for 80 mentors:** Confirmed completion of training, including participation and assessment records, for the first group of 80 in-company mentors — **26%** of the total contract amount.
- **Deliverable 3 — Completion of training for 85 additional mentors** (progressive number 165): Confirmed completion of training, including participation and assessment records, for a second group of 85 in-company mentors — **26%** of the total contract amount.
- **Deliverable 4 — Completion of training for the remaining 85 mentors** (progressive number 250) **and submission of the final report:** Confirmed completion of training for the third group of 85 in-company mentors, together with submission of the final technical report as described under section (e) — **26%** of the total contract amount.

Each payment request shall be accompanied by supporting evidence (e.g., participant lists, attendance records) confirming delivery of the respective output.

4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The applicants shall:

- be an **Albanian entity registered** with the National Business Centre (*Qendra Kombëtare e Biznesit*). Consortia are permitted, provided that the Consortium Lead is a registered Albanian entity. Where a consortium applies, one member must be designated as the lead entity, assuming full contractual and financial responsibility for the assignment, and all members must be named in the application together with a signed consortium agreement or letter of intent.

5. 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 (Section 3). Technical proposals must include the following:
 - 2.1. *Entity profile* - A summary of relevant experience of the applying entity (or entities, in the case of a consortium), including previous similar assignments in training delivery, capacity-building, mentor/coach training, VET, or Work-Based Learning;
 - 2.2. *Proposed training programme and methodology* - A description of the bidder's proposed in-company mentor training programme and curriculum, including its learning outcomes, structure, and proposed delivery modality, together with an explanation of how it will be contextualized to the Albanian VET/WBL framework and to the profile of participating mentors, in line with Scope of Work section (a);
 - 2.3. *CVs of proposed experts/trainers* - Individual CVs of the trainers who have been contacted and agreed to engage in this assignment, highlighting their qualifications, professional background, and relevant experience in mentor training, coaching, or workplace-learning capacity-building;
 - 2.4. *Implementation approach and coordination plan* - A narrative description of how the bidder will organize expert mobilisation, coordination with S4J and NAVETQ, delivery logistics and participant management, and monitoring and evaluation, in line with Scope of Work sections (b) through (e);
 - 2.5. *Workplan and milestones*, describing an implementation timeline aligned with the four deliverables set out in Section 3, from programme finalization through completion of training for each mentor group.

3. Financial proposal

The financial proposal must be itemized by deliverable (as defined in Section 3). Please submit the financial proposal in Excel format. Prices shall be provided in CHF.

Swisscontact/S4J is registered with the Regional Directorate of Taxes for a zero-percent (0%) VAT rate on services and goods provided to the project; financial proposals must therefore be submitted at VAT 0% and must not include VAT or any equivalent indirect tax.

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

6. 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%
 - Proposed training programme and methodology 35%
 - CV of proposed experts/trainers 20%
 - Implementation approach and coordination plan 5%
 - 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 not 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.

7. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTION:

The deadline of submission is **14 September 2026, 15:00**. 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, date of handover and title: 26-14-S4J - Support Quality Work-Based Learning in Companies – Capacity-Building for in-company mentors for quality Work-Based Learning. 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.

8. 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 **7 September 2026, EOB**. The deadline for submitting responses will be **8 September 2026, EOB**. Responses to requests for clarification by one bidder must be shared on the website of the project.

9. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

9.1 Validity of Proposals

Proposals must remain valid and open for acceptance for a period of 60 (sixty) days from the submission deadline. Swisscontact may request an extension of this validity period; applicants may accept or decline such a request.

9.2 Intellectual Property

The training programme, curriculum, methodology, and training materials developed and/or owned by the contractor prior to or independently of this assignment shall remain the exclusive property of the contractor. This is a service-delivery contract: Swisscontact is contracting for the delivery of training services, not acquiring ownership of the contractor's training programme or methodology.

Swisscontact, NAVETQ, and S4J partner VET providers shall be granted a non-exclusive, royalty-free license to use the training materials, tools, reports, and other outputs submitted as deliverables under this assignment for their own institutional, oversight, and reporting purposes, without further compensation to the contractor, for a period of one year (365 days) from the last day of the service contract.

9.3 Confidentiality

The contractor, its personnel, and any engaged experts shall treat all non-public information obtained in the course of this assignment — including participant data, training materials under development, and NAVETQ/S4J internal communications — as confidential, both during the assignment and after its completion, and shall not disclose such information to third parties without prior written authorization from Swisscontact. The contractor shall further ensure that any personal data of participating mentors collected during the assignment is handled in line with applicable data protection requirements.

9.4 Performance Assurance

Swisscontact does not require a financial performance guarantee for this assignment. Satisfactory performance is instead secured through the milestone-based payment structure described in Section 3 and Swisscontact's right, at its discretion, to withhold or adjust payment where deliverables do not meet the required quality standard, or to discontinue the contract for a given output as described in Section 3.