

**Terms of reference for
National/International Consultancy for the Development, Training Delivery, and State
Accreditation of the Standardized National Training Programme for Foster Parents in
Albania**

**in the framework of the project: "A right to Family II – Improving the availability,
accessibility and quality of foster care and community-based services in Albania,
Armenia, Belarus, North Macedonia and Ukraine".**

INTRODUCTION

SOS Children's Villages, Albania, in the framework of the project **"A Right to Family II – Improving the Availability, Accessibility and Quality of Foster Care and Community-Based Services in Albania, Belarus, North Macedonia and Ukraine"** funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), is seeking a qualified team of experts to develop, train professionals, and secure formal state accreditation for a standardized national training programme for foster parents in Albania.

This consultancy will be executed during the period September 2026 – October 2027 (estimated at **50 working days**). The selected consulting team will work in close coordination with a designated working group, comprising representatives from the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the State Social Service (SHSSH).

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

SOS Children's Villages Worldwide and the five locally registered SOS Children's Villages National Associations in Albania, Armenia, Belarus, North Macedonia and Ukraine are implementing the regional project **"A Right to Family II – Improving the Availability, Accessibility and Quality of Foster Care and Community-Based Services in Albania, Belarus, North Macedonia and Ukraine"**, funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project contributes to strengthening child protection systems and promoting high-quality family-based alternative care across the participating countries.

SOS Children's Villages Albania is a non-governmental, non-profit organization working to ensure that every child grows up in a safe, caring and supportive family environment. In Albania, the project supports national efforts to strengthen foster care services by improving the quality, accessibility and sustainability of family-based alternative care.

The child protection and social care system in Albania is undergoing a profound structural transformation following the entry into force of Law No. 92/2025 "On Alternative Care in the Family" and its supplementary 2026 secondary legislation package. This modern legal framework accelerates the country's deinstitutionalization strategy by establishing a decentralized, state-funded, and highly professionalized family care model. The new framework introduces complex legal shifts that require immediate operationalization.

It establishes entirely distinct categories of foster care, including Voluntary (Kinship) Care, Emergency Care, and state-salaried Professional Foster Care for children with complex needs. It mandates that all approved foster families must be logged into a new National Electronic Register before they can legally receive children or be compensated by the State Treasury.

It introduces strict, mandatory training and continuous evaluation standards managed by the Agency for Quality Assurance of Health and Social Care (ASCK).

Currently, a critical systemic gap exists: Albania lacks a standardized, uniform, and state-

accredited national training curriculum to qualify these different categories of foster parents under the new legal parameters. Without a legally compliant, trauma-informed training program, local municipalities cannot certify families, and the implementation of the new law remains stalled. This assignment is urgently required to bridge this gap, translating the 2026 statutory updates into a practical, accredited national blueprint that ensures safety and quality of care for vulnerable children.

2. PURPOSE AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the assignment is to develop and finalize a competency-based national training programme for foster parents and strengthen the capacity of designated professionals to deliver the programme independently and sustainably.

Specifically, the assignment aims to:

- Assess the training needs of foster parents and professionals involved in foster care and identify gaps in existing training materials and approaches.
- Design a standardized, competency-based training curriculum for foster parents, aligned with national legislation (specifically Law No. 92/2025 "On Alternative Care" and the 2026 regulatory framework), child protection standards, and international good practices on alternative care.
- Develop a comprehensive training package, including a participant handbook, trainer's manual, and supporting training materials, structured in full alignment with state formatting guidelines.
- Ensure stakeholder ownership of the programme through structured consultations and participatory workshops with key actors, including foster parents, government institutions, and civil society organizations.
- Pilot the training programme through Training of Trainers (ToT) and subsequent training of foster parents, and refine the materials based on feedback and lessons learned.
- Strengthen the capacity of designated professionals in four municipalities to deliver initial and ongoing training to foster parents through two Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions based on the finalized curriculum.
- Support the preparation of the training programme for accreditation by fully developing the necessary technical dossiers (such as the detailed competency matrix and analytical agendas) required to secure formal state accreditation from the Agency for Quality Assurance of Health and Social Care (ASCK).

3. SCOPE OF WORK

The experts will design the standardized training programme for foster parents that can be sustainably delivered by national and local professionals and will provide trainings accordingly. The consultants will work closely with the designated working group and relevant stakeholders to ensure that the programme is evidence-based, contextually relevant, aligned with national child protection framework and international standards and the technical criteria required to secure formal accreditation from the Agency for Quality Assurance of Health and Social Care (ASCK). The pilot implementation and immediate capacity-building activities will be focused on within four (4) selected target municipalities.

The experts will be responsible for the following:

Phase 1. Inception

- Review the existing legislation, policies, standards, and training materials for foster parents, focusing specifically on the new Law No. 92/2025 "On Alternative Care in the Family", the 2026 package of draft Decisions of the Council of Ministers (VKMs) regarding foster care payments, monitoring protocols, and civil society partnerships, as well as the National Standards for Social Care Services.
- Enhance the methodology and work plan for the assignment, ensuring the alignment of the training tools with andragogical frameworks (adult learning principles) and the specific technical evaluation criteria set by ASCK.
- Identify the key stakeholders and prepare a consultation plan, explicitly including the Directorate of Social Protection Policies within the Ministry, the State Social Service at both central and regional levels, and the Municipalities.
- Submit to SOS Albania valid copies of the active professional licenses issued by the Order of Social Workers or the Order of Psychologists in Albania, which serve as mandatory qualification documents for the administrative accreditation dossier.

Phase 2. Training needs assessment

- Conduct training needs assessment through consultations with foster parents, child protection professionals, state authorities, the Departments Social Services within Municipalities, NGOs, and other relevant stakeholders.
- Coordinate closely with SOS Children's Villages Albania to secure authorized institutional access to municipalities for interviewing foster families, ensuring full compliance with privacy protocols and national data protection legislation.
- Review existing training resources and identify learning gaps and priority needs, highlighting the practical and systemic challenges faced by Municipalities in operationalizing the new forms of voluntary (kinship), emergency, and professional foster care.
- Prepare a Training Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis Report, including recommendations to inform the development of the training programme.

Phase 3. Programme design and development

- In collaboration with the working group, define the programme objectives, competency framework, learning outcomes and curriculum structure, formulated in accordance with Bloom's Taxonomy as required by ASCK.
- Facilitate two one-day workshops with the working group:
 - o Workshop 1: Validate the findings of the training needs assessment and agree on the programme objectives, competencies and curriculum framework.
 - o Workshop 2: Review the draft curriculum and training materials and agree on revisions prior to pilot implementation.
- Develop the draft training package, including:
 - o training curriculum;
 - o Foster Parent Participant Handbook;
 - o Trainer's Manual;
 - o training presentations and learning materials;
 - o practical exercises, case studies and role-play scenarios;
 - o the National Foster Care Evaluation Toolkit, comprising standardized Pre- and Post-tests, grading rubrics, and participant satisfaction surveys, structured to be uniformly deployed across municipalities.
- The training package should include, at a minimum, the following thematic topics:

- Policy context in Albania;
- Principles of foster care and the role of foster parents;
- Child development and the developmental needs of children, including children with complex needs and adverse childhood experiences;
- Attachment, trauma and trauma-informed care;
- Safeguarding, child protection and children's rights;
- Positive parenting, communication and behavior management;
- Supporting children's education, health and well-being;
- Working with biological families and maintaining family relationships, where appropriate;
- Collaboration with social workers and other professionals;
- Legal and ethical responsibilities of foster parents;
- Foster parent well-being and self-care.
- as well as a dedicated module on the specifics of voluntary (kinship) care versus professional/specialized care, including the new state contracting and financial support schemes.

The training package should be competency-based, participatory, practice-oriented, aligned with national legislation, policy frameworks and international standards on alternative care for children and suitable for both initial and ongoing training of foster parents.

The technical content should be structured in a way to be transposable into the official ASCK application formats, specifically the Module Competency Matrix and the minute-by-minute Time Allocation Analytical Agenda.

The final content and structure shall be refined based on the findings of the training needs assessment, stakeholder consultations and pilot implementation.

Phase 4. Pilot Testing

- Deliver a Training of Trainers (ToT) for 8–10 child protection professionals representing both public (State Social Service and Municipalities) and private foster care providers.
- Support the pilot delivery of the training to at least 12 prospective and existing foster parents and collect feedback.
- Collect and analyze feedback from participants and facilitators, specifically validating the clarity, accessibility, and andragogical suitability of the materials.
- Conduct a validation of the entire National Foster Care Evaluation Toolkit (including testing the accessibility of the Pre/Post-tests and the objectivity of the grading rubrics), as required by ASCK standards.
- Prepare a pilot report with recommendations for improving the programme, including a dedicated section on data-driven adjustments to the curriculum structure and training methodology.

Phase 5. Finalization and Capacity Building

- Revise the curriculum and training materials based on the findings of the pilot implementation and stakeholder feedback.
- Finalize the training package and supporting technical documentation ensuring full integration into the official state formats required by ASCK (including the detailed Module Competency Matrix, Time Allocation Table, and the minute-by-minute Analytical Agenda), to secure formal accreditation and the issuance of continuous education credits.

- Develop the National Foster Care Evaluation Toolkit, comprising standardized Pre- and Post-tests, grading rubrics, and participant satisfaction surveys, structured to be uniformly deployed across all municipalities.
- Provide ongoing technical support, formatting revisions, and professional feedback to address any technical queries or amendments requested by ASCK and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection until the formal Accreditation Code is successfully obtained.
- Prepare the finalized, print-ready versions of the Trainer's Manual and the Foster Parents' Guidebook, fully incorporating the strict visual identity, institutional branding guidelines, and mandatory accreditation disclaimers required by the competent national authorities including also SOS Children's Villages, branding guidelines.
- Deliver two ToT trainings (10 working days) for professionals who will implement the programme.
- Submit the final training package and consultancy report, including recommendations for implementation, quality assurance, periodic updates and sustainability of the training programme. The consultants shall provide recommendations for the institutionalization and sustainable implementation of the training programme, including a proposed approach for the future delivery of Training of Trainers and ongoing training of foster parents by designated national institutions, specifically aligned with the licensing mandates of the Order of Social Workers and the Order of Psychologists in Albania.

4. APPROACH

The assignment shall be implemented using a participatory, evidence-based and competency-based approach, ensuring that the training programme responds to the identified needs of foster parents and is aligned with the national legal and policy framework (specifically Law No. 92/2025 "On Alternative Care" and the 2026 secondary legislation package) and international standards on alternative care for children.

The experts shall:

- Apply a participatory methodology, engaging foster parents, child protection professionals, government institutions, civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders throughout the assignment.
- Work closely with the designated working group to validate key deliverables and facilitate stakeholder ownership of the training programme.
- Apply adult learning principles (andragological frameworks) and Bloom's Taxonomy to design measurable learning objectives and develop practical, interactive, and competency-based training materials.
- Pilot the training programme within the targeted municipalities, systematically incorporate data-driven feedback from participants and stakeholders and revise the training package accordingly.
- Ensure that the final training package is structured in the mandatory technical templates (matrices and analytical agendas) required to secure formal state accreditation from the Agency for Quality Assurance of Health and Social Care (ASCK) for sustainable, nationwide implementation.

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE

The consultants shall ensure that all deliverables are of high technical quality, evidence-based and aligned with the national legal and policy framework, relevant international standards on alternative care for children and accreditation requirements.

More specifically:

- All materials developed under this consultancy must strictly adhere to Law No. 92/2025 "On Alternative Care in the Family" and the 2026 secondary legislation package.
- Training package must adhere to National Accreditation Formats. Draft and final curriculum deliverables will not be considered complete if submitted in generic text formats. The consultants must provide all components (including the Module Competency Matrix, Time Allocation Charts, and Minute-by-Minute Analytical Agenda) in the exact templates prescribed by ASCK.
- The curriculum and evaluation tools must undergo field-validation during Phase 4 pilot in targeted municipalities. The consultants must provide a data-driven validation report proving that the Pre- and Post-test toolkits are accessible, measurable, and tailored to the varying educational backgrounds of foster parents.
- Each major deliverable will undergo a review process involving SOS Children's Villages, Albania, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, State Social Service (SHSSH) representatives, and designated working group.
- The consultants are required to systematically address all technical feedback from SOS Children's Villages, Albania, the Ministry, or ASCK, and submit revised drafts within five (5) working days of receiving consolidated comments.
- Final clearance of the consultancy and the release of the final payment retention are strictly contingent upon the technical dossier successfully passing the ASCK technical evaluation board and receiving its official state accreditation code.

6. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

Deliverables	Description
1. Inception report	Methodology, work plan, including steps for accreditation, timeline, stakeholder consultation plan, proposed approach for the assignment and certified copies of the licenses of the consulting team.
2. Training Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis Report	Findings from the desk review and stakeholder consultations, analysis of existing training resources, identified learning needs and recommendations for the training programme.
3. Programme design report	Competency framework, training objectives, learning outcomes, curriculum framework and summary of the outcomes of Workshop 1.
4. Draft Training package and technical dossier	Draft competency-based curriculum, Foster Parent Participant Handbook, Trainer's Manual, training presentations, practical exercises and case studies, and the draft components of the National Foster Care Evaluation Toolkit, accompanied by the completed ASCK templates including ASCK Competency Matrix and minute-by-minute Analytical Agenda.
5. Pilot validation and evaluation toolkit	Successful delivery of the initial ToT, pilot sessions, outcomes of workshop 2, including a data-driven report validating the complete National Foster Care Evaluation Toolkit.
6. Final Training Package	Finalized, print-ready manuals and the finalized National Foster Care Evaluation Toolkit incorporating the official

	Ministry branding and the ASCK official accreditation code.
7. Two Training of Trainers (ToT) Delivered	Delivery of the two ToTs for foster care professionals using the finalized curriculum, including training agenda, participant materials, attendance records, training evaluation summary and a training report.
8. Final Consultancy Report	Summary of the assignment, key achievements, recommendations for implementation, quality assurance, periodic updates and a roadmap for institutionalization.

7. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE EXPERTS

7.1 Team composition and expertise required

Given the complexity and multi-stage nature of the assignment, the consultancy should be carried out by a team of two experts with complementary and combined expertise covering curriculum development and child protection/foster care systems. The team is expected to jointly carry out all tasks under the assignment, including assessment, curriculum and training package development, training delivery and finalization.

The team should together demonstrate expertise in:

- Curriculum development and instructional design for adult learning;
- Child protection systems, with specific experience in foster care or alternative care services;
- Design and delivery of competency-based training programmes, including Training of Trainers (ToT);
- Development of training materials such as curricula, manuals and facilitator guides;
- Facilitation of multi-stakeholder consultations and participatory workshops.
- Structuring and aligning technical educational content into specialized state accreditation formats (such as ASCK matrices and analytical agendas).

The team may include national and international experts. The inclusion of an international expert is considered an asset. Final team composition and division of responsibilities shall be proposed by the applicants in their technical proposal. However, the division of labor must explicitly designate a locally licensed national expert to lead the delivery of the training sessions to comply with state accreditation guidelines.

7.2 Minimum requirements

Each expert must meet the following minimum requirements:

- University degree in social work, psychology, education, social sciences or a related field;
- Minimum of 7 years of relevant professional experience in child protection, social services, education or related areas;
- Proven experience in developing or delivering training programmes for adults;
- Experience working with government institutions and NGOs;
- At least one of the core experts in the team must hold an active, valid, and unrevoked professional license to practice issued by either the Order of Social Workers or the Order of Psychologists in Albania. This is a mandatory criterion for state accreditation eligibility; proposals failing to submit valid local licenses will be disqualified.

7.3 Technical and Professional Experience

The following criteria will be used to assess the technical quality of the proposed experts:

- Demonstrated experience in child protection programming, preferably in foster care or alternative care systems, with deep familiarity with Albania's new Law No. 92/2025 "On Alternative Care" and the 2026 secondary legislation package;
- Experience in conducting training needs assessments and developing training strategies;
- Experience in designing and delivering training programmes;
- Experience in facilitating stakeholder consultations, workshops, and participatory processes;
- Familiarity with international standards and guidelines on alternative care and child rights (e.g. UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children);
- Direct, documented experience in successfully navigating the accreditation, certification, or formal state approval of social care training programmes within the Albanian system (specifically with ASCK or the Ministry of Health and Social Protection).

8. LOCATION / TIMELINE / LANGUAGE AND DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT

The consultancy is expected to require an estimated effort of 50 working days, to be shared between the two experts over the duration of the assignment. The distribution of working days between the experts shall be proposed by the applicants in their technical proposal.

All final deliverables, including the training curriculum, training materials and reports, shall be submitted in Albanian language. If required by SOS Children's Villages Albania, selected deliverables may also be submitted in English.

9. GENERAL INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

This call is open to all suppliers (independent consultants or companies) who can provide the requested services.

Applicants shall bear all costs of the application preparation; costs of proposal development cannot be included as a direct cost within the assignment.

Required documents must be submitted in English; financial bids must be stated in ALL/Euro.

10. SANCTIONS AND COMPLIANCE

The applicant must not be subject to sanctions imposed by EU/UN or any other applicable national or international sanctions` regimes to which Albania is a party.

11. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Interested candidates should submit:

- A letter of interest stating eligibility for the assignment.
- Curriculum Vitae (CV) for each of the experts, highlighting relevant experience.
- A brief technical proposal (max 5 pages), describing proposed methodology and approach, detailed work plan and timeline, team composition and division of responsibilities, clearly specifying which expert will fulfil the role of Lead Author and who will serve as Licensed Lead Trainer, and quality assurance arrangements.
- A valid, unrevoked copy of the professional license to practice issued by either the Order of Social Workers or the Order of Psychologists in Albania for the designated National Expert. Failure to include this document will result in immediate disqualification of the entire proposal.

- At least two (2) verified examples or extracts of previously developed competency-based training curricula, modules, manuals, or adult-learning guides, preferably within the field of social care, child protection, or public policy.
- Financial proposal statement of the requested amount per day and the total gross amount for the implementation of the contract, inclusive of all expenses and applicable taxes in the candidate's country of residence.

The financial proposal should specify whether the expert is registered as a business entity or operates as an individual freelancer and provide the corresponding VAT/Tax Identification Number, applicable in their country of residence. In case the applicant is nonresident in Albania a Tax residence document should be delivered as part of the application.

12. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION DOCUMENTS AND DEADLINE

Bids need to be submitted electronically to the following e-mail address: info@soskd.org.al with subject line: "Application to design training curricula for foster parents for BMZ Right to Family II project" by **03.08.2026**. Late submissions shall not be considered.

Technical and financial proposals are to be submitted as separate PDF files, with the expressions "technical proposal" and "financial proposal" used in the documents' filenames respectively.

Questions related to the application process must be addressed at info@soskd.org.al.

13. MODIFICATION AND WITHDRAWAL OF BIDS

Bids may be withdrawn on bidder's written request to SOS Children's Villages, Albania prior to the closing date of this Request for Proposals. Any corrections or modifications must also be received in writing prior to the closing date.

Changes must be clearly stated in comparison with the original proposal. Failure to do so will be at bidder's own risk and disadvantage.

14. RIGHTS OF CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

Throughout the bidding and evaluation under these Terms of Reference, contracting authority maintains the rights to:

- contact any or all references supplied by the bidder(s).
- request additional supporting or supplementary data from the bidder(s).
- arrange interviews with the bidder(s).
- reject any or all proposals submitted.
- accept any proposals in whole or in part.
- negotiate with the bidder(s) who will be considered for contracting.

15. SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on technical quality and financial offer.

Proposals must meet all mandatory minimum requirements, including the submission of an active professional license from the Order of Social Workers or the Order of Psychologists in Albania for the designated national trainer, to be considered eligible for technical evaluation. Non-compliant proposals will be disqualified immediately.

The technical proposal will be assessed against pre-defined criteria (with a maximum of 70 points) including the methodology and understanding of the assignment, qualifications and experience of the proposed team, relevant expertise in curriculum development, training of trainers and child protection/foster care systems, and quality assurance arrangements.

The financial proposal will carry a maximum of 30 points. Only technically qualified proposals meeting the minimum required score of 70% of the technical points (49 out of 70 points) will be considered for financial evaluation. The final selection will be based on the combined technical and financial score.

16. CONTRACTING

SOS Children's Villages, Albania will inform the successful bidder electronically and will send the contract form within a maximum of weeks after the closing date of the Request for Proposals. The successful bidder shall sign the contract and return it to SOS Children's Villages, Albania within two weeks of receipt of the contract.

17. TERMS OF PAYMENT

Payment will be made only upon SOS Children's Villages, Albania acceptance of the work performed in accordance with the above-described deliverables. Payment will be conducted by bank transfer in the currency of billing and is due 30 days after receipt of invoice and acceptance of work.

Payments will be made in three instalments upon satisfactory completion and approval of deliverables, as follows:

1. First instalment (20%)

Upon approval of the Inception Report and the Training Needs Assessment and curriculum framework.

2. Second instalment (50%)

Upon approval of the Draft Training Package and technical dossier, the draft National Foster Care Evaluation Toolkit, completion of the first Training of Trainers (ToT), field-piloting with foster parents and submission of the validated report.

3. Final instalment (30%)

Upon receipt of the official ASCK Technical Accreditation Code, submission of the finalized, print-ready branded manuals, finalized National Foster Care Evaluation Toolkit completion of the two Training of Trainers (ToT) and submission of the final consultancy report.

18. NOTICE OF DELAY

Shall the contracted bidder encounter delay in the performance of the Contract, which may be excusable under unavoidable circumstances, the contracted bidder shall notify SOS Children's Villages, Albania in writing about the causes of any such delays within two (2) days from the beginning of the delay.

After receipt of the contracted bidder's notice of delay, SOS Children's Villages, Albania shall analyze the facts and extent of delay, and extend the time for performance when, in its judgment, the facts justify such an extension.

19. COPYRIGHT RIGHTS

All produced materials and all other types of data compiled by or received by the contracted bidder under the Contract shall be treated as confidential and shall be delivered only to SOS CV authorized officials on completion of work under the Contract.

20. TERMINATION

SOS Children's Villages, Albania reserves the right to terminate without cause this Contract at any time upon fifteen (15) days prior written notice to the Contractor, in which case SOS Children's Villages, Albania shall reimburse the Contractor for all reasonable costs incurred by the Contractor prior to receipt of the notice of termination.

SOS Children's Villages, Albania reserves the right to terminate the contract without any financial obligations if the contractor is not meeting its obligations without any prior notice:

- agreed time schedule
- withdrawal or replacement of expert without obtaining written consent from SOS Children's Villages
- the deliverables do not comply with the requirements of ToR.