

Terms of Reference
International Trainer / Expert for conducting
“Advanced training on foster care models for children with complex needs”
On behalf of SOS Children’s Villages, Albania
For 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”.

DEADLINE EXTENDED

New deadline for submission of offers: May 22, 2026

SOS Children’s Villages, Albania hereby extends the deadline for the Request for training services presented below.

With the deadline extension, the period for completion of the training is still expected to be until October 2026. Changes can anyway occur upon agreement with selected trainer.

All other aspects of this Request for Proposal remain the same. Applicants who have already submitted their offers need not modify or re-submit their proposals.

INTRODUCTION

These Terms of Reference (ToR) serve as a request for proposals from individual international trainers / experts, who are interested in designing and delivering an advanced training on **“Foster care models for children with complex needs”**, organized in the frame of the regional project: *“Improving the availability, accessibility and quality of foster care and community-based services in Albania, Belarus, North Macedonia and Ukraine”*.

Details regarding the content of proposals and submission procedures are explained herein.

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

SOS Children’s Villages, Worldwide and the 5 locally registered SOS Children's Villages National Associations Albania, Armenia, Belarus, North Macedonia and Ukraine, since September 2025, are implementing the regional project entitled *“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 aims to improve children’s rights with a specific focus on supporting the reform of alternative childcare systems in the 5 project countries.

SOS Children’s Villages Albania, Armenia, Belarus, North Macedonia and Ukraine are non-profit non-governmental organizations and active members of SOS Children’s Villages International, which comprises more than 130 SOS Children’s Villages national associations. We work together with a single vision: every child belongs to a family and grows up with love, respect and security.

Across the five countries, foster care is recognized as a preferred form of alternative care for children who cannot remain with their families. However, child protection systems across the five countries face challenges in responding adequately to the needs of children with complex needs. Children entering alternative care often have complex emotional, behavioral, developmental, mental health or disability-related needs whether arising from abuse, neglect, family separation, institutionalization, other adverse experiences or from congenital or acquired conditions. These experiences significantly affect children’s well-being and development and require specialized support services within alternative care systems.

In all five countries, foster care models lack or have insufficient specialized support mechanisms necessary to support children who have experienced trauma, who present behavioral and emotional challenges or who are children with disabilities.

Specialized foster care models, including therapeutic foster care and enhanced family-based care arrangements, provide structured and professionalized support to children with complex needs through trained foster carers, multidisciplinary services, and close collaboration between child protection and mental health professionals.

International standards such as the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children adopted by the United Nations emphasize the importance of strengthening family-based care systems and developing well-regulated specialized foster care systems, supported by appropriate policies, standards, and services for children with complex needs.

To strengthen the capacity of professionals working in child protection and foster care systems, **a three-day advanced face-to-face training will be organized for approximately 20 government representatives and foster care / child protection experts at national, regional and local levels** from five countries.

The training is intended for professionals with experience in child protection and foster care systems. Therefore, the training should focus on advanced discussion of specialized foster care models, system development and policy implementation. Participants will be selected by SOS Member Associations in consultation with government partners. The group will consist of mid- to senior-level professionals.

An international expert will be engaged in designing and delivering the training, drawing on international best practices and evidence-based approaches. The trainer is expected to present key frameworks, tools, strategies and approaches that can support participants in strengthening specialized foster care policies and services in their respective countries.

2. PURPOSE AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this assignment is to engage an international trainer to design and deliver a three-day advanced training program that strengthens participant's knowledge and skills related to specialized foster care models for children with complex needs, while also supporting participants in identifying opportunities to improve policy frameworks, procedures and service delivery systems in their respective countries.

The specific objectives of the training are to:

- Strengthen participants' understanding of the needs of children with behavior, emotional developmental challenges and disabilities.
- Promote trauma-informed approaches to supporting children who have experienced abuse, neglect or other adverse experiences.
- Introduce specialized foster care models, including therapeutic and enhanced foster care approaches.
- Explore effective strategies for recruiting, retaining, training and supporting specialized foster carers.
- Examine policy frameworks, standards and system components necessary to develop sustainable specialized foster care systems.
- Share international experiences and good practices in supporting foster families who care for children with complex needs.
- Support participants in identifying policy, procedural and service improvements to strengthen foster care systems in their countries.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

The selected expert will design, prepare and deliver the three-day in-person training program.

1. Training preparation

- Review relevant background materials provided by the organizers or through other sources.
- Analyze information collected from participating countries through a pre-training questionnaire developed by the trainer.
- Develop a detailed training program and methodology using innovative methods of adult education.
- Ensure training materials reflect international standards and recent good practices.

2. Training Delivery

- Facilitate three-day in person training.
- Present specialized foster care models and frameworks addressing children with complex needs.
- Facilitate discussions on recruitment, training and support systems for foster carers.
- Address policy and system-level issues, including standards, placement procedures and collaboration between services.
- Integrate gender considerations across training sessions.
- Facilitate interactive exercises, including case studies and group discussions.

3. Facilitation of country reflection

- Facilitate an assessment exercise to assess the level of development of specialized foster care systems across participating countries.
- Guide participants in analyzing policy and practice gaps in their national contexts.
- Support country groups in developing initial action ideas for improving specialized foster care systems.

4. Reporting

- Analyze the information collected from participating countries through a post-training questionnaire developed by the trainer.
- Provide a training report, summarizing the main discussions, participant's feedback, key lessons learned, and recommendations.

4. TRAINING METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

The training should follow an integrated framework, examining specialized foster care at three levels:

- Child level: understanding trauma, behavioral challenges and developmental needs of children with complex needs, including those with disabilities.
- Foster family level: recruitment, training, supervision and support systems for foster carers.
- Policy and system level: standards, procedures, monitoring mechanisms and financing of specialized foster care services.

This approach will support participants in linking practical care approaches with broader policy and system reforms.

The training should use participatory and adult learning approaches, combining theoretical input with practical exercises and peer learning. Methods should include interactive presentations, case study analysis, group work, facilitated discussions, country reflection sessions, action planning exercises.

The training should also incorporate gender perspectives and demonstrate sensitivity to the diverse cultural, political, and historical contexts of the five participating countries.

5. KEY TOPICS TO BE COVERED

The training should address the following key themes:

- Understanding children with complex behavioral, emotional, developmental needs, including those with disabilities.
- Trauma informed care approaches.
- Mental health considerations in foster care.
- Specialized and therapeutic foster care models.
- Recruitment strategies and profiles for specialized foster parents.
- Training, supervision and support system for foster carers.
- Preventing foster placement breakdown.
- Cooperation between foster carers, child protection professionals, community services and mental health providers.
- The role of community-based services in supporting foster placements.
- Policy frameworks and quality standards for specialized foster care.
- Gatekeeping and placement decision-making.
- Financing and sustainability of specialized foster care services.
- Gender considerations in foster care systems.
- Lessons learned and international best practices.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

To assess the effectiveness of the training, the following methods will be used:

- Pre and post - training knowledge assessments
- Participant feedback surveys
- Group reflections and discussions
- Country action planning outputs.

Indicators of success include improved knowledge scores and identification of policy and procedural improvements by participants.

By the end of the training, participants will have developed a clearer understanding of the policy, procedural and service components required to strengthen or improve specialized foster care systems and will identify potential actions to strengthen foster care services in their national contexts.

Participants will also be invited to complete a follow-up survey approximately one year after the training to assess how the knowledge gained has been applied in policy and practice.

7. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

The selected expert will be expected to deliver the deliverables listed below:

Deliverable	Description
Inception note	Proposed training approach and draft agenda
Training programme	Detailed three-day training programme
Training materials	Presentations, exercises, case studies etc.
Training delivery	Facilitation of 3-day training
Pre and post training knowledge assessment	Pre-training and post-training knowledge assessment questionnaires, analysis of results

Training evaluation	Evaluation forms, and summary of feedback
Country reflection outputs	Facilitation of group work leading to identification of potential policy, procedural or practice improvements in participants' countries. Summary of these outputs.
Training report	Summary of key topics and discussions, participants' feedback, main results from pre and post training questionnaires, key policy and practice reflections emerging from discussions, recommendations, proposed next steps.

8. REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE EXPERT

The expert should have the following qualifications.

- Advanced university degree in social work, psychology, child development, public policy or related fields.
- Minimum 10 years of experience in child protection or alternative care.
- Demonstrated expertise in foster care systems and specialized foster care models.
- Experience working with children with trauma or behavioral challenges.
- Knowledge in trauma-informed care approaches.
- Experience working with government institutions or policy reform processes.
- Proven experience delivering capacity building and training programmes.
- Strong facilitation and training skills.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Experience working with multinational professional audiences.
- Proficiency in the English language, with the ability to deliver training effectively to participants from diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- Experience working in Eastern Europe or post-Soviet countries or demonstrated familiarity with the transition contexts of these countries, will be considered an asset.

9. LOCATION / TIMELINE / LANGUAGE AND DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT

The training will be held in **Tirana**, Albania in 2026. Ideally, the training should be conducted no later than October 2026. The exact dates of the training will be determined in consultation with the selected trainer and the participating countries. The training will be delivered in **English** Language.

The assignment will include preparing and delivering the three-day training, compiling the final training report, and submitting all required deliverables after the training.

10. GENERAL INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

- This call is open to all national and international 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 Euro.
- Travel to/from Albania, accommodation, meals and transfer from/to the airport will be covered from SOS Children's Villages, Albania. Therefore, in the financial proposal, interested trainers should quote the fee required for the preparation, delivery and reporting of the training.

10.1 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.

10.2 APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Interested candidates should submit:

- A letter of interest stating eligibility for the assignment.
- Curriculum Vitae (CV) highlighting relevant experience.
- A brief technical proposal (2-3 pages), describing the proposed training methodology and approach, including a brief outline of the proposed training structure and key topics to be covered during the three-day training.
- 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.

10.3 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 conduct training for BMZ Right to Family II project” by **22.05.2026, 17:00 CET**. 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.

10.4 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.

10.5 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.

10.6 SELECTION CRITERIA

The evaluation of bids shall be based on the following criteria:

- Relevance professional experience
- Technical expertise in foster care systems

- Training and facilitation experience
- Quality of training approach
- Financial proposal

10.7 CONTRACTING

SOS Children’s Villages, Albania will inform the successful bidder electronically and will send the contract form within two (2) 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 five (5) calendar days of receipt of the contract.

10.8 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.

10.9 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.

10.10 COPYRIGHT RIGHTS

All training 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.

10.11 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.