



Project: “Regional Cooperation for Better Social Inclusion at Local Level”

Terms of Reference

**for engagement of a consultant for
for conducting assessment and developed evidence base situation analysis and recommendations about
decentralization of the social protection in the North Macedonia**

I. Project summary

The NALAS project “Regional Cooperation for Better Social Inclusion at Local Level” addresses the insufficient institutional capacities and know-how of local government administrations and other relevant local stakeholders from the Western Balkan economies in the identification of the needs of disadvantaged groups of citizens, development of evidence-based local policies in the field of social protection and ensuring of access to local services through innovative social approaches. In addition, the project is strengthening the capacities of the Network of Association of Local Authorities in SEE to set the topic of social inclusion higher on the agenda of the network and its member associations.

The Overall Objective of the project is to support the local governments and their associations in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo* and Albania in strengthening the social and economic inclusion of vulnerable groups in line with the overarching principle of the 2030 Agenda "Leave no one behind".

The Specific objectives are related to 1) strengthening the institutional capacities of NALAS and its member associations from the project's target economies related to the development and implementation of needs-based recommendations on social and economic inclusion of vulnerable groups; 2) enhancing the capacities of the local governments necessary to improve the living conditions of the disadvantaged groups through evidence-based decision making and social approaches and 3) improving social services on municipal level regarding their responsiveness to migration and gender-sensitive needs of vulnerable groups.

Output 1 assist the Local Government Association (LGA's) in **development of roadmaps and recommendations related to strengthening their advocacy capacities for addressing social inclusion issues at local level.**

It includes:

- Assessment of social inclusion status quo and Local Government Associations (LGA) advocacy capacities for addressing social inclusion topics at local level.
- Conceptualization of the roadmaps and recommendations
- Implementation of specific recommendation

Local Governments Association plays a vital role in advocating for the interests of local communities, influencing policies, and ensuring that local governments have the resources and support they need to serve their constituents effectively. Advocacy is a multifaceted function that involves a range of activities aimed at advancing the priorities of local governments and their residents. Therefore, the project will contribute in development of LGA roadmaps that will serve as action plans guiding the provision of specific advocacy actions for social inclusion approaches. The recommendations will be defined in format of concrete actions steps, in which the roles and responsibilities of the main actors/stakeholders involved in provision of the specific social inclusion approach will be addressed. Furthermore, budgetary implications and respective responsibilities will be clarified. The roadmaps will support NALAS member associations to sustainably anchor the topic of social inclusion in their structures, in line with the respective economy contexts, and to advocate for social inclusion measures at local level.

In order to support ZELS (Association of the Units of Local Self-Government of the Republic of North Macedonia) in **implementation of developed Advocacy roadmap**, a concrete **Operation Plan** was developed. The Plan provides detailed action steps for the Association and involved actors/stakeholders to achieve the **advocacy aim: Advance implementation of Decentralization Process of Centres for Social Work at the country level.**

The expected results of the roadmap are to strengthen the awareness and political will for continuation and complete implementation of the social protection system decentralization by creating positive behaviours and opinions about the importance of this process. Through the increased level of knowledge and shared lessons learnt from the countries from the region of SEE, it is expected the decision makers to support the completion of the process of decentralization of Centres for Social Works (CSWs) in North Macedonia.

Outcome 1 of the ZLES Advocacy Roadmap aims to address the gaps in the implementation of administrative and fiscal decentralization of CSWs and propose solutions for further continuation of decentralization. In order to achieve this outcome, an evidence-based situation analysis with recommendations for decentralization of the social protection in North Macedonia shall be conducted.

For achieving the “**Outcome 2: Capacities of duty bearers at local level (ZELS-Social Inclusion Committee and members of ZELS) about decentralization process are enhanced**”, workshops and meetings with members of ZELS are planned. These events will be used for presentation of the Study for Decentralization Processes in the region of SEE and development of Policy Paper on Decentralization Process Perspectives and next steps.

For fulfilment of the **Outcome 3 : Enhanced knowledge and created will among decision makers at central level to advance the process of decentralization of CSWs at country level** ZELS will organize an event on which will be elaborated the main issues/factors for advancing the Decentralization process in social protection area.

The project “Regional Cooperation for Better Social Inclusion on Local Level” is implemented by NALAS in cooperation with GIZ on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

The Advocacy Roadmap is developed and will be implemented by ZELS in coordination with the NALAS Secretariat.

The Consultant acts as a fundamental source of know-how who will conduct a situation analysis and will develop recommendations about decentralization of the social protection in North Macedonia. In addition, the Consultant will conduct a comparative analysis of practices for the implementation of decentralization of CSWs in countries of the region of SEE.

In this regard, ZELS and NALAS are inviting the experts, to express their interest and to apply for the position of Consultant for conducting the assessment and developing evidence-based situation analysis and recommendations about decentralization of social protection in North Macedonia.

II. Specific Objectives of the Assignment

The specific objectives of the assignment are to provide a comprehensive legal overview and evaluation of the existing relevant legislation and policies related to the social policies at local level, to assess the progress of the decentralization process in the social policy area, structural organization and competencies of the Centers for Social Works in the Republic of North Macedonia. Also, to identify relevant practices in two countries in the region of SEE regarding the structure and function of the CSW's with a special focus on the level of decentralization of the CSW's and their financial independence from the central level.

The consultant will liaise with relevant stakeholders from central and local levels to develop evidence-based situation analysis and recommendations for decentralization of the social protection in North Macedonia. It will compare existing policies and legislation with their practical implementation. It will consider the capacities of the institutions on the central and local levels, particularly the political level, local services providers, NGO's, ZELS bodies and other relevant stakeholders in implementing these policies, including what are the coordination structure and their effectiveness. This will provide an understanding of the current status of the process of decentralisation of the social protection services and Centres for Social Works, how they are being applied (or not); and what should be done in short and mid-term periods.

The consultant's support will contribute to strengthening the awareness and political will for the continuation and complete implementation of the social protection system decentralization by creating positive behaviours and opinions about the importance of this process. Through the increased level of knowledge and shared lessons learnt from the countries from the region of SEE, it is expected the decision makers to support the completion of the process of decentralization of Centres for Social Works (CSWs) in North Macedonia.

III. Responsibilities and Tasks of the Consultant

The Consultant will work closely with ZELS and will be supported by its project coordinator, and ZELS bodies for social protection and inclusion. The Consultant shall consult the MLSP, MLSG, CSW's and social services providers to fulfil the following key tasks and responsibilities.

For fulfilment of the **Outcome 1. Gaps in implementation of decentralization (administrative and fiscal) of CSWs are addressed and solutions for further continuation of decentralization are proposed**, the Consultant shall:

- **Develop evidence-based situation analysis and recommendations about decentralization of the social protection in North Macedonia, by:**
 - Conducting desk research for collection of evidence
 - Facilitating Consultation Workshop with ZELS Social Protection and Inclusion Committee on the process of decentralisation of the social protection services and Centres for Social Work
 - Facilitating Consultation Workshop with local authorities (mayors, president of municipal councils, representatives from ZELS WG for social protection) on the status quo and challenges in the process of decentralisation of the social protection services and Centres for Social Work

- Facilitating a Consultation Workshop with representatives of the disadvantaged groups (associations) and local service providers on challenges in the delivery of social protection services and performance of Centres for Social Work.
 - Developing Situation Analysis Report (decentralization processes and analysis of the situation in CSWs)
 - Presenting the findings from the Situation Analysis Report to the duty bearers in the frame of a one-day meeting.
- **Develop analysis of practices for implementation of decentralization of CSWs in countries of the SEE region by:**

- Identifying Decentralization Practices from the SEE region and defining scenarios (proposals on how the decentralization can continue in NM)
- Facilitating a one-day workshop for ZELS bodies (ZELS Working Group and the SPI Committee members) and discussion about the identified practices and propose recommendations for continuation of the process (defining scenarios)
- Facilitating a workshop - discussion with representatives from MLSP-sector for decentralization of Social Services, CSW's, municipalities and other relevant practitioners to inform them about the identified practices and let them know how the process in NM can continue, and to initiate dialogue and joint work process to define the proposals how the process can be restarted in NM in nearest future

For fulfilment of the **Output 2. Enhanced Capacities of duty bearers at local level (ZELS-SI Committee and members of ZELS) about decentralization process**, the Consultant shall contribute by:

- Conducting a one-day workshop with members of ZELS to present the Study for Decentralization Processes in the region
- Developing Policy Paper- Decentralization Process Perspectives and next steps based on the feedback from workshops

For fulfilment of the **Output 3. Enhanced knowledge and created will among decision makers at central level to advance the process of decentralization of CSWs at country level**, the Consultant shall contribute by:

- Sharing relevant information about the key issues/factors for advancing the implementation of Decentralization Process in North Macedonia with decision makers (Minister, head of Sector for Social protection and head of department for decentralization of social services) at central level gained relevant on a Capacity development event where will be elaborated the main issues/factors for advancing the decentralization process in social protection with focus on scenarios how Decentralization of CSWs can be done.

More specifically, the Consultant shall perform the following tasks and ensure the provision of the related deliverables:

No.	Activity/Deadline	Tasks	Deliverable	Expert days
1	Develop evidence-based situation analysis and recommendations about decentralization of the social protection in the North Macedonia	Conducting a comprehensive desk research for collection of the evidence about decentralization of the social protection in the North Macedonia	First draft of the findings on the process of decentralisation of the social protection services and Centres for Social Work	5

	July-September 2024			
2	Facilitate Consultation Workshop with ZELS Social Protection and Inclusion Committee September 2024	Conducting one-day consultations with ZELS Social Protection and Inclusion Committee on the process of decentralization of the social protection services and Centers for Social Work	Report/minutes from the workshop	1
2	Facilitate Consultation Workshop with local authorities (mayors, president of municipal councils, representatives from ZELS WG for social protection) on the status quo and challenges in the process of decentralisation of the social protection services and Centres for Social Work September 2024	Conducting consultations with relevant local authorities about the status quo and challenges in the process of decentralisation of the social protection services and Centres for Social Work	Report/minutes from the workshop	2
3	Facilitate Consultation Workshop with representatives of the disadvantaged groups (associations) and local service providers on challenges in the delivery of social protection services and performance of Centres for Social Work July- September 2024	Conducting consultations with relevant association of disadvantaged groups and local services providers about challenges in the delivery of social protection services and performance of Centres for Social Work	Report/minutes from the workshop	1
4	Development of the Situation Analysis about decentralization process and analysis of the situation in the CSW's September 2024	Summarizing the main findings and evaluating the legislation and policies related to decentralization process, about status and function of the CSW's in NMy taken into consideration recommendation for improvement proposed during the consultation meetings	Situation Analysis Report accompanied with records/minutes from the conducted meetings	6

5	<p>Active participation on one-day meeting with duty bearers</p> <p>October 2024</p>	<p>Presenting the findings from the Situation Analyses Report</p>	<p>Report/minutes from the workshop</p>	2
6	<p>Preparation/design a draft of Analysis of practices for implementation of the decentralization of Centers for Social Works in the countries of the SEE region</p> <p>September- October 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying Decentralization Practices from the SEE region countries and defining scenarios - Drafting proposals on how the decentralization can continue in NM 	<p>Report on identified practices-at least 3 practices from the region of which at least one is EU member state</p>	7
7	<p>Facilitate a one-day workshop for ZELS bodies (ZELS Working group for social protection and ZELS Committee for social protection and social inclusion)</p> <p>October 2024</p>	<p>Conducting a workshop for ZELS bodies(ZELS Working Group and the SPI Committee members) and discussion about the identified practices and propose recommendation for continuation of the decentralization process</p> <p>-Defining Scenarios</p>	<p>Workshop report</p> <p>Revised Report based on the feedback from the SI Committee members</p> <p>A working document with defined proposals on how the process can be restarted and has been developed.</p>	1
8	<p>Facilitate a workshop- discussion with representatives from MLSP-sector for decentralization of Social Services, CSW's, municipalities and other relevant practitioners</p> <p>November 2024</p>	<p>Conducting and supporting discussion to inform them about the identified practices and let them know how the process in NM can continue.</p> <p>-Initiating a dialogue and joint work process to define the proposals how the process can be restarted in NM in nearest future</p>	<p>Minutes from the workshop discussion</p> <p>Revision of the report and set of proposals based on the inputs and comments received from the representatives from MLSP departments, CSWs and municipalities.</p>	1
9	<p>Support enhanced capacities of targeted duty bearers about how the decentralization of the CSW's can be done</p> <p>November 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Designing of the workshop in close cooperation with the ZELS - Development of event's materials - Conducting a one-day workshop with members of ZELS to present the Study for Decentralization Processes in the region 	<p>Detailed Design of the Event developed</p> <p>Event's materials developed – Agenda, presentations, templates, tools...</p> <p>Reports from the conducted workshop</p>	2
10	<p>Development of Policy Paper-Decentralization Process Perspective and next steps</p> <p>December 2024</p>	<p>Designing Policy Paper with recommendations and next steps based on the feedback from workshop</p>	<p>Policy Paper-Decentralization of CSW perspectives and next steps</p>	3
11	<p>Support to enhanced knowledge and created will among decion makers at central level to advance the process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Designing CD event with close cooperation with the ZELS - Development of events materials - Facilitating thew event 	<p>Report from the capacity building event with conclusions and recommendations</p> <p>List of participants</p>	2

	of decentralization of CSW's at country level March 2025		Agenda	
			Testimonials	
12	Support a consultation meeting among ZELS SPI Committee and representatives from MLSP May 2025	-Facilitating the process of establishing Working Group for Decentralization of the social service and CSW with MLSP is initiated -Designing materials for Working Group	Minutes of meeting Tentative proposal about composition, scope and aim of the Working Group MLSP -announcement for selection of working group members	1
			Total number of expert days:	34

All above-listed activities and delivery of the expected outputs are envisaged to take place in **Skopje**, between **15 June 2024** and **31 May 2025**.

The consultant shall prepare a **brief Assignment Report** which will contain an overview of the implemented activities with a folder of developed deliverables.

IV. Expert days

Considering the above-mentioned tasks and responsibilities, the maximum number of days projected for the entire assignment is **up to 34**.

V. Consultant Profile

The Consultant has significant knowledge and previous professional experience in the process of preparing and development of various programmes and legal procedures related to social welfare, social and labour market inclusion of different vulnerable groups with specific knowledge for decentralization process of social protection at North Macedonia.

The Consultant has previous experience in carrying out analytical work and legal reviews.

The Consultant has experience in preparation and implementation of capacity building activities for different stakeholders with focus on Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Centres for Social Work and Policy, Non-Government organizations, municipalities.

The Consultant has relevant working experience in preparation and implementation of focus groups, panel discussion, informal meeting, workshops, round tables for different stakeholders.

The Consultant has proven excellent analytical and writing skills, good knowledge of the context in North Macedonia.

The Consultant working experience at social protection and social inclusion area and decentralization process in NM will be considered as an asset.

The Consultant should have a University Degree in an area relevant to the improvement of public administration and social services (e.g. social sciences, political science, public administration, pedagogy, human resource management or another relevant field).

Successfully completed trainings on social approaches and Generic Training of Trainers related to design and facilitation of trainings will be considered as an asset.

The Consultant have Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.

VI. Application Procedure

Interested candidates (individuals) for the position of consultant are asked to submit a proposal, **by 17 June 2024, 16:00** (CET). The proposal must be submitted in the English language **by e-mail, at shehi@nalas.eu and irena.nikolov@zels.org.mk with subject: Consultant for decentralization of the Centres for social works.**

Interested candidates are asked to provide:

1. **CV** in pdf format.
2. **Cover Letter** in pdf format.

Please respond to the questions in relation to the requirements provided in the section “V. Consultant Profile” of this ToR.

3. **Financial Offer** separately provided in pdf format.

The Financial Offer shall specify only the net amount per expert day in EUR, as well as, the total amount expressed in EUR.

Potential expenses related to the travel and accommodation for the Consultant shall be calculated in the Consultant`s fee and covered by the Consultant.

Only personal income taxes under the Laws of North Macedonia will be calculated and paid by NALAS.