

Request for Proposals and Terms of Reference

Technical Advisor/Consultant: Technical Assistance for Deliberative Local Decision-Making

1. Summary of Requirements

The Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe (NALAS), within the project “Promoting deliberative democracy and innovative approaches to citizen participation in South-East Europe”, supported by the Council of Europe, requests proposals from interested Consultants to provide technical assistance for strengthening local governments and their associations to enhance their capacities to implement and integrate deliberative approaches in local decision-making.

2. Invitation

Consultants with proven experience and expertise in providing technical assistance to local governments and their associations, supporting citizen participation at local level, such as citizens’ assemblies, community forums, consultation platforms and participatory budgeting, are invited to respond to this Request for Proposals.

3. Request for Proposals Terminology

The following terms will apply to this Request for Proposals (RfP) and Terms of Reference (ToR) and to any subsequent Contract. Submission of a proposal in response to this Request for Proposals indicates acceptance of all the following terms:

Terminology

- a) “NALAS” means the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe;
- b) “Contract” means the written agreement resulting from the Request for Proposal executed by the NALAS Secretariat and the successful vendor;
- c) “Contractor” means the successful vendor selected from this Request for Proposal;
- d) “Must”, “Mandatory” or “Required” means a requirement that must be met in order for a proposal to receive consideration;
- e) “Consultant” means an individual that submits, or intends to submit, a proposal in response to this Request for Proposal.

4. Closing Date and Location

To be considered, proposals must be received in electronic form not later than **7 October 2024 (Monday), 16:00 (CET)** at info@nalas.eu, with the Subject: Offer for technical assistance for Deliberative Local Decision-Making.

5. Enquiries

This Request for Proposal can be downloaded from the NALAS website at www.nalas.eu. For any questions about the content of this RfP, please contact NALAS Project Manager, Mr. Miodrag Kolic, at kolic@nalas.eu.

6. Ownership of Proposals

All documents, including proposals submitted in response to this Request for Proposals become the property of NALAS. However, only the submissions by the successful contractor will be used. Once a contract has been awarded, the name of the successful consultant will be available to the public upon request.

7. Project Overview

NALAS strives to support *South-East Europe cities and municipalities grow into sustainable, smart, inclusive and resilient livelihoods*. In achieving this, local governments (LGs) must create mechanisms that enable citizens participate in making important decisions and shaping the future of their communities. Citizen participation is at a core principle of human rights, representing a condition for effective democratic citizenship for all residents. Citizen participation enhances the active role of citizens, improves trust, increases transparency and strengthens democratic processes.

The value of deliberative democracy has been widely promoted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (the Congress), both through its statutory work and co-operation activities. NALAS, as an important partner of the Congress, has promoted citizens participation through policy positions, research papers, and different project activities. Still, compared to the other forms of citizen participation, deliberative democracy is a relatively new concept for South-East Europe (SEE) local governments and their associations.

The regional project "Promoting deliberative democracy and innovative approaches to citizen participation in South-East Europe", implemented in partnership of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (the Congress), as the lead, and NALAS, aims to promote deliberative democracy and increase the capacities of NALAS' member LGAs and the local governments of South-East Europe, enabling them to plan and implement deliberative democracy processes.

Project's overall objective: Residents in South-East Europe enjoy enhanced local democracy and more transparent and inclusive local public institutions

Project's specific objective: Local governments and their associations have enhanced capacities to implement and integrate deliberative approaches in local decision-making.

As a partner in the regional project, NALAS is responsible for:

- Coordination with LGAs and LGs
- Organisation of meetings of the Community of Practice
- Piloting the e-course

Through the Community of Practice (CoP), the project will provide series of online and onsite training sessions, workshops and networking meetings, that will build the capacities of NALAS, its member LGAs and LGs in the basis of deliberative democracy, as well as the details of the deliberative processes' organisation and implementation. NALAS will institutionalise the e-course and will integrate it in the regular offer of its e-Academy, enabling its future use by all LGs of SEE. NALAS will be promoting the project products through its statutory events, regional activities and projects, during and beyond the project duration. Also, NALAS will provide support to the Congress in implementing all other project activities, related to the pool of trainers, capacity building of LGs and LGAs, as well as promotion of deliberative democracy.

Therefore, NALAS is looking to engage a consultant with relevant experience and expertise to submit proposal for providing technical assistance for strengthening local governments and their associations to enhance their capacities to implement and integrate deliberative approaches in local decision-making.

8. The Aim of the Assignment

The aim of the assignment is to provide technical assistance for strengthening local governments and their associations to enhance their capacities to implement and integrate deliberative approaches in local decision-making.

The Consultant shall be responsible for the following tasks:

- Provide technical assistance for selected LGAs and LGs in deliberative democracy
- Establishing and running a Community of Practice (CoP)
- Coordination of the piloting of e-course in organisation of deliberative processes
- Contribution to the establishing of the pool of trainers
- Supporting capacity building of LGs and LGAs
- Promotion of deliberative democracy
- Reporting

All activities within this ToR shall be completed no later than 30 September 2025.

9. Services and Deliverables under the contract

Service	Deliverables	Expert days
1. Providing technical assistance to LGAs and LGs	Support to 7 NALAS member LGAs from Albania, Serbia, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro, as well as 18 LGs, 3 per economy. Documented meetings and promoted results.	20
2. Establishing and running a Community of Practice (CoP)	Established functional CoP in deliberative democracy with 50 practitioners. Provided contribution in the organisation and implementation of the launching meeting of CoP, organised by the Congress. Established database of the members of the CoP. Organised two online and one onsite meeting/workshop of the CoP and provided contribution to the other meetings/workshops organised by the Congress. Documented meetings and promoted results.	37
3. Coordination of the piloting of e-course in organisation of deliberative processes	Piloted e-course in organisation of deliberative processes as a part of NALAS e-Academy. Prepared list of course participants and their result.	12
4. Contribution to the establishing of the pool of trainers	Established pool of trainers. Provided support to the Congress in preparing the call and selection criteria, distributing the call and mobilisation of potential trainers, and organisation of the training of trainers. List of members of the pool of trainers. Documented and promoted training of trainers.	5
5. Supporting Capacity building of LGs and LGAs	Provided support for organisation of the workshops organised by the Congress. Documented and promoted workshops.	18
6. Promotion of deliberative democracy	Prepared promotional materials and publications, website articles and social media posts. Provided contribution to the thematic round tables and the final conference organised by the Congress. Documented and promoted final conference.	20
	Total (maximum) number of expert days:	112

All deliverables under this ToR should be approved by NALAS Project Manager.

10. Proposal submission

The complete proposals submitted by the consultant shall include the following elements:

Technical Offer:

- a) Cover Letter, explaining the consultant's suitability for the assignment, as specified in this RfP;
- b) Proposed approach
- c) Detailed CV of the consultant that clearly demonstrates how the consultant meets the criteria stated under Chapter 11;

Financial Offer:

- d) Financial offer, including the number of expert days for the assignment, fee per day and total amount, using the table below. The fees should be gross and stated in euros. The gross amount should include the personal income taxes and other taxes obligatory under the laws of the Republic of North Macedonia (at the moment 10% of the gross amount) and will be calculated and paid by NALAS. The Consultant will receive the amount reduced for the paid personal income tax.

The travel and accommodation costs for the execution of the assignment shall be covered by the project.

Service	Number of expert days	Fee per day	Total in EUR
1. Provision of technical assistance to LGAs and LGs			
2. Establishing and running a Community of Practice (CoP)			
3. Coordination of the piloting of e-course in organisation of deliberative processes			
4. Contribution to the establishing of the pool of trainers			
5. Supporting Capacity building of LGs and LGAs			
6. Promotion of deliberative democracy			
Total:			

11. Technical or professional ability of the Consultant

To qualify as capable of performing the contract in terms of its technical and professional qualifications, the consultant must meet the following minimum requirements:

- At least 7 years of experience in working with local governments on public engagement and deliberation.
- At least 5 years of experience in the development and institutional building of local governments and their associations, focusing on public engagement in local decision-making processes.
- Strong understanding of the principles and theories underlying deliberative democracy.
- Experience in designing and implementing strategies for engaging the public in local decision-making processes.
- Experience in educating and/or training others on deliberative democracy practices is an asset.
- At least 5 years of regional experience, working in South East Europe.
- Fluency in English.
- Knowledge of local languages is an asset.

12. Evaluation Criteria and Scoring

The evaluation of proposals will be undertaken by NALAS Evaluation Committee. The proposals will be evaluated and rated based on the criteria set out in this RfP. In order to do so:

- The proposal must be submitted in English;
- The proposal must be submitted by the stated deadline;
- The proposal must clearly list, in details, what services will be provided with the associated costs for each component;
- The proposal must be complete, containing all the elements listed in Chapter 10 of this RfP.

The Evaluation Committee will evaluate the proposals based on the following criteria:

- 40% Consultant's Capacity: relevance of Consultant's expertise and experience for fulfilling the tasks under this RfP. Previous experience with NALAS will be considered as an asset;
- 30% Technical Offer: proposed approach;
- 30% Financial Offer.

13. Terms of Payment

The payments will be made based on provided monthly timesheets, invoice/request for payment, after delivering and approval of the deliverables and provision of brief monthly report. In addition, for the last payment, a final report should be provided and approved (*to be submitted no later than 15 October 2025*).

14. Modification of Terms

NALAS reserves the right to modify the terms of the RfP at any time at its sole discretion.

15. Consultant Expenses

Consultants are solely responsible for their own expenses in preparing a proposal and for subsequent negotiations with NALAS. Short-listed proposals may be asked to make a presentation to the Evaluation Committee, which will be solely at the Consultants own expense.

16. Acceptance and Rejection of Proposals

NALAS may not necessarily accept the lowest priced proposal or any proposal. At its sole discretion, NALAS reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received and to accept any proposal which it considers advantageous, whether or not it is the lowest priced proposal. NALAS is not under any obligation to award a contract, and reserves the right to terminate the Request for Proposal process at any time, and to withdraw from discussions with all or any of the Consultants who have responded. NALAS reserves the right to accept the proposed offer in total or in part, to reject any or all offers, to waive any minor informalities, irregularities, or technicalities, and to accept the offer deemed most favourable to the Network.

17. Contract Negotiation

NALAS reserves the right to negotiate specific terms of the contract with the short-listed proponents prior to the final award of the contract. NALAS also reserves the right to negotiate specific terms of the contract with the Contractor as the contract progresses.

18. Ownership

All materials, documents and information prepared, developed or adjusted by the contractor for the purposes of realisation of the assignment under this ToR, remain the property of NALAS. The contractor agrees that no part of the training materials, documents and information may be reproduced or distributed in any form, or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, for any other purposes and objectives than those related to this ToR.

Thank you for your interest in submitting a proposal. It is hoped that the information provided is of value and should anything be unclear, please contact NALAS directly.