



# TERMS OF REFERENCE

## Local Government Expert

### Table of contents

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION .....	2
2. OBJECTIVE AND PURPOSE .....	2
3. SCOPE OF WORK .....	2
4. DELIVERABLES .....	4
5. DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT .....	4
6. LOCATION.....	5
7. QUALIFICATIONS .....	5
7.1. START DATE AND PERIOD OF IMPLEMENTATION .....	5

## **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

NALAS is a network of associations of local authorities of South-East Europe. The Network brings together 14 Local Government Associations (LGAs) which represent roughly 9000 local authorities, directly elected by more than 80 million citizens of this region. The NALAS Secretariat, based in Skopje, is responsible for the overall coordination and the implementation of the activities.

NALAS was created in 2001 following the first Forum of Cities and Regions of South-East Europe (Skopje, November 2000), organised by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. The Network was established under the auspices of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe (Working Table 1) and the Council of Europe. During the first years, NALAS functioned as an informal organisation with regular meetings, seminars and training programmes. In July 2005 NALAS became an officially registered association with its seat in Strasbourg. The NALAS Secretariat was established in March 2007.

NALAS promotes the process of decentralisation in partnership with its member LGAs and in cooperation with central governments and international organisations, considering local self-government as a key issue in the current process of transition affecting the various countries in South-East Europe. NALAS initiates and carries out regional initiatives for its members and helps LGAs to become viable representatives of local authorities vis-à-vis their central government.

NALAS is supporting Albanian municipalities in creating a unified local government association (LGA) that can effectively represent the interests of all municipalities within the country. This initiative follows the principles set out in the Strasbourg Agreement reached by the delegation of Albanian municipalities from the ruling party and opposition.

## **2. OBJECTIVE AND PURPOSE**

The objective of this assignment is to:

1. Support the preparation of a declaration of the opposition mayors on their support of the consensual unification of the voice of local authorities in Albania in one Local Government Association, initiated by NALAS and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.
2. Support the preparation of a roadmap for the unification of the voice of local authorities in one association, from the technical and political perspective
3. Provide recommendations on the priority areas of the technical committees of the local government association as a backbone of the advocacy role of the unified association.

## **3. SCOPE OF WORK**

The Local Government Expert will be responsible for providing technical and strategic support to advance the objectives of the assignment as outlined above. Specifically, the contractor will undertake the following activities:

### **1) Facilitate the Preparation of the Declaration of Opposition Mayors**

1. Desk review of the Strasbourg Agreement reached by the delegation of Albanian municipalities from the ruling party and opposition.
2. Conduct consultations with opposition mayors and their representatives regarding the technical and political unification of local authorities into a single LGA.
3. Draft a declaration of opposition mayors on their support for the continuation of the dialogue for the consensual unification of the voice of local authorities in Albania in one Local Government Association supported by NALAS and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

The declaration shall build on the Strasbourg Agreement, which emerged from a negotiation process supported by NALAS and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. It will reflect the commitment of opposition mayors to fostering a unified and strong LGA capable of effectively serving and representing all local governments in Albania, irrespective of political affiliation, size, or geographic location.

Three draft-declarations should be prepared:

- 1) Declaration of the Opposition Mayors
- 2) Joint Declaration of Mayors, representing the position and the opposition
- 3) Joint Declaration of Mayors for communication with the public.

The draft declarations shall aim at achieving the following objectives:

**1. Reaffirm support for the Consensual Unification Process:**

- Confirm support for the continued consensual unification process, at technical and political levels, that ensures a fair representation and role for the opposition.

**2. Reaffirm Aspiration and Commitment for Unity:**

- Confirm the position and opposition mayors' aspiration and support for an inclusive LGA.
- Emphasize the shared vision of a strong association representing the collective interests of local governments.

**3. Promote Cross-Party Collaboration:**

- Highlight the willingness of opposition mayors to engage constructively with mayors from all political affiliations, as well as government representatives on specific and tangible themes that helps advance their mandate as mayors and provide better services to their citizens.

**4. Strengthen Advocacy for Unified Local Government Positions:**

- Commit to supporting the development of **unified positions on initiatives** that protect and advance the interests of all local governments.
- Mandate the LGA to develop unified positions on initiatives that serve as the primary advocate for local government interests at the national and international levels.
- Reinforce the importance of neutrality and inclusivity in the LGA's operations and decision-making.

**2) Develop a Roadmap for the Unification of the Voice of Local Authorities**

- Engage with key political and technical stakeholders to identify potential pathways for consensual unification and collaboration.
- Develop a comprehensive roadmap detailing milestones, activities, roles, and timelines for achieving the unification of local government voices under one LGA, addressing both technical and political dimensions.

### **3) Provide Recommendations on the Technical Committees**

- Assess best practices in technical committees within LGAs in comparable contexts.
- Propose a structure for the technical committees, ensuring balanced representation, clear roles, and efficient decision-making processes.
- Propose priority areas for the unified association to create technical Committees and territorial organisation of the committees.

## **4. DELIVERABLES**

The key deliverables for this assignment are the following:

### **1) Declaration of Opposition Mayors**

- Draft declaration document, submitted for feedback and revised based on inputs.
- Finalized declaration of opposition mayors, ready for dissemination.

### **2) Roadmap for the Unification of Local Authorities**

- A detailed roadmap document, including proposed actions, timelines, and responsibilities for both technical and political processes;

### **3) Recommendations on Technical Committees**

- A report outlining proposed structures, functional areas and operational guidelines for the technical committees of the unified LGA.
- Suggested best practices and examples relevant to the Albanian context.

### **4) Final Report**

- A comprehensive report summarizing all deliverables, key findings, and recommendations, submitted at the end of the assignment.

## **5. DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT**

The assignment is expected to be completed within 18 working days:

- 5 days for Declaration of Opposition Mayors.
- 5 days for the Roadmap for the Unification of Local Authorities.
- 7 days for Recommendations on Technical Committees.
- 1 day for report preparation and submission.

## **6. LOCATION**

The assignment will take place in **Tirana**. Travel to municipalities shall be agreed beforehand with NALAS.

## **7. QUALIFICATIONS**

The Local Government Expert should possess:

- At least 10 years of direct experience on local governance and municipal associations, particularly within the Albanian and/or South-East European context.
- At least 10 years of experience in conducting participatory decision-making processes, the development of policy papers and position papers, in working with technical committees of local government associations.
- Familiarity with relevant frameworks governing the organization and functioning of local government associations in Europe.
- Strong analytical and reporting skills.

### **7.1. START DATE AND PERIOD OF IMPLEMENTATION**

The assignment is expected to be completed between December 2024 and February 2025. The deliverables deadlines are the following:

- Declaration of Opposition Mayors by 10 December
- Roadmap for the Unification of Local Authorities by 15 December
- Recommendations on Technical Committees by February 2025
- Final Report, March 2025

Timelines may be amended with the approval of NALAS, as per the needs of the project.

\* \* \*