

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Expert on Local Government Association Development

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**Project Title:** One Voice of Local Government Associations in Albania – Phase 2
**Contracting Authority:** Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe

**Donor**: Swiss Development Cooperation

# 1. Background

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.

With the support of the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), NALAS is supporting Local Government Associations and Albanian municipalities in creating a unified national local government association (LGA) that can effectively represent the interests of all municipalities within the country in an inclusive manner.

This initiative aims to support the Unified Local Government Association of Albania (NAMA) to deliver high-quality services, establish effective policy advocacy services and structures and foster confidence and inclusivity among its membership. To achieve this, NALAS aims to support the association to strengthen its governance and operational frameworks, ensuring inclusivity, professionalism, and effectiveness in advocacy and policy dialogue. This initiative aligns with ongoing efforts to enhance NAMA’s organizational structure and technical capacity, supporting its role as a key stakeholder in intergovernmental relations and local governance.

# 2. Objective of the Assignment

The primary objective of this consultancy is to support NAMA establish effective governance and operational frameworks, enabling it to deliver high-quality services, foster inclusivity and professionalism among its diverse membership, enhance advocacy and capacity building processes and structures and strengthen the functioning of its technical committees to enhance its capacity for evidence-based policy-making and representation of local governments.

# 3. Scope of Work

The consultancy will involve two main focus areas:

**A. Governance and Operational Frameworks**

1. Support adaptation and enhancement of NAMA’s internal policies and policies and procedures for services to member municipalities
2. Support the adaptation of its organizational structure, including a revised organigram, job descriptions and recruitment plans
3. Support adaptation and development of new procedures for advocacy and policy dialogue, including within the Consultative Council; the organization and functioning of the LGA’s Thematic Forums; procedures for the LGA’s training functions including planning, organizing and delivering of capacity building activities for member LGAs
4. Facilitate two workshops to ensure inclusivity and alignment:

**Workshop 1:** First week of February – Initiate the process of adaptation and development of the new policies and procedures, with the participation of NAMA’s staff and board, NALAS member LGAs etc.

**Workshop 2:** First week of March – consult, validate and finalize new adapted and updated governance and operational procedures.

**B. Advocacy Processes and Technical Committees**

1. Support enhancing the organization and functioning of NAMA’s technical committees by providing technical assistance on:
	* Establishing committee structures, roles, and coordination mechanisms.
	* Developing work plans, advocacy strategies, and training plans for two committees.
	* Providing technical advice for the planning and delivery of 12 committee meetings in 2025, with a focus on local finance and social services, waste management and preschool education.
2. Provide recommendations for processes and procedures for consensus-building within the association.
3. Provide recommendations to ensure proactive participation of opposition members and other stakeholders in the consultation processes developed by the Association.
4. Provide advise to NAMA to enhance its bottom-up processes for improved services towards members and its collaboration with government institutions, international development partners and civil society organizations and other stakeholders.
5. Support the thematic forums on waste management and preschool education, adopting NAMA’s established methodologies and build on the support provided to them by the Swiss funded ’Bashki tw Forta’ project
6. Provide hands on support for planning and delivering four thematic committee meetings by March 2025:
	* Two meetings in early February to kick-start the process of bottom-up development of policy advocacy initiatives;
	* Two meetings in early March to advance on the development of the policy advocacy initiatives

# 4. Deliverables

The consultant will be responsible for delivering the following:

1. Recommendations for the developing of a comprehensive manual of internal policies and procedures, including on the updated organigram, updated job descriptions to reflect new processes and procedures with the thematic committees and recruitment plan
2. Recommendations for updated procedures for the organization and functioning of the thematic committees to enhance the advocacy and policy dialogue, and capacity-building processes.
3. Recommendations for enhancing NAMA’s bottom-up services for members, advocacy structures and collaboration strategies with key stakeholders including government institutions, development partners, CSOs etc.
4. Recommendations for planning and delivering two workshops on the governance and operational framework of the LGA, including agendas, discussion sessions, follow up actions:
5. Recommendations for the planning and delivering of 12 workshops/meetings of the thematic committees focusing on developing the committees’ work plans, advocacy strategies, and training plans for committee members.
6. Support collaboration outputs with the BtF-supported thematic committees.
7. Final report summarizing consultancy outcomes, lessons learned, and recommendations.

# 5. Location

The assignment will take place in Tirana and tasks can be performed also remotely. Travel shall be agreed beforehand with NALAS.

# 6. Duration and Timeline

This contract will have a duration of a maximum of 30 working days.

The consultancy will span from January 2025 to March 2025, with key milestones as follows:

* **January 2025:** Initiation of consultancy and preparatory work.
* **February 2025:**
	+ Workshop 1 - Adaptation and development of the new policies and procedures
	+ Two committee meetings.
	+ Recommendations for manual of internal policies and procedures, procedures for the organization and functioning of the thematic committees, supporting the work of the thematic committees,
* **March 2025:**
	+ Workshop 2 – Consultation and Finalization of the new policies and procedures
	+ Two committee meetings.
	+ Recommendations for enhancing NAMA’s bottom-up services for members, advocacy structures and collaboration strategies with key stakeholders including government institutions, development partners, CSOs
* **March 31, 2025:** Submission of the final report.

# 7. Methodology

The expert is expected to employ a participatory and inclusive approach, ensuring active involvement of NAMA staff, board representatives, and stakeholders throughout the process. Methodologies should include:

* Desk reviews of existing policies, procedures, and governance structures.
* Stakeholder consultations and interviews.
* Facilitation of workshops and committee meetings.
* Development of tailored recommendations for governance and advocacy policies and procedures.
* Regular progress updates to NAMA and key partners.

# 8. Required Qualifications

The consultant must possess:

1. Advanced degree in public administration, governance, or a related field.
2. At least 10 years of direct experience on local governance and municipal associations, particularly Western Balkans and/or South-East European context.
3. 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.
4. At least 10 years of experience in local government association’s organizational development, governance, or local government operations.
5. Proven expertise in local government associations developing governance frameworks, advocacy strategies, and technical capacity-building.
6. Strong facilitation and communication skills.
7. Familiarity with Swiss-funded projects and local governance contexts will be considered as an asset.

# 9. Reporting and Supervision

The consultant will report to NALAS’s Executive Director and the Project Manager, while working closely with the staff of the unified LGA. Progress updates will be provided bi-weekly, with feedback incorporated into the deliverables.

# 10. Budget and Payment Schedule

The budget for this consultancy will be determined based on the agreed scope of work and deliverables. Payments will be made as follows:

* **30%** upon signing the contract and submission of the inception report.
* **40%** upon completion of workshops and interim deliverables.
* **30%** upon submission and approval of the final report.

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

# 11. Modification of Terms

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