

Request for Proposals and Terms of Reference

Development of NALAS Regional Strategy for Water Supply and Sanitation Sector and Policy Recommendations for the Local Government Associations in Region of Southeast Europe

1. Summary of Requirements

The Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe (in the rest of the document referred to as “NALAS”), within the project “Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services (RCDN)”, supported by SECO and BMZ/GIZ requests proposals from interested individual experts or companies for the provision of professional services to develop NALAS’ Regional Strategy for Water Supply and Sanitation Sector and Policy Recommendations for the Local Government Associations in Region of Southeast Europe.

2. Invitation

Companies and experts with relevant experience and expertise in water and sanitation sector and development of strategic documents and recommendations 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 a company or individual expert 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 **18 February 2022 (Friday), 16:00 (CET)** at info@nalas.eu, with Subject: Offer for development of NALAS’ Regional Strategy for WSS Sector and Policy Recommendations.

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, or +389 2 3090818.

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. Background

The project “Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN) for Water and Sanitation Services” aims at increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the water utilities in the Western Balkans, contributing to better service provision with larger numbers of population groups getting access to drinking water and sanitation services and meeting the EU environmental Acquis Communautaire.

The project is jointly financed by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and development (BMZ), and it is administratively embedded in the GIZ Project “Open Regional Fund for Southeast Europe - Modernisation of Municipal Services (ORF MMS)”, commissioned by BMZ.

Three key sets of activities will contribute to achieve the RCDN project outcomes:

- Outcome 1: The Associations of water utilities and municipalities in the Western Balkans, in cooperation with NALAS and IAWD, are enabled to deliver quality capacity development measures to water utilities and municipalities in the frame of the RCDN in a financially sustainable manner.
- Outcome 2: Management and technical staff of water utilities and public officials of municipalities have access to and make use of RCDN’s high-quality, demand-oriented and standardised capacity development products.
- Outcome 3: National Authorities, International Financial Institutions and Donors promote the use as well as contribute to the improvement of the RCDN capacity development offer.

The RCDN builds upon and integrates the existing Capacity Development (CD) activities, on regional as well as national levels, and facilitates scaling-up and further replication throughout the region. Strengthening capacities of associations for collaborative CD delivery is core of the methodological approach. The project provides the necessary assistance for introducing and enhancing functional capabilities, procedures and instruments that allow the RCDN partner associations to deliver fee-based CD products to water utilities and municipalities in an effective manner.

To this end, the project works with 14 associations of municipalities and water utilities from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as their regional networks NALAS and IAWD, to facilitate and coordinate CD initiatives in the region and to support the delivery of CD measures to water utilities and municipalities in the respective countries. It also involves further key stakeholders, such as lending institutions (International Financial Institutions – IFIs, etc.) active in the infrastructure sector which are interested in strengthening capacities to develop and secure their operations in the water and sanitation sector or Donors which may benefit from a regional platform to identify CD needs, dialogue with the stakeholders and their design policies.

NALAS Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022 foresees improvement of the quality of the services at local level (modernization, increasing efficiency) in water and wastewater sector. In addition, NALAS is focused on climate change mitigation and adaptation through interventions in the wastewater management, as well as further strengthening of the LGAs’ advocacy role by evidence-based policymaking.

At the heart of NALAS are the Task Forces, bringing together the best experts from the region, competent association staff and professionals employed in the local government administration. These practitioners are

exposed in the front lines directly facing the consequences and challenges coming from policies and laws which define the system of local government. The NALAS Task Force on Solid Waste and Water Management (TF SWWM) is composed of two groups of local experts – one specifically focused on solid waste issues, while the second one on water and sanitation services or water management.

The WSS sector is of highest relevance for both, Associations of Public Utility Companies (APUCs) and Local Government Associations (LGAs), which means that the focus on waste water fosters immediate collaborative approach, also considered as an opportunity for joint advocacy efforts. In that regard, NALAS has established a strategic partnership with IAWD – the International Association of Water Supply Companies in the Danube River Catchment Area.

Against this background, NALAS invites companies and experts with relevant experience and expertise to submit proposal for developing NALAS’ Regional Strategy for Water Supply and Sanitation Sector and Policy Recommendations for the Local Government Associations in Region of Southeast Europe.

8. Scope and Objectives of the Assignment

The main objective of the assignment is to develop NALAS’ Regional Strategy for Water Supply and Sanitation Sector and Policy Recommendations for the Local Government Associations (LGAs) in Region of Southeast Europe (SEE) in close coordination with the LGAs members of NALAS and NALAS TF SWWM Group on Water Management.

The strategy will be prepared based on the survey and analysis of relevant legislations and policies in the WSS sector in SEE and in-depth interviews with Local Governments on police options on local level. The survey will also include analysis of European policies in the WSS.

In addition, the Consultant shall support the process of preparation of the policy recommendations necessary for policy dialogue and advocacy initiatives of the NALAS members related to national policy changes in the sector of water and sanitation, including changes that could encourage enabling learning environment at local, national and regional level.

Lobbying and advocacy interventions should seek to have positive impact on water and sanitation learning framework from the legal and institutional aspects. At the institutional and cooperation level, promoting advocacy for capacity development and peer-to-peer exchange need to enhance networking within the water and sanitation sector stakeholders and increase cooperation with development actors like international financial institutions and donors.

9. Deliverables under the contract

The Consultant shall implement the following activities and deliver related outputs:

Activity	Related output/deliverable	Period of implementation
1. Development of the concept of the policy document	Setting the structure, format, name, and length of the document and harmonization with the needs of the NALAS network	February 2022
2. Development of the questionnaire and the interview questions for survey on WSS related policies in SEE	Preparation of the questionnaire and interviews guidelines for representatives of LGAs regarding different policy options in the WSS sector	February/March 2022

3. Desktop analysis of the context of WSS in SEE	Analysis of European and regional legislation and policies in the WSS, an overview of existing regional initiatives and projects including the strategies, policies and recommendations developed by the RCDN partner associations as well as the NALAS TF SWWM Group on Water Management.	February/March 2022
4. Processing of the questionnaire responses on WSS policies in SEE	Analysis of the responses of the representatives of the LGAs to the questionnaire and the formulation of the inputs for the policy document	March 2022
5. Conduction of interviews with the representatives of three LGs on WSS policy options at local level	Preparing and conducting an in-depth discussion (online) with representatives of Local Governments on policy options on local level and compiling a report that should be part of the policy document	March 2022
6. Compilation of the draft NALAS' Regional Strategy and Policy Recommendations for Water Supply and Sanitation Sector	Writing the first draft of the policy document including draft policy recommendations which will be shared with LGAs for opinion, comments, and amendments	April 2022
7. Preparation and conducting workshop of the TF SWWM Group on Water Management for validation of the findings and proposed NALAS' Regional Strategy and Policy Recommendations for WSS	Preparation and moderation of the discussion on draft policy document at the workshop of the NALAS TF SWWM Group on Water Management	April 2022
8. Finalization of the Draft NALAS' Regional Strategy and Policy Recommendations for WSS	Compilation of final draft of policy document based on the inputs from the workshop for the adoption at the NALAS Assembly	April 2022
9. Assignment Report preparation	Assignment Report prepared, submitted and approved by NALAS programme staff.	May 2022 (latest by 20 May 2022)

The proposed time frame is tentative. The final decision on the dates will be made in consultation with NALAS. All deliverables under this ToR should be approved by NALAS Project Manager.

10. Proposal submission

The following format and sequence should be followed in order to provide consistency in Consultants' responses and to ensure each proposal receives full and fair consideration. All pages should be consecutively numbered.

Technical Offer:

- Cover Page, showing Consultant's name, address and contact information;
- Up to one page Letter of Introduction, signed by an authorised signatory;
- Table of Contents, including page numbers;
- Presentation of the Consultant and its suitability for the assignment;
- A short summary of the key features of the proposal;
- Body of the proposal, including: objectives, approach, solutions, proposed time frame and activity plan.

Financial Offer:

- The Financial Offer shall contain the total budget for execution of the task, showing separately the number of expert days and expert fees per activity as specified in article 9. The prices should be stated in EUROS, with applicable taxes shown separately (VAT, income tax, etc.).
- Any additional expenditures related to travel and accommodation linked to the activities of this ToR will be covered by NALAS.

Capacity Guarantee:

- Expert Reference List with at least 3 similar tasks conducted;
- Detailed CV/CVs of the experts proposed to execute the assignment.

11. Technical or professional ability of the applicants

In order to qualify as capable of performing the contract for public procurement in terms of its technical and professional qualifications, the expert as an individual or engaged/proposed by the company must meet the following minimum requirements:

Competencies

Technical Competencies:

- Excellent analytical and writing skills. All documents shall be prepared in the English language;
- Excellent communications and facilitation skills.
- Full computer literacy.

Required Skills and Experience

Academic qualifications:

- Master's degree (or equivalent) in environment, waste management, technical science or engineering.
- PhD will be considered as an asset.
- Specific training/additional education relevant for the topic will be considered as an asset, too.

Professional Experience:

- Have extensive (over 5 years) regional practical and consulting experience in the area of Water and Sanitation Management; Understanding of the sector, its specifics and challenges (specifically local governance, WSS and decentralization issues);
- Have demonstrable experience of policy development in the area of Water and Sanitation Management (or related/environmental field), participating in at least 3 policy development assignments;
- Previous experience in working with the representatives from central and/or local government level institutions of the Western Balkans and/or countries of SEE region on issues related with the assignment. Participating in at least 5 projects;
- Experience in working with local government associations (LGAs), as well as Associations of Public Utility Companies (APUCs) in the countries of SEE region. At least 3 initiatives implemented with the LGAs and APUCs from SEE;
- Knowledge/experience with EU legislation and legislation of the project countries relevant for the assignment.

Language Requirements:

- Language proficiency in both, written and oral English language.

Notes:

- NALAS strives to assure equitable representation of women and minorities in all its activities.

- Consultant must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities defined by the Terms of Reference.

12. Evaluation Criteria and Scoring

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 activities/services will be provided with the associated costs for each component;
- The responses must contain a list of references of past projects and work of this nature, with contact names and telephone numbers.

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

- 40% Consultant's Capacity: relevance of suggested expert's competencies, skills and experience for fulfilling the tasks under this RfP. Previous experience with NALAS and familiarity with NALAS and RCDN capacity development approach and quality standards will be considered as an asset;
- 30% Technical Offer: proposed objectives, approach, solutions, proposed time frame and activity plan;
- 30% Financial Offer.

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.