

Request for Proposals and Terms of Reference

Regional Thematic and Methodological Expert or Team of Regional Experts/Consultants for a regional dashboard on the role of local authorities in implementation of the Reform Agendas in the Western Balkans

1. Summary of Requirements

The Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe (NALAS), within the EU-Council of Europe joint programme "LORAI – Local Observatory on Reform Agendas Implementation in the Western Balkans", requests proposals from interested Thematic and Methodological Regional Expert or Teams of Regional Experts/Consultants (in the text below: Regional Expert/s) to support the content part of development, data collection and reporting of the regional online dashboard on the role of local authorities in implementation of the Reform Agendas in the Western Balkans (LORAI Dashboard).

2. Invitation

Individual experts or teams of regional individual experts/consultants (natural persons) with proven regional experience and expertise in EU relations, EU integration of the Western Balkans, local government competences, monitoring local government and EU processes, conducting regional researches in these topics and contributing to online dashboards 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) "Regional Expert/s" means an individual expert or team of individuals/natural persons 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 **12 October 2026 (Monday), 16:00 (CET)** at info@nalas.eu, with Subject: Offer for consulting services on LORAI dashboard.

5. Enquiries

This Request for Proposal can be downloaded from the NALAS website at [Announcements – Nalas](#). For any questions about the content of this RfP, please contact NALAS Programme Director, Ms. Jelena Janevska, at janevska@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

LORAI is a joint European Union–Council of Europe programme that aims to enhance the role and capacities of local authorities in the Western Balkans in implementing and monitoring the Reform Agendas under the EU's Reform and Growth Facility, a key element in the region's path towards EU accession.

LORAI is implemented by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe in partnership with NALAS, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), and Local Government Associations (LGAs) in each Beneficiary.

LORAI objectives:

- Strengthen the monitoring process of Reform Agendas implementation, by enabling meaningful and effective participation of local authorities in the reform process.
- Increase engagement and advocacy capacity of local authorities by empowering them to actively influence the design, implementation, and monitoring of reforms, and propose policy and investment priorities for the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

The success of the Reform Agendas (RA) requires institutions at every level to effectively implement and monitor them; however, recent assessments reveal that local authorities are only limitedly involved in these processes.

To address this gap and to strengthen reform effectiveness, foster public trust and accountability, the programme will:

- Establish an open-access dashboard that presents the impact of reform implementation at the local level
- Reinforce principles of inclusive multilevel governance and dialogue-building among all levels of government and
- Advance regional peer learning and knowledge sharing.

Programme activities will include development of a dashboard, focus group meetings, a regional conference, dialogue-building workshops, peer reviews, Multiannual Financial Framework labs, regional peer exchanges, and drafting of recommendations for policy development and implementation under reform agendas.

LORAI is anchored in the Western Balkans Growth Plan and aligns with [Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1449](#), which emphasises inclusive reform implementation and meaningful local government participation.

The programme is based on the principles of the [European Charter of Local Self-Government](#), a Council of Europe treaty which lays down standards for protecting local and regional democracy in Europe.

8. The Objectives of the Assignment

Within the LORAI project, NALAS is responsible to design, develop, operate, and maintain the LORAI open-access dashboard, that presents the impact of Reform Agendas implementation at the local level. The dashboard will be based on relevant set of indicators, developed considering the identified needs of local authorities in each of the six Western Balkans economies – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as their respective LGAs.

In this direction, **the aim of the assignment is to provide content support in the development, data collection and reporting of the regional dashboard**, through:

- **Providing regional support in data collection and analysis** for the regional dashboard.
- **Producing three monitoring reports** on the level of involvement and contribution of local authorities in implementing the Reform Agendas and articulating their presentation on the regional dashboard.

The basis for the regional dashboard was set by the conducted Baseline Study on the Involvement of Local Authorities in the Western Balkans Reform Agenda and Growth Facility. This study clearly indicated, mainly by hearing the voices of local governments, how much local governments know about Reform Agenda, how much they were consulted in its development, what role they have and could possibly have in its implementation. Based on the findings of the Baseline Study, up to 10 national indicators have been identified for monitoring in each of the participating economies - five common indicators, focused on monitoring the participation of LGs and LGAs in the implementation and monitoring of RAs and their financial dimension, and up to five specific indicators, shading a local government light on the already determined monitoring indicators of the RAs.

Based on these indicators, the Regional Expert/s will provide **support in data collection and analysis for the LORAI dashboard**, which will include the following:

- Continuous methodological guidelines, technical assistance and support to the LGAs and their local experts for the collection and analysis of national data, based on the set indicators (through online format of the following events: regional orientation meetings, regional and bilateral meetings and exchanges).
- Expert support in the design, development, and content creation for the LORAI open-access dashboard.
- Production of three regional reports, based on the data reported by the seven participating LGAs.
- Provision of technical assistance for the organisation of LGAs' focus groups and LORAI's exchanges with existing monitoring structures.
- Continuous assessment of the relevance and impact of the monitoring system and technical assistance for improvement/adjustments of LORAI Dashboard.

All activities listed above will be implemented remotely/online.

The data collection and reporting process will be synchronised in terms of dynamics with the national Reform Agenda monitoring systems (each 6 months). Throughout the process, the Regional Expert/s should identify regional commonalities, to support regional reporting, peer learning, and policy dialogue.

In planning the methodology and workload, the Regional Expert/s should take into account that this assignment will be conducted in close cooperation with the LGAs and their local experts who, under the guidance and support of the Regional Expert/s are responsible for data collection at national level. For the technical part of the LORAI Dashboard, NALAS will recruit adequate IT

** This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.*

support. **Therefore, the local expertise and IT expertise should not form part of the contract related to this RfP.**

The Regional Expert/s will closely coordinate with the International Expert engaged by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the Congress' staff to ensure alignment with LORAI programme objectives, the local experts and the IT expert.

9. Activities, deliverables and deadlines under the contract

Activity	Deliverables	Deadlines
Continuous methodological guidelines, technical assistance and support to the LGAs and their local experts for the collection and analysis of national data, based on the set indicators	Meeting agendas, records, notes, feedback documentation.	November 2027
Support in the design, development, and management of the LORAI open-access dashboard.	Input and feedback documentation-reports, texts, charts.	November 2026 November 2027
Production of three regional reports, based on the data reported by the seven participating LGAs.	Regional report 1. Regional report 2. Regional report 3.	December 2026 June 2027 November 2027
Provision of technical assistance for the organisation of LGAs' focus groups and LORAI's exchanges with existing monitoring structures.	Meeting agendas, records, notes, e-mail exchanges.	November 2027
Continuous assessment of the relevance and impact of the monitoring system and technical assistance for improvement/adjustments of LORAI Dashboard.	Meeting agendas, records, notes, e-mail exchanges.	November 2027

All deliverables under this ToR must be approved by NALAS Programme Director.

10. Proposal submission

The complete proposal submitted by the Regional Expert/s shall include the following elements:

Technical Offer:

- Cover Letter** of **up to 1 page**, explaining Regional Expert/s' **suitability for the assignment**, as specified in this RfP.
- Proposed approach** in **up to 3 pages**, focused on the **added value propositions** of the bidder.
- Brief CV** of **up to 3 pages** (in case of teams, CV of each team member). The CV shall focus only on **how the expert meets the criteria** stated under Chapter 11.

- d) In case of team of Regional Experts, **Declaration of commitment**, signed by all team members.

To be able to objectively evaluate bids, based on merit, NALAS strongly discourages use of AI-generated content.

Financial Offer:

- e) **Financial offer, per activity and relevant deliverables** (not working days) specifying the responsible Regional Expert/s, amount per Regional Expert/s, as well as total amount, based on the table below. **In case of teams**, please divide responsibilities based on Regional Expert's expertise, meaning that not all Regional Experts need to be involved in each activity/deliverable.

Activity	Deliverables	Responsible Regional Expert	Amount (in EUR)
Support in the design and development of the LORAI open-access dashboard.	Input and feedback documentation-reports, texts, charts.	<i>Expert NAME</i>	<i>AMOUNT</i>
Production of Regional Report 1.	Regional report 1. Meeting agendas, records, notes for methodological guidelines, technical assistance and support to the LGAs and their local experts for the collection and analysis of national data, based on the set indicators.	<i>Expert NAME</i>	<i>AMOUNT</i>
Production of Regional Report 2.	Regional report 2. Meeting agendas, records, notes for methodological guidelines, technical assistance and support to the LGAs and their local experts for the collection and analysis of national data, based on the set indicators.	<i>Expert NAME</i>	<i>AMOUNT</i>
Production of Regional Report 3.	Regional report 3. Meeting agendas, records, notes for methodological guidelines, technical assistance and support to the LGAs and their local experts for the collection and analysis of national data, based on the set indicators.	<i>Expert NAME</i>	<i>AMOUNT</i>
Provision of technical assistance for the organisation of LGAs' focus groups and LORAI's exchanges with existing monitoring structures.	Meeting agendas, records, notes, e-mail exchanges.	<i>Expert NAME</i>	<i>AMOUNT</i>

Continuous assessment of the relevance and impact of the monitoring system and technical assistance for improvement/adjustments of LORAI Dashboard.	Meeting agendas, records, notes, e-mail exchanges.	<i>Expert NAME</i>	<i>AMOUNT</i>
Support in management of the LORAI Dashboard.	Input and feedback documentation-reports, texts, charts.	<i>Expert NAME</i>	<i>AMOUNT</i>
	Total per expert		<i>AMOUNT</i>
	Total		<i>AMOUNT</i>

The prices should be gross and stated in euros. 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% from the gross amount), which will be calculated and paid by NALAS. The Regional Expert/s will receive the amount reduced for the paid personal income tax. They shall receive the accountancy documents relevant to the payments made, for their bookkeeping.

11. Requirements: Professional qualifications, expertise and experience of the team of Regional Experts/Consultants

To qualify as competent of performing the contract, the Team of Regional Experts/Consultants must meet the following requirements:

- Experience in conducting national and regional researches related to local government. At least 5 national and 2 regional researches conducted.
- Proven expertise in design and/or implementation of at least 2 systems, including dashboards, observatories, indicators, data collection or reporting frameworks, with clear description of Regional Expert/s' role.
- At least 10 years of experience in the field of local government.
- At least 10 years of experience in EU relations and EU integration.
- Practical experience in working with at least two Local Government Associations in the region (i.e. projects, advisory roles, or partnerships).
- Excellent written and spoken English.
- Proficiency in at least one of the languages spoken in the Western Balkans.

12. Evaluation Criteria and Scoring

The proposals will be evaluated and rated based on the criteria set out in this RfP, in two steps:

Step 1: Eligibility screening, to ensure that the proposal meets ALL of the following:

- The proposal must be submitted by natural person/s.
- The proposal must be submitted in English.
- The proposal must be submitted by the stated deadline.
- The proposal must be complete, containing all the elements in terms of content, format and size, as specified in Chapter 10 of this RfP.

Step 2: Technical and financial evaluation of proposals

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

- Technical criteria:
 - 40% Regional Expert's/Regional Expert Team's Capacity: qualifications, expertise and experience for fulfilling the tasks under this RfP. *Please note that each team member should meet the requirements under Chapter 11;*
 - 30% Approach: Proposed approach, including added value propositions.

Minimum technical threshold for passing into the next stage (financial evaluation) is 60% of the total number of average points per Regional Expert/s (42 points at least).

- Financial Criteria:
-30% Financial Offer: Based on activity and deliverables, as described in Chapter 10 d).

13. Terms of Payment

The payment will be made in three instalments, based on approval of the relevant deliverables, and submitted request for payment, as follows:

Instalment	After approval of the following deliverables
1	Regional report 1. Meeting agendas, records, notes for methodological guidelines, technical assistance and support to the LGAs and their local experts for the collection and analysis of national data, based on the set indicators. Input and feedback documentation-reports, texts, charts for design and development of the LORAI open-access dashboard.
2	Regional report 2. Meeting agendas, records, notes for methodological guidelines, technical assistance and support to the LGAs and their local experts for the collection and analysis of national data, based on the set indicators. Meeting agendas, records, notes, e-mail exchanges for provision of technical assistance for the organisation of LGAs' focus groups and LORAI's exchanges with existing monitoring structures. Meeting agendas, records, notes, e-mail exchanges for continuous assessment of the relevance and impact of the monitoring system and technical assistance for improvement/adjustments.
3	Regional report 3. Meeting agendas, records, notes for methodological guidelines, technical assistance and support to the LGAs and their local experts for the collection and analysis of national data, based on the set indicators. Input and feedback documentation-reports, texts, charts for support in management of the LORAI open-access dashboard.

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. For this specific RfP, individual contracts will be signed with each of the experts/consultants, based on the negotiated offer.

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.



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