Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe

EU4MUNICIPALITIES

Co-funded by the European Union

bashkëpunimi gjerman
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

Implemented by giz

Terms of Reference

Expert for Quality Assurance of Construction Works and Capital Investments of Grantees (Municipalities)

Ref. No.: EU4M-II/P4/2026

Table of Contents

1. Background 2
2. Objective of the Assignment 2
3. Scope of Work 3
4. Deliverables 4
5. Location 5
6. Duration and Level of Effort 5
7. Methodology and Working Arrangements 5
8. Required Qualifications 5
9. Reporting and Supervision 6
10. Budget and Payment Schedule 6
11. Modification of Terms 7
12. Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination 7

1. Background

NALAS is the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (SEE). NALAS promotes decentralisation, good local governance and improved municipal service delivery in partnership with its member associations, local governments, central governments and international partners.

NALAS manages the EU4M-SIMPACT project (Small Grants and Inter-Municipal Partnerships for Action) under the EU4Municipalities programme, implemented in partnership with GIZ, the National Association of Municipalities of Albania (NAMA) and the KDZ Centre for Public Administration Research.

EU4M-SIMPACT aims to improve local governance and socio-economic development in Albania by improving the quality, coverage and accessibility of municipal infrastructure and services and strengthening municipalities' capacity to manage EU funds.

Through EU4M-SIMPACT, NALAS provides grants for municipal projects and investments. Delivering these investments on time and to the required standard depends on sound technical preparation, complete procurement documentation and effective monitoring.

NALAS seeks independent technical advice throughout the grant cycle to assess investment proposals, review technical documentation before contracting and verify implementation of approved investments.

2. Objective of the Assignment

The overall objective of the assignment is to provide NALAS with independent technical expertise to ensure that the supported municipal investments are technically sound, implementable, appropriately specified, and delivered in accordance with the approved project scope, applicable technical requirements, agreed timelines and expected quality standards.

The specific objectives are to

- support in assessing the investment components of municipal grant applications
- identify technical gaps and risks affecting feasibility, costs, procurement readiness or implementation, and recommend how to address them
- ensure effective monitoring of construction works and timely identification of technical risks and implementation issues
- help verify implementation progress, quality and compliance with the approved technical scope, and follow up on issues affecting timely completion.

3. Scope of Work

NALAS will allocate tasks according to the stage of the grant cycle and the type, location and technical characteristics of each investment. The main tasks are set out below.

3.1 Technical evaluation of municipal grant applications

- Assess the technical documentation submitted with municipal grant applications, including designs, drawings, bills of quantities, cost estimates, technical specifications, terms of reference, feasibility or technical studies, permits and approvals, implementation schedules and other supporting documents, as applicable.
- Assess whether each proposed investment is realistic, technically feasible, whether the documents are internally consistent and whether the design is sufficiently developed for timely implementation.
- Identify missing documents, design deficiencies, permitting issues, implementation constraints and other risks that could affect procurement, construction or operation.
- Prepare a concise written assessment using the agreed format and evaluation criteria.
- Present the findings to NALAS , advise and provide clarifications. NALAS retains responsibility for final evaluation and award decisions.

3.2 Technical support during the contracting phase

- Assess revised or supplementary technical documentation of investment projects.
- Advise corrections, clarifications and improvements needed to make the documentation suitable for procurement and implementation.
- advise on compliance of proposed and implemented infrastructure investments with national building legislation and technical standards
- Flag any proposed change to the approved objectives, outputs or scope that requires prior NALAS approval.
- Follow up on agreed corrections until the documentation is ready for contracting or implementation, as applicable.

3.3 Technical monitoring of grant implementation

- Monitor grant implementation through desk reviews and on-site visits and, where relevant, review of records held by municipalities and their contractors or supervisors.
- Review progress against approved designs, specifications, bills of quantities, work plans, milestones and contractual deadlines.
- Carry out site visits and inspections in line with the monitoring plan and as needed, taking account of the type, stage and risk profile of each investment. Verify reported progress and completed works or supplies against the approved technical documentation and supporting records.

- Identify delays, deviations, quality concerns and other technical risks. Record field findings and promptly advise NALAS on corrective action.
- Assess proposed technical changes, variations, substitutions and budget reallocations affecting the investment. Advise NALAS on their justification and implications for quantities, specifications, cost, functionality, quality and timing.
- Follow up on agreed actions with municipalities, document unresolved technical issues and escalate material risks to NALAS.
- Final site verification and identify outstanding works, defects and missing documentation to be addressed before closure.
- Provide related technical support requested by NALAS to help investments meet the agreed schedule and quality requirements.

3.4 Professional conduct, impartiality and confidentiality

The expert shall act independently and impartially. Before undertaking evaluation assignments, the expert will be required to sign declarations of impartiality, confidentiality and absence of conflict of interest. Any actual or potential conflict of interest concerning an applicant, beneficiary, contractor or assignment must be disclosed to NALAS immediately. Information obtained through the assignment shall be treated as confidential and used solely for the purposes of the contract.

4. Deliverables

NALAS will specify the outputs required for each assignment. Depending on the stage of the grant cycle, these may include the following.

- Written technical assessments of the investment components of municipal grant applications.
- Written reviews of revised technical documentation before contracting or implementation, recording any clarifications, corrections and outstanding issues.
- A brief report after each significant technical assessment or site visit, recording findings against the approved technical documentation, risks, recommendations and follow-up actions. Include photographs where appropriate.
- Technical opinions on implementation issues or proposed changes, including delays, deviations, quality concerns, changes to works schedules and budget reallocations affecting the investment.
- Technical input to final verification or completion of investments, when requested.
- Brief assignment completion summaries covering work performed, issues identified and recommendations.

All outputs shall be concise, evidence-based and submitted in the format and language specified by NALAS.

5. Location

The assignment will combine remote-based/desk work with meetings and field visits to up to 24 beneficiary municipalities and project sites in Albania, as required by NALAS. The expert shall be available to travel to project locations for technical inspections and meetings with benefiting municipalities in accordance with the agreed work orders or assignments.

6. Duration and Level of Effort

The assignment foresees an indicative level of effort of up to 50 working days over the period December 2026 to November 2027. The 50 days represent an indicative maximum and do not constitute a guaranteed minimum volume of work. NALAS may adjust the sequencing, timing and distribution of tasks in line with the grant implementation schedule and the contractual arrangements.

7. Methodology and Working Arrangements

- Use the checklists and assessment criteria established by NALAS for the grant scheme.
- Base technical conclusions on the available evidence and specify which deficiencies are material and which can be addressed during contracting or implementation.
- Maintain an audit trail of evidence reviewed, findings, recommendations, clarifications and follow-up actions.
- Coordinate with NALAS before communicating formal project requirements or decisions to municipalities.
- Brief and debrief the NALAS project team and, where relevant, the Evaluation Committee before and after key evaluations, technical reviews and site visits.

8. Required Qualifications

Qualifications and skills

- University degree in civil engineering, architecture, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, environmental engineering or another relevant technical field.
- Professional licences and/or certification for technical documentation audits and professional supervision issued by competent authorities.
- Good analytical, reporting and communication skills.
- Fluency in Albanian and English, including the ability to review and develop project documents and write technical reports.

General professional experience

- At least 10 years of professional experience in engineering, architecture, infrastructure development, construction or a related technical field.

Specific professional experience

- At least 10 years of experience relevant to the assignment, including preparing, reviewing, supervising or assessing designs, drawings, specifications, bills of quantities, cost estimates, feasibility studies or other works documentation.
- Demonstrated experience supervising rehabilitation or construction works for public or municipal infrastructure, facilities, local services or comparable public investments.
- Experience in the technical evaluation of investment proposals, donor-funded projects, public investment programmes or grant schemes is an advantage.
- Relevant experience working on donor-funded projects is an advantage.
- Demonstrated experience in project implementation, site inspection, quality control, contract implementation or technical monitoring, including identifying and resolving implementation problems.
- Experience assessing design changes, works variations, costs or budget reallocations during construction is an advantage.
- Knowledge of applicable Albanian technical, construction, permitting and public investment requirements is required.

9. Reporting and Supervision

The expert will report to the Project Manager designated by NALAS and coordinate with the EU4M-SIMPACT project team. During implementation, the expert will liaise with municipal teams and other technical counterparts as directed by NALAS.

NALAS will provide the applications, assessment tools, grant documents and technical information needed for each assignment. The expert shall promptly notify NALAS of material technical risks, delays in obtaining information or other issues affecting timely completion. Conflicts of interest shall be disclosed in accordance with Section 3.4.

10. Budget and Payment Schedule

The contract value will be based on the agreed daily fee and the number of working days. NALAS will make payments against approved timesheets, approved deliverables or both, as specified in the service contract.

The expert shall bear travel and related costs for site visits.

11. Modification of Terms

NALAS may clarify or amend the procurement documents before the submission deadline and shall communicate any material amendment equally to all candidates. After award, changes to the scope, schedule, deliverables or other contract terms must be justified, agreed in writing and made in accordance with the applicable NALAS procurement and contractual rules.

NALAS may cancel the procedure where duly justified and may reject proposals that fail to meet the procurement requirements. NALAS is under no obligation to award a contract. Cancellation, rejection and award decisions shall follow the principles of transparency, equal treatment, non-discrimination and proportionality.

NALAS will conclude an individual service contract with the selected expert. Negotiations may take place only where duly justified.

12. Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination

NALAS provides equal opportunities to all candidates. It assesses applications on qualifications and professional merit, without discrimination, and welcomes candidates from all backgrounds.