

Project:

Cooperation for Development – Support to Decentralisation and Sustainable Local Development in Georgia (C4D)

Terms of Reference Senior National Advisor

1.1 Background and Rationale

The project “*Cooperation for Development – Support to Decentralisation and Sustainable Local Development in Georgia (C4D)*” will be implemented by SALAR International, as the operational arm of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) in international development cooperation. By agreement with the Swedish Embassy in Georgia, the implementation period for the programme is 47 months, from May 2024 to March 2028. It is fully funded by Sida.

SALAR and SALAR International

SALAR is a member-based organization, representing and advocating for the interests of all municipalities and regions in Sweden. SALAR has for many years engaged in international exchange and cooperation and has a framework agreement with its subsidiary SALAR International to implement all international development cooperation projects. SALAR and SALAR International have various international experiences of supporting decentralisation reforms, local good governance and democratisation as well as sustainable service delivery across the world, including in the fields of environmental protection, urban planning and sustainable development.

The project was designed during an inception phase between March and November 2023, which investigated the possibilities for strategic support linked to the goals of Sweden’s reform cooperation with Georgia: to strengthen democracy and respect for human rights, to improve the country’s environmental work and to support Georgia’s efforts to strengthen the ties with the European Union. It was identified that SALAR can bring support and added value in i) supporting the Georgian decentralisation process and to strengthen the capacity of the country’s local self-government, ii) the EU accession process and iii) broadly in relation to the Result Strategy for Sweden’s reform cooperation with Eastern Europe and the priorities of the Government of Sweden.

The project will be implemented during a crucial time for Georgia’s European perspective. On 8 November 2023, the European Commission recommended that the Council grants Georgia the status of a candidate country - on the understanding that certain reforms and steps are taken. Accession to the European Union is a merit-based process, fully dependent on the objective progress achieved by each country. Of particular concern to the democratic development of Georgia are the national elections due to be held in October 2024, followed by the local elections in 2025.

Local self-governance is one of the core principles of democracies that respect and promote human rights and contribute to a sustainable way of living. Decentralisation refers to the redistribution of authority, resources, and decision-making from a central authority to regional or local entities. This redistribution is intended to promote more efficient governance, empower local communities, and enhance accountability and responsiveness to local needs. The European Charter of Local Self-

Government, ratified by Georgia, lays down standards for protecting the rights of local authorities. The Charter commits the parties to applying basic rules guaranteeing the political, administrative and financial independence of local authorities.

Whereas the system of local government may differ in different countries, the unique concept of strong local self-government as in Europe, rests on three pillars; clear division of powers, allocation of relevant resources to municipalities and citizens' control and participation. The experience of Eastern European countries shows that decentralisation reforms, delegating state power to local governments, requires substantive coordination among stakeholders both at the national level and between local and national levels.

In 2019, the Georgian Government adopted the Decentralisation Strategy for 2020-2025. Despite the results of its implementation over the last few years, there is still a wide scope for improvements and further reform. The transfer of adequate financial resources to local governments remains a key challenge, coordination between national level institutions is still weak and public involvement and consultations are lacking.

The project is designed to address these needs: to provide support to municipalities, strengthen their capacities to fulfil their mandates and play a fundamental role in democratic and sustainable development in Georgia. It also aims to contribute to evidence-based policy formulation, and to strengthening the use of best practice in central-local consultations and multi-level governance. It will be linked to requirements in Georgias process of EU-accession, the Copenhagen Criteria and the implementation of Agenda 2030.

1.2 Objectives and activities of the project

The overall objective of the project Cooperation for Development (C4D) is ***to promote democratic, effective, and accountable local self-governments and sustainable local development in Georgia.***

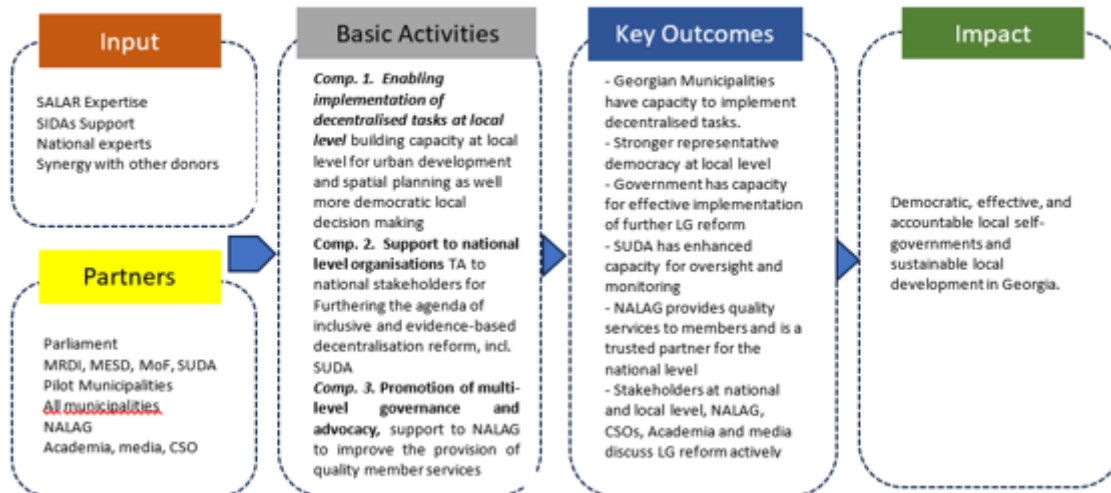
The specific objectives intervention and result areas are divided into three Components, namely:

Component 1 Contributing to building capacity in municipalities to implement delegated tasks using participatory approaches.

Component 2 Contributing to inclusive and evidence-based decentralisation reform in Georgia

Component 3 Advocating decentralisation reform and strengthening multi-level governance on local development

The proposed intervention logic of the project is:



1.3 Description of the Assignment

Team

For the successful implementation of the project it is foreseen that a local Senior National Advisor (SNA) will support the processes in Georgia with a particular focus on national level actors and the multi-level governance framework.

S/he will report to the Team Leader and Project Manager from SALAR International and be in close contact with the Senior National Coordinator and the rest of the local team and other experts. The implementation phase will be carried out together with the institutional support functions of SALAR International for administrative, financial and quality assurance purposes.

When the full team has been set up, roles and division of responsibilities will be further discussed and defined among the team members.

Role of the Senior National Adviser

The SNA will be a senior expert engaged as a representative in the project to coordinate activities mainly in Georgia. S/he will be responsible for facilitating contacts and conducting continuous strategic dialogue with national ministries, cooperation partners, international and national actors, as well as facilitating methodological development, events and consultations. S/he will provide technical assistance as required in particular to MRDI, MoF, SUDA, NALAG and other national and local level stakeholders.

The position requires integrity, innovation, problem-solving skills, professionalism, strong interpersonal skills, and the ability to lead others. The SNA will be contracted as independent consultant, based in Tbilisi, and play an important role in the implementation of activities, provide expertise, learnings from previous experiences and methodological support, as well as providing

strategic advice relevant and of benefit for the Georgian stakeholders and matched with SALARs areas of expertise and the priorities of the Swedish Government.

In coordination with the SALAR International team the SNA will produce and compile technical input, analysis and reports, as well as monitoring and evaluation of progress. The SNA will also be responsible for continuous risk assessments, advice on possible changes or updates in the context of the political development, government administration and related institutional frameworks which may affect the project plan and activities.

More specifically and in close cooperation with the SALAR International team, the tasks of the SNA are (but not limited) to:

- Advice and support to central government to manage, develop and monitor decentralisation reform and related policies
- Identify opportunities, capacity needs and interests of stakeholders to move forward with the decentralisation action plan and related processes
- Provide expert advice and input to selected relevant national policy discussions, for example the roadmap for decentralisation, and the ongoing dialogue between local, regional, and central level governments on post 2025 decentralisation reform between MRDI and other key stakeholders
- Provide support to NALAG in representation of members and advocating their needs and identifying possibilities for defining/strengthening their membership services
- Supporting cooperation between NALAG and academic institutions, think-tanks, CSOs and the media.
- Supervise and manage short and long-term experts engaged in the project as agreed with the project Team Leader
- Jointly with the SALAR I team prepare content for workshops, events and joint exercises with Georgian and stakeholders and international organizations
- Support to enhanced cooperation and knowledge exchange between (some of the) Associations of local authorities in the Eastern Partnership countries
- Monitoring and evaluation of the progress in project implementation related to the Logical Framework including preparing written reports.
- Provide additional comments and strategic advice to the TL/Project Manager during the process, incorporate any needed changes in the work plan and incorporate possible feedback on suggested changes from Sida.

1.4 Planning and Outputs

Planning & Time Frames

The work will be carried out in coordination with the Team Leader, SALAR International's Project Manager, International and Local Experts and the Swedish Embassy in Tbilisi. The assignment will be implemented during May 2026 (with possible extension to March 2028).

The role entails engaging both in physical meetings and workshops carried out in Georgia, but also through digital means and interactions as well as participation in international meetings and study tours.

Overall expected Outputs

- Consultations and ongoing dialogue with selected key stakeholders and beneficiaries, including a number of public consultations implemented with MRDI with support from the project
- Provide suggestions to policy recommendations for the next phase of decentralization reform beyond 2025.
- Advice and counselling related to the new strategy has been adequately coordinated with other stakeholders and donors active in the field of decentralisation reform
- Facilitation of institutional consultations and cooperation between stakeholders
- Facilitation of institutional capacity needs assessment and peer-review of NALAG – and related training, advice, recommendations
- Training materials adapted, produced, and disseminated to relevant audiences
- Workshops/trainings and events conducted and documented
- Input to strategic communications and advocacy plan and related activities and outputs
- Written reports of findings and conclusions as well as oral presentations

1.5 Expert Profile and Scope of the Assignment

Profile Required

- Post-graduate qualification in political science, economics, law or related field and over 10 years' experience of working with issues concerning regional and local governance, preferably with a solid understanding of the context of international development cooperation.
- Professional experience in Georgia and/or in other post- Soviet country contexts.
- Experience in the preparation of policy papers, briefs, plans, research and analyzing data collected concerning different subjects related to local governance and public administration, EU-accession processes and EU-standards, public service delivery and policy development.
- Prior experience of drafting analytical and pedagogical content, project documentation and competence in writing and preparing publications in English and Georgian language.
- Experience of team management/supervising and leading work of experts
- Excellent communication and facilitation/coordination skills and ability to respond flexibly in a dynamic environment
- Demonstrated ability to maintain impartiality and objectivity
- S/he must be independent and free from conflicts of interest.

Duration of assignment

The role as Senior National Advisor entails an engagement of on average 11 days/month (132 days/year). The contract will be assigned for two years, with a possible extension of two years. Total number of days for the first two years will be 264 days.

Diversity and equal opportunities

SALAR International embraces diversity and respects human rights in all areas of its work. SALAR International strives to create a gender-equal and diverse working environment. Team members shall respect equal rights of individuals and strive to create an atmosphere where people's differences are accepted and valued. SALAR International supports working arrangements that enable personnel to combine work with family commitments.

Application: Send your application with CV and a cover letter to opportunity@salarinternational.se. Please note “*Georgia Senior National Advisor*” in the subject line. Interviews will be conducted on an ongoing basis.

Contact person: Anna G:son Berg, anna.gson.berg@skr.se

Deadline: 22 May 2024