

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Consultancy Contract for Local Expert

Pre-study in North Macedonia with focus on good governance & sustainable development at local level

ABOUT THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) has been granted finance by the Swedish Embassy in Skopje, North Macedonia for the implementation of a pre-study and development of a project proposal for the promotion of good governance and sustainable development at local level. The pre-study is implemented by SKL International, a subsidiary of SALAR based in Stockholm, and will be conducted from January to June 2021. It is expected to result in a project proposal for a multi-year intervention. In addition to a project manager from SKL International, an International Decentralisation Expert from Sweden and a Local Expert from North Macedonia will be engaged for the assignment and will work closely together as a team. Given the continuous travel restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic, it is foreseen that the pre-study mainly will be implemented through digital means and the Local Expert will therefore play a key role in facilitating and establishing contacts with key stakeholders in North Macedonia (NM).

On these grounds, SKL International is seeking to engage a Local Expert (LE) in NM as soon as possible and who can facilitate the practical implementation of the pre-study in the country as well as provide strategic and contextual advice throughout the assignment. The LE will be engaged as consultant for a total of maximum 33 working days between January 2021 – June 2021. Consulting contract will be concluded with SKL International.

This document provides information to those who are interested in the role and want to submit a proposal for the LE position. Part 1, Terms of Reference, describes the assignment and the role of the LE. Part 2 of the Request for Proposals describes what information needs to be submitted by Applicants and how the proposals will be assessed by SKL International.

PART 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Background & Rationale

Three factors provide the main rationale of the pre-study and design of project proposal that aim to strengthen good governance and sustainable development at local level: a) NM's ongoing EU accession process and its impact on local governments; b) NM's decentralization process; and; c) The 'Results Strategy for Sweden's Reform Cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey' (2014-2020).

NM's EU-accession process will serve as the overall framework for the pre-study and is considered to be a strong force for reform and development even in the future. Since the EU accession process has profound impact on local governments in their roles as employers, service providers, regulators, purchasers of goods and services and enforcers of standards, it is of vital importance to include local government and local level perspectives early in the process.

Further, Sweden's strategy for reform cooperation emphasizes several results that are highly relevant for local governments in the areas of democracy, public administration and environment. More specifically, it includes results related to: strengthened public administration and capacity to implement reforms for EU-integration; delivery of higher quality, more inclusive and sustainable public services; improved democratic accountability; gender equality; human rights; and increased compliance with EU regulations and international agreements on the environment, climate and energy.

In sum, these factors will provide the overall framework for the envisaged pre-study.

1.1 SALAR's & SKL International's previous experiences

SALAR and SKL International have significant experiences of supporting decentralisation reforms, local good governance and sustainable service delivery in reform countries in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and other countries. The scope of the international projects range from interventions at the system level, i.e. support to decentralisation processes, municipal legislation and intergovernmental financing to activities at the local level, i.e. sustainable urban development in pilot municipalities, as well as development of more effective & equitable service delivery in areas such as waste and water management and increased dialogue with citizens. The pre-study will draw on former and on-going experiences in strengthening the local governance sector in the Western Balkans, including countries such as Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Albania.

1.2 Three Thematic tracks

Based on the overall framework described above and SALAR's knowledge and previous experiences from Western Balkans, the pre-study will mainly explore relevancy, potential partnerships as well as added-value of potential SALAR support in the following thematic areas of interest:

- Waste & Water Management at local level
- Urban Mobility & Planning for improved air quality
- Local governments' role, interests and needs in relation to EU-accession

2. The Assignment

2.1 Main Steps

The ToRs foresee that the pre-study mainly will include the following steps:

- a) Desk study and initial digital consultations with key stakeholders in NM to get an overall understanding of the broader context and the enabling environment of NM
- b) Digital Thematic scoping phase to review and assess each thematic area of interest and potential partners through desk study, digital consultations and interviews with key stakeholders
- c) Collection and reflection on findings, identification of main conclusions, identification of key partner, selection of thematic focus area for project proposal, final consultations and development of project proposal for a multi-year project intervention

2.2 Planning & Time Frames

The assignment will be implemented during January – June 2021. The final project proposal is expected to be submitted to the Swedish Embassy in Skopje no later than the third week of June 2021.

As previously mentioned, the pre-study is expected to be conducted mainly through digital means and interactions. In the event that the situation around the Covid-19 pandemic would develop in a positive direction, one international travel could possibly be conducted to NM either in March or April 2021.

Considering the upcoming local elections in NM scheduled for May 2021, it will be difficult to interact with key stakeholders in NM during that period of time and therefore consultations will be scheduled before the election period. May and June will instead be devoted to compilation of conclusions and drafting of the final project proposal.

2.2 Pre-study Team

For the implementation of the pre-study, it is foreseen that a Project Manager from SKL International and an International Decentralisation Expert will work closely together with a Local Expert from North Macedonia in a joint team. Other Local and International Experts may be contracted if deemed necessary. Institutional support functions of SALAR and SKL International will provide administrative, financial and quality assurance support throughout the pre-study phase.

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

3. The role of the Local Expert

The LE will support the implementation of the pre-study by providing contextual and technical advice as well as logistical and planning support. Given the insecure circumstances surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic, it is foreseen that the pre-study will be implemented mainly through digital means and that the local expert will play a key role in facilitating contacts with key stakeholders in NM and ensure that interpretation/translation is catered for when necessary. The LE will also contribute to the research and assessment of each thematic area of interest, draw conclusions that are of relevance for stakeholders in NM as well as provide input to the final drafting of the project proposal.

Considering the different thematic tracks of the study, it will be considered an advantage if the LE also can provide contextual and technical expertise in the area of environment and sustainable development.

The role of the LE will include, but not be limited, to the following tasks:

- Provide contextual advice and input relevant for the pre-study. This can include information (including maps, data, etc.), documentation and descriptions of political trends, national policies, strategies and institutional framework relevant for local good governance, sustainable development and EU-accession in NM.
- Provide thematic advice and input to the pre-study team throughout the process and related to the identified thematic tracks. This can include information and description of thematic policies and strategies as well as past or ongoing initiatives, projects, etc. carried out by the government or other actors in the thematic areas of interest.
- Support SKL International in identifying and mapping relevant key stakeholders, e.g. national and selected local government representatives, donors, NGOs and international organisations, as well as local experts in the fields covered by the thematic tracks.
- Be responsible for establishing, organizing and facilitating contacts and digital consultations/interviews with key stakeholders in NM
- Facilitate and organize interpretation and translation when deemed necessary
- Gather and document information from digital consultations and interviews with key stakeholders in NM
- Provide advisory support to SKL International when developing conclusions and drafting the final project proposal

Further, the LE is expected to maintain close communication (zoom, email, Whatsapp etc.) with SKL International's pre-study team in Stockholm during the assignment and continuously report as agreed. The LE will also represent SALAR/SKL International in dialogue with key stakeholders in North Macedonia and is therefore expected to get acquainted with the organisations and follow SKL International's Code of Conduct (CoC).

4. Scope and Location

The LE is a consultant that will work on a per day fee rate, either as self-employed contractor or as representative of a company/organization that will provide the LE. A consultancy company/organization may also submit a joint proposal for the position. Most of the work is expected to take place either digitally or in Skopje.

The number of total days estimated for the assignment are **33 days** (8 working hours per day).

The table below reflects the indicative number of expert days for different tasks. The distribution of time may change during the course of the assignment and in dialogue with SKL International's Project Manager.

| Task | Days |
|--|------|
| Desk study & mapping of key stakeholders | 7 |
| Preparations & Initial digital consultations | 11 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Digital Thematic Scoping Phase | 10 |
| Development of project proposal | 5 |
| Total | 33 |

PART 2: REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

5. Essential information

If you are interested in the role as Local Expert, you should follow the information below.

a. How to submit a Proposal

Proposals should be submitted electronically, via email to the following email address:

opportunity@sklinternational.se

b. Closing time – January 14, 2021

Proposals must be received at this email address no later than **January 14, 2021**. It is the Applicants' responsibility to ensure that documentation is prepared and sent within the timeframe. An automatic response will be generated from the email address, which is valid as proof of submission.

c. Clarification and questions

Any questions for clarification or additional information can also be sent to the above email and no later than January 6, 2021. Answers will be provided by email on January 7-10.

6. Information to be provided by Applicants

Proposals shall comprise the following information:

- a) An **email and/or a personal letter** that includes the following information:
 - a. a brief description of the Applicant's suitability for the role and relevance to the Selection Criteria listed below
 - b. the Applicant's readiness and possible start date (the LE is expected to start to work as soon as possible)
 - c. Other assignments/employments that may affect the availability and flexibility of the Applicant
 - d. Contact details: Full name, current job title, telephone number and email address
 - e. The total daily fee requested by the Applicant in Swedish Krona (SEK). For more information, see "Price" section below.
- b) An up-to-date **curriculum vitae (CV)** of not more than seven (7) A4 pages length, showing relevant qualifications, experience and expertise

7. Selection Criteria & Assessment

Proposals will be evaluated against the Selection Criteria described below. The availability and readiness to start the assignment as soon as possible will also be taken into consideration. An interview will also be conducted with short-listed candidates and references may be taken. At the end of the selection process, the preferred Applicants will be assessed in terms of their proposed price relative to other Applicants. Based on this process, SKL International will make an overall and balanced assessment that will result in a final and formal decision on appointment.

Selection Criteria

- Graduate degree in a relevant area for the pre-study such as environmental governance & protection, sustainable development, urban planning, political science, public administration or any other relevant area
- Have at least 5 years' experience of working with good governance related issues preferably including both national, regional and local levels
- Experience in desk research and analyzing data collected concerning different subjects such as environment, public administration, EU-standards, public service delivery and policy development
- Access to a broad network of key stakeholders in North Macedonia, including preferably government representatives, international representatives and NGOs. Capability of establishing and maintaining contacts and networks
- Working experience from international development cooperation and/or EU-related issues. Experience in the field of environment (waste, water, air quality, etc.) would be an advantage.
- Ability to plan, organize and facilitate digital interactions and other project logistical activities such as interpretation and translation
- Experience of working with international project teams, demonstrating flexibility in responding to developments and different needs as these arise
- Working proficiency in English. Good competence in documenting and writing project documents in English
- Fluency in Macedonian
- Either be self-employed or employed by a company/organization taking on the role as employer

Price

The LE will be paid a daily fee (8 working hours per day).

Applicants shall state their Price in the Proposal as a proposed daily fee in Swedish Krona (SEK). This shall be an all-inclusive fee that includes all relevant taxes (except VAT), social costs, insurances and any other overheads. Costs for travel, accommodation etc. will be reimbursed separately, on cost basis.

SKL International reserves the right to negotiate the actual daily fee with the preferred Applicant on the basis of his or her seniority, experience and competitiveness for the position. Further, SKL International may need to negotiate the daily fee rate based on the maximum rate available for this position as defined in the overall pre-study budget.

8. Contracting arrangements

The Successful Applicant will be contracted by SKL International, based in Stockholm, Sweden. The contract is expected to be signed in January 2021 and last until the end of June 2021. Considering that SKL International also will submit a project proposal for a longer-term project, a next potential project phase may also open up for new opportunities for the LE.