



TERMS OF REFERENCE

EU Expert

to assist NALAS – the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe

in the framework of

the **BACID III** project -

Building Administrative Capacities of the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova



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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The BACID III Program - Building Administrative Capacities of the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova, is co-funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and implemented by the Austrian Association of Cities and Towns, KDZ-Centre for Public Administration Research, ReSPA (Regional School for Public Administration) and NALAS (Network of Associations of Local Authorities in South-East Europe).

The main objective of BACID III is to improve good public governance in the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova. BACID III activities focus on two elements of governance:

- Increasing the quality of public administration and public services with the Common Assessment Framework (CAF); and
- Decentralization and local autonomy as key elements of the “Western European Democracy Model” and guarantors for the provision of high-quality local services.

The main outcome of BACID III will be that the quality of public administration and public services are enforced and decentralization and local autonomy in the Western Balkans and Moldova strengthened. From this perspective it is expected that decentralisation and local autonomy as key elements of the “Western European Democracy Model” and guarantors for the provision of high-quality local services in the Western Balkans and Moldova are strengthened through the work of NALAS.

NALAS – The Network of Associations of Local Authorities in South-East Europe brings together 14 Local Government Associations (LGAs) from South-East Europe (SEE). NALAS promotes the process of decentralisation in partnership with its member LGAs and in cooperation with central governments and international organisations, considering local self-government as a key issue in the current process of transition affecting the various countries in South-East Europe. NALAS initiates and carries out regional initiatives for its members and helps LGAs to become viable representatives of local authorities vis-à-vis their central government.

NALAS today is a broadly accepted stakeholder in the South-East Europe efforts to join the European Union. NALAS has been a recognised partner of European institutions and have close cooperation with DG NEAR, Committee of the Regions, Council of European Municipalities and Regions and Council of Europe. Due to challenging situation in the Region (antidemocratic developments, slow social and economic progress, demographic changes, interfering global politics, reluctance from EU and individual members, etc.) the European Integration process is slow and support of NALAS is still needed. Strengthening triangular partnership between NALAS, NALAS members and local/regional partners in exploring and utilizing corresponding EU funding opportunities is crucial for achieving sustainability and improvement of public services in the Region. Policy advocacy and institutional dialogue vis-à-vis EU institutions remains the most effective approach in proactive role of NALAS in development and implementation of EU policies towards the Region, specifically in area of EU integration process.

BACID III will contribute to the institutional sustainability of NALAS by strengthening its technical capacities in its core areas, in particular extending NALAS’ role in EU Affairs, advancing the decentralization observatory and fiscal decentralization benchmarks and in developing capacities in digitalization to support the South-East European Local Governments (LGs).

2. OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE & EXPECTED RESULTS

2.1. Scope and objectives

The overall objective of the assignment is the enhancement of the capacities of NALAS to increase the awareness of national governments and EU institutions for the needs of LGs in SEE and help to acknowledge them as important partners in South-East Europe, in particular in the Western Balkans and Moldova, and thereby to contributing to improving local public policies and services.

The specific objectives are the following:

- Support efforts of NALAS to be acknowledged as relevant stakeholder vis-à-vis national and EU institutions as well as regional initiatives;
- Help policymakers, experts, practitioners and researchers in their quest to improving local government policies and services utilizing EU Accession process;
- Support strengthening cooperation of NALAS and relevant European Institutions and regional initiatives.

2.2. Results to be achieved with support of the expert

- The institutional sustainability of NALAS is ensured through high acknowledgement and comprehensive cooperation with EU institutions and regional initiatives;
- Decentralisation and local autonomy as key elements of the “Western European Democracy Model” and guarantors for the provision of high-quality local services in the Western Balkan and Moldova are strengthened through the implementing projects related to decentralization with/for regional initiatives;

3. SCOPE OF THE WORK

3.1. General

The expert will contribute to carrying out the NALAS agenda in extending its role in EU Affairs, especially in areas of decentralization, advocacy efforts of the Local Government Associations and decentralisation reforms and promoting local autonomy and sustainable and inclusive local economic development in South-East Europe. This includes the following specific activities within the framework of the BACID III programme (2022-2024).

3.2. Specific activities

1. **Organizing and carrying out two regional events** with Ministries of EU integration (or similar Governmental bodies) and LGAs to intensify the dialogue between central governments and local level on decentralization and access of local governments to EU Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA).
2. **Elaborating and publishing one position paper** coordinated in the frames of Pre-Accession support (IPA) for advocating to increase EU support for SEE local governments.
3. **Elaborating and publishing one position paper** on the financial consequences of the COVID-19 crises for municipalities in SEE and the need for further EU support.

4. **Presenting NALAS views and positions stated in the Position papers** in selected sessions of the Committee of the Regions and Council of Europe as well as contributing to the European Week of Regions and Cities.
5. **Initiating cooperation with OECD** on Key Local Governments indicators.
6. **Linking the NALAS Group for Gender and Youth** with CEMR Expert Group of Gender Equality.
7. **Supporting NALAS in preparation and implementation of EU related activities** defined in the NALAS Strategic plan.

The activities will be implemented and supported by the NALAS local Fiscal Decentralization Expert, with contributions from short term decentralization experts.

3.3. Deliverables

1. **Two regional events organized and carried out** (Activity 1) in 2022 and 2024.
2. **Two Position papers elaborated and published** (Activity 2 and 3) in 2022 and 2024.
3. **NALAS views and positions stated in the Position papers presented** (Activity 4) on 5 events (2 in 2022, 3 in 2023 and 1 in 2024).
4. **Cooperation with OECD initiated** (Activity 5) in 2023.
5. **NALAS Group for Gender and Youth linked**(Activity 6) in 2023.
6. **NALAS supported in preparation and implementation of EU related activities** (Activity 7) in 2022-2024.

4. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

4.1. Location

This is a regional assignment covering the region of South-East Europe. The expert may work remotely and travel as needed within the region, on a need basis. Coordination with the NALAS Secretariat shall take place through online tools and in person meetings.

4.2. Start date and period of implementation

The period of implementation of the contract is from 15.04.2022 to 31.5.2024. The maximum envisaged number of working days for the assignment is 270 days.

5. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE EXPERT

Qualifications and skills

The expert shall possess the practical experience in the field and demonstrate the following skills and expertise:

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- University degree (min. 240 ECTS) in Law, Political Sciences, International Relations, Public Policy or other relevant fields, following 5 years of relevant professional experience, OR 7 years of relevant professional experience,
- In-depth knowledge on governance and public administration in SEE, specifically on the local self-government system,
- Excellent understanding of European Union enlargement processes, preferably with practical experience,
- Experience in strategic planning processes at local government level,
- In-depth knowledge of EU funding and specifically Instrument for Pre-accession,
- Practical experience with developing and implementing EU funded projects is an asset,
- Previous cooperation with the EU institution is desirable,
- Demonstrated analytical and writing capacity,
- Training and facilitation, coaching and mentoring skills,
- Capability to write and communicate in English is a must,
- Computer literacy, ability to present information in an appealing format,
- Demonstrated ability and willingness to work with people of different cultural, ethnic and religious background, different gender, and diverse political views.

6. CONTRACTUAL PROVISIONS

The Expert shall be contracted by the Austrian Association of Cities, Vienna, as support to the NALAS Secretariat.

The tasks shall be performed in close cooperation and agreement with the NALAS Secretariat, while KDZ-Centre for Public Administration Research as implementing Austrian project partner of AACT is responsible for final approval of deliverables produced.

7. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The interested Experts shall submit the CV and requested daily fee not later than 8th of April 2022 **16.30 CET** at: info@nalas.eu.

The maximum level of fee foreseen for the assignment is 160 EUR per day.

Within the commitment to diversity and inclusion, qualified women are especially encouraged to submit an offer.

Questions to the ToR: Questions about the ToR shall be submitted to Mr. Kelmend Zajazi, NALAS Executive Director via e-mail info@nalas.eu, mobile: +389 70 255 789, no later than 6th of April 2022.

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