



Request for Proposals

Development of NALAS Matchmaking Platform

Opening date: 3 April 2013 | Closing date: 15 April 2013

1. Summary of Requirements

The Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe (in the rest of the document referred to as "NALAS") requests proposals from interested consultants for the provision of professional services to develop a Matchmaking Platform between municipalities from South-East Europe (SEE) and the private sector, to be utilized within the second International Municipal Fair NEXPO 2013 (in the rest of the document referred to as "NEXPO 2013") scheduled to take place in Rijeka and Opatija, the Republic of Croatia, between 25 and 27 September 2013, but also beyond NEXPO, on national and SEE level.

2. Invitation

Individual consultants or companies with proven experience and expertise in matchmaking between municipalities and business sector are invited to respond to this request for proposals.

3. Request for Proposals Terminology

The following terms will apply to this Request for Proposals 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) "Consultant" means an individual consultant or a company 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 no later than 16:00 (CET), 15 April 2013 (Monday), at the following address:

info@nalas.eu

5. Enquiries

This Request for Proposal can be downloaded from the NALAS website at www.nalas.eu. Questions regarding this Request for Proposal should be directed to NALAS at +389 2 3090818, or by email to info@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 consultant 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

While many local governments in South East Europe have identified cooperation with the private sector as promising means to modernize services and to tackle backlogs of investments, this potential is still insufficiently tapped. On one hand, municipalities face challenges to first identify and later contact operators or attract investors from the private sector. On the other hand, the private sector is often not aware of municipal projects under development and does not search for instruments for identification of opportunities. Thus, the need of an exchange platform between local governments and the private sectors becomes more and more pressing. NEXPO International Municipal Fair as a major event gathering local governments from the whole SEE region has a high potential to become such a platform spurring exchanges between municipalities and the private sector and contributing thus to better economic development and modernization of municipal services in the region.

The first NEXPO International Municipal Fair was organized in March 2011 in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, hosting over 2000 visitors, 100 exhibitors and 200 mayors from South East Europe. NEXPO combines municipal fair, thematic conferences, workshops and other side events of interest to the local governments and associations of local governments in South East Europe enabling and allowing them to discuss common challenges and to present innovative approaches in the area of good governance, social inclusion and European integration.

Given the great success of this event, it was decided to reiterate the experience. Thus, NEXPO 2013 is to be organized in Rijeka and Opatija, Republic of Croatia, from 25 to 27 September 2013, hosted by the Association of Cities of the Republic of Croatia, the Association of Municipalities of the Republic of Croatia and the Cities of Rijeka and Opatija. The focus of the event will be on promoting practices and experiences amongst municipalities, but also on building up a regional platform enabling municipalities to exchange with suppliers, service providers, investors and other private companies interested in operating municipal services. The overall topic of NEXPO 2013 is EU Integration, while the workshops and matchmaking will focus on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, specifically: energy auditing in public buildings, public lighting, energy efficient construction, insulation, eco-friendly municipal and regional transport, public energy awareness campaigns and renewable (solar energy, geothermal, hydropower, biomass, wind).

NALAS is aiming at developing a sustainable matchmaking platform for local governments as well as suppliers, service providers, investors, banks, investment funds and other private companies interested in operating municipal services, enabling them (1) to promote and exchange practices, (2) to present their plans and projects, (3) and to market their products and services for the improvement of municipal services in SEE.

As a base for development of the Matchmaking Platform, NALAS conducted a Needs Assessment among municipalities on one hand, and the private sector on the other hand. This Assessment revealed the needs of the municipalities, identified companies (suppliers, service providers, investors, banks, investment funds and other private companies interested in operating municipal services), and their potential offers through such Matchmaking Platform, to be implemented during NEXPO and beyond. It will include identification and assessment of the:

- Demand and supply of municipalities for investment/partnership projects with private sector aiming to improve service delivery as well as increase the levels of local economic development and create new value, in all municipal services areas, with a special focus on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energies;
- Upcoming municipal projects in the area of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energies in the next 5 years;
- Demand and supply of the private companies for investment/partnership projects with local governments aiming to improve service delivery and create new value, in all areas, with a special focus on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energies;

- Companies investment strategies and projects in the area of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energies in the next 5 years;
- Value drivers, market opportunities as well as obstacles for partnerships projects between the two sectors;
- Matchmaking tools and mechanisms that work for both the local governments and the business sector;
- Interest to use NEXPO 2013 as a matchmaking platform.

The Needs Assessment consisted of the following elements:

1. Survey of municipalities in all 12 NALAS LGA member countries;
2. In-depth analysis of municipalities in 3 NALAS LGA member countries (Croatia, Bulgaria, Serbia);
3. Survey and in-depth analysis (based on interviews and focus groups) of the business sector in 6 countries (Croatia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Slovenia, Germany and Turkey), focusing on the leading companies in the Energy sector.

The Needs Assessment report will be provided to the selected consultant for a detailed review and consideration when designing the Matchmaking Platform.

8. Scope and Objectives of the Assignment

Based on the Needs Assessment findings, contributions from the Advisory Board, GIZ/ORF and NALAS contributions, the Contractor will:

- Develop a comprehensive Matchmaking Platform for SEE municipalities and business sector to be utilized within the International Municipal Fair NEXPO 2013 and beyond, with variety of elements and tools that provide for the best exchange and interaction of municipalities and businesses both on national and SEE level. The Matchmaking Platform should take into consideration NALAS mission, organization and structure. For developing the Matchmaking Platform and its elements, the Consultant should consider experiences of other Matchmaking Platforms, International Fairs and other similar events, the way they function, replication potentials, their applicability to NALAS and NEXPO context, etc.
- Prepare a detailed action plan for implementation of the NALAS Matchmaking Platform, both within NEXPO 2013 and beyond, including detailed activities, tools, distribution of NALAS and its members roles and responsibilities, potential partnerships/involvement with/of other relevant actors (suppliers, service providers, investors, banks, investment funds and other private companies interested in operating municipal services), etc.
- Develop a business plan for the Matchmaking Platform, including, but not limited to: business description: mission statement, business overview, products and services; market analysis: market characteristics, target customer profile; competitors assessment; marketing plan: products and services, prices, distribution, promotion; operating plan: ownership and management, resources and production, legal issues; financial plan; executive summary.
- Prepare guidelines for Local Government Associations and Local Governments on matchmaking, NALAS Matchmaking Platform Offer and preparing for result-oriented matchmaking.

In preparation of NEXPO 2013, NALAS has formed a Steering Committee for the event, as well as Matchmaking Platform Advisory Board. The Contractor shall work closely with both of these bodies during the whole period. Specifically, the Contractor shall attend the Second Advisory Board Meeting to be held in Rijeka, the Republic of Croatia, from 8-9 May 2013 and facilitate sessions to collect inputs on the elements of the Matchmaking Platform. The Contractor shall also attend the Third (and last) Advisory Board Meeting to be held in June 2013. There, the

Contractor shall present the final Matchmaking Platform and facilitate sessions to design a Roadmap for its implementation.

All activities during the implementation of the task will be closely coordinated with NALAS to ensure coordination of approaches, activities, message delivery and branding.

All activities within this assignment shall be completed no later than 24 June 2013.

9. Deliverables under the contract

- a) Detailed plan for developing NALAS Matchmaking Platform (*1 week after signing the contract*)
- b) Review of matchmaking functions provided in relevant Matchmaking Platforms, International Fairs and other similar events, the way they function, replication potentials, their applicability to NALAS and NEXPO context, etc. and identification of operators (*by 30 April 2013*);
- c) Draft concept for NALAS Matchmaking Platform, based on the Needs Assessment Report, to serve as a starting point for discussions at the Second Advisory Board Meeting (*by 6 May 2013*);
- d) Draft NALAS Matchmaking Platform for SEE municipalities and business sector designed and submitted to NALAS (*by 22 May 2013*);
- e) Draft action plan for implementation of the NALAS Matchmaking Platform, including detailed activities, tools, responsibilities, partnerships, etc. submitted to NALAS (*by 1 June 2013*);
- f) Draft business plan for NALAS Matchmaking Platform submitted to NALAS (*by 1 June 2013*);
- g) A draft Guidelines for Local Government Associations and Local Governments on matchmaking, NALAS Matchmaking Platform Offer and preparing for result-oriented matchmaking (*by 15 June 2013*);
- h) Final versions of NALAS Matchmaking Platform, Action Plan for implementation, Business Plan and Guidelines (incorporating NALAS, GIZ/ORF and Advisory Board's inputs) delivered to NALAS (*by 24 June 2013*).

10. Proposal submission

The following format and sequence should be followed in order to provide consistency in Consultants' responses and to ensure each proposal receives full and fair consideration. All pages should be consecutively numbered.

Technical Offer:

- a) Cover Page, showing Consultant's name, address and contact information;
- b) Up to one page Letter of Introduction, signed by an authorized signatory;
- c) Table of Contents, including page numbers;
- d) Presentation of the consultant and his/her suitability for the assignment;
- e) A short summary of the key features of the proposal;
- f) Body of the proposal, including: objectives, approach, key possible matchmaking tools, proposed time frame and activity plan.

Financial Offer:

- g) The Financial Offer shall contain the total budget for execution of the task, showing separately the travel costs, expert fees and additional expenditures (if any). The prices should be stated in EUROS, VAT shown separately, following the specified Terms of Payment in this RfP.

Capacity Guarantee:

- h) A consultant Reference List with at least 3 similar tasks conducted in the SEE Region;
- i) Detailed CV/CVs of the experts proposed to execute the assignment;

- j) Documents confirming the financial capability of the consultant (only in the case of a company).

11. Technical or professional ability of the applicants

In order to qualify as capable of performing the contract for public procurement in terms of its technical and professional qualifications, the applying consultant/company must meet the following minimum requirements:

- The Consultant has a solid expertise in matchmaking, designing and/or organising international fairs or other similar events with participation of companies and municipalities;
- The consultant has prepared/executed at least 3 similar assignments in the SEE Region;
- The Consultant has solid track records in Market research, Market analysis and product development, marketing strategy (ideally for companies marketing products or services to local governments);
- In the case of a company, the consultant has the necessary financial capability, presented in the financial reports.

12. Evaluation Criteria and Scoring

Evaluation of proposals will be undertaken by NALAS Evaluation Committee. At the sole discretion of the Committee, a short list of the highest scored consultants will be developed. Short listed applicants may be invited to make a presentation to the Committee either in Rijeka or in Skopje. After the presentation(s), the Committee will re-evaluate the short-listed proposals.

The proposals will be evaluated and rated based on the criteria set out in this Request for Proposal document. In order to do so:

- the proposal must be submitted in English;
- the proposal must be submitted by the stated deadline;
- the proposal must clearly list, in details, what services will be provided with the associated costs for each component;
- the responses must contain a list of references of past projects and work of this nature, with contact names and telephone numbers.

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

- 60% Consultant's/Organizational Capacity: relevance of consultant's expertise and experience for fulfilling the tasks under this RfP;
- 20% Technical Offer: proposed methodology, work plan, ideas for the matchmaking platform;
- 20% Financial Offer.

13. Terms of Payment

The payment will be done in 3 instalments after receiving all specified documents:

1. Advance instalment of 20% of the total price after the signing of the contract;
2. Second instalment of 30% of the total price, after the submission of the Draft NALAS Matchmaking Platform for SEE municipalities and business sector designed and submitted to NALAS (*to be submitted by 22 May 2013*)
3. Third and final instalment of 50% after submission of the final versions of NALAS Matchmaking Platform, Action Plan for implementation, Business Plan and Guidebook (incorporating NALAS, GIZ/ORF and Advisory Board's inputs) (*to be submitted by 24 June 2013*)

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.

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.