# Request for Proposals

# Elaboration of a Needs Assessment Study

Opening date: 28 December 2012 | Closing date: 15 January 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 elaborate a Needs Assessment Study of the municipalities and the private sector in a selected number of countries which will serve as a base for development of the Matchmaking Platform to be utilized for 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.

## 2. Invitation

Teams of individual consultants, businesses or companies with proven experience and expertise in planning and execution of Needs Assessment Studies 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

1. “NALAS” means the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe;
2. “Contract” means the written agreement resulting from the Request for Proposal executed by the NALAS Secretariat and the successful vendor;
3. “Contractor” means the successful vendor selected from this Request for Proposal;
4. “Must”, “Mandatory” or “Required” means a requirement that must be met in order for a proposal to receive consideration;
5. “Consultant” means a team of individuals 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 a sealed envelope no later than 16:00 (CET),

14 January 2013, at the following address:

NALAS, Partizanski odredi 42/7, Skopje 1000, Macedonia

Proposals and their envelopes must be clearly marked with the name and address of the consultant and the name of the Project: “Request for Proposals: Elaboration of a Needs Assessment Study”. Technical and financial offer should be presented in separate, clearly marked envelopes.

The proposal package must include two (2) hard copies, along with one (1) digital copy, in PDF format on a CD-Rom or USB flash drive.

## 5. Enquiries

This Request for Proposal can be downloaded from the NALAS website at [www.nalas.eu](http://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](mailto: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, in partnership with 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 stakeholders interested in operating or investing in 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 expected to develop a sustainable cooperation platform for local governments as well as stakeholders from the private sector, 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.

In order to achieve this, NALAS is planning to develop an exchange solution (a Matchmaking Platform) that would enable the municipalities and the private sector to simultaneously identify what they have to offer to each other, and how to utilize NEXPO in doing so. The process of matchmaking would support the utilization of the overlapping interests of both sides in a jointly favourable manner, thus supporting not only the development of the municipalities, but also general economic development in the region and the respective country. Prior to the commencement of the preparation of the Matchmaking platform, NALAS needs outside assistance and plans to engage a team of individual consultants or a consulting company to elaborate a Needs Assessment Study of the municipalities and the private sector which will serve as a base for development of this Matchmaking Platform.

## 8. Scope and Objectives of the Assignment

The Needs Assessment will reveal the needs of the municipalities and the potential stakeholders from the private sector, but also of what they have to offer to each other 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 will consist of the following elements:

1. Survey of municipalities in all 12 NALAS LGA member countries. The survey should provide response from at least 10% of all municipalities in each country, representing variety of municipal sizes and characteristics;

2. In-depth analysis of municipalities in 3 NALAS LGA member countries (Croatia, Bulgaria, Serbia);

3. Survey and in-depth analysis of the business sector in 6 countries (Croatia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Slovenia, Germany and Turkey), focusing on the leading companies in the Energy sector.

The detailed assessment methodology should be proposed by the selected consulting company, based on the use of tolls such as: questionnaires, focus groups, interviews, etc., as well as on the inputs from NALAS and its relevant bodies. In each of the researched countries, the same combination of tools and research steps will be undertaken in order to secure comparability of the results.

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.

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

The duration of the assignment cannot be extended longer than 8 weeks after signing of the contract and commencement of the assignment.

## 9. Support from NALAS and its partners in implementation of the Assignment

NALAS, as a Network of 15 Local Government Associations (LGAs), will support this assignment through:

1. Providing its data base of municipal contacts;

2. Providing contacts of the respective Local Government Associations;

3. Providing a network of NALAS Knowledge Management Assistants support the implementation of the assignment;

4. Providing contacts of the partner Economic Chambers in some of the countries.

It is expected that the vendor coordinates all its activities with NALAS and its member LGAs and regulates the relationships with all partners on commercial basis.

## 10. Deliverables under the contract

1. Detailed methodology for execution of the research and finalized time and action plan for the execution of the assignment (*1 week after the commencement of the assignment*)
2. Short summary/report on the implementation of the research in the selected countries including lists of participating companies, municipalities and institutions (*3 weeks after the finalization and acceptance of the agreed Methodology and Action plan by NALAS*).
3. Draft detailed Assessment Study based on the results of the research (*2 weeks after the finalization of the research and submission of the short summary/report to NALAS*):

* Overview of 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 and beyond.
* Catalogue of potential municipal projects in the area of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energies in SEE.
* Overview of municipalities' interest to attend NEXPO and specific areas of interest.
* Contact list of municipalities-potential participants at NEXPO.
* Overview of 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.
* Overview of companies' investment strategies and projects in the area of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energies in the next 5 years.
* Overview of companies' interest to use NEXPO as a matchmaking platform and specific areas of interest.
* Contact list of companies-potential participants at NEXPO.
* Summary of value drivers, market opportunities as well as obstacles for partnerships projects between the two sectors.
* Overview and recommendations for the matchmaking tools and mechanisms that work for both the local governments and the business sector.
* LGA best practice developed based on the matchmaking experiences of the Croatian Association of Cities.

1. Final Assessment Study with included comments and suggestions from the NALAS / Advisory Board (*2 weeks after the provision of comments and suggestions for improvement of the Draft Study by NALAS*). The end deliverable must include a digital version of the report in Word and PDF format and two hard copies of the final report, including all attachments.

## 11. Proposal submission

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

*Technical Offer:*

1. Title Page, showing Consultant name, address and contact information;
2. One page letter of introduction, signed by an authorized signatory;
3. Table of Contents, including page numbers;
4. A presentation of the consultant and its suitability for the assignment;
5. A short summary of the key features of the proposal;
6. The body of the proposal focusing on the Methodology of the proposed research approach, including: objectives, a detailed research approach including the tools planned to be used during the execution of the assignment and the rationale behind their use, individual approach in each of the research countries, proposed time and activity plan.

*Financial Offer:*

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

*Organizational Capacity Guarantee:*

1. A consultant Reference List with at least 3 similar researches conducted in the SEE Region;
2. CVs of the experts proposed to execute the assignment.
3. Documents confirming the financial capability of the consultant.

## 12. 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 companies / teams of consultants must meet the following minimum requirements:

* the consultant has prepared/executed at least 3 similar researches in the SEE Region, including research of local government and the business sector (a Company Reference List);
* the consultant has the necessary financial capability, presented in their financial reports, and
* the consultant has a team of at least three (2) experts in the relevant fields.

Expert 1 - Local Government Expert

* A degree in Local Governance, Local Development, Public Administration, Economics, Engineering or equivalent;
* At least 7 years of relevant professional experience, in at least 3 (three) NALAS member countries;
* Experience in researches, analyses and preparation of other development documents in the field of local and regional economic development, entrepreneurship, private-public partnerships, and other topics linked to the areas of the research in this RfP;
* Developed assessment, conceptual and analytical skills, able to communicate and synthesize complex ideas to different audiences;
* Practice of networking with national, regional and local government institutions, association of municipalities as well as international agencies;
* Additional practice in policy advice to different levels of government on private sector development, creation of private sector development policies, would be an advantage;
* Additional practice in policy advice to local/regional government and support in performance improvement through training, capacity building and organizational reform, would be an advantage.

Expert 2 - Private Sector Expert

* A degree in Engineering, Economics or equivalent;
* At least 7 years of relevant professional experience in at least 3 (three) NALAS member countries;
* Experience in researches, analyses and assessment studies with involvement of the private sector in the field of local and regional economic development, private-public partnerships, and other topics linked to the areas of the research in this RfP;
* Developed assessment, conceptual and analytical skills, able to communicate and synthesize complex ideas to different audiences;
* Practice of networking with national, regional and local government institutions, association of municipalities as well as international agencies;
* Additional experience in supporting the development of private sector entities by providing consultancy support in the areas of business planning, strategy development, investment decisions, private-public partnerships or similar, would be an advantage.

Ideally, the team should also include a methodology expert, who will harmonize field approach, will analyze data and develop the report.

One of the proposed experts will assume the responsibility of a team leader and will be in charge of the communication to the NALAS and its relevant bodies.

## 13. 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 in English;
* the proposal must be submitted by the appropriate date and time;
* the proposal must clearly list, in detail, 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:

* 30% Methodology and approach – a work plan including the proposed method to accomplish the tasks identified in the Request for Proposal. Provide a brief description of your approach to execute the research, including: objectives, a detailed research approach including the tools planned to be used during the execution of the assignment and the rationale behind their use, individual approach in each of the research countries, proposed time and activity plan, based on the requirements provided in this Request for Proposal including explanation of any modification you would make.
* 20% Quality of the team - Appropriateness of the proposed consultants and fulfilling of the qualifications for the professional ability of the applicants in this this RfP.
* 20% Previous Experience in undertaking similar work - indicate the number of projects of similar professional services and type or the number of projects of similar scale. Examples and samples of similar researches and other reports of a similar nature that have been prepared by the consulting company. Provide references from previous clients including specific contacts and phone numbers.
* 20% Cost and Ability to Meet Deadlines - the Financial Offer with a total budget for execution of the Needs Assessment Study, broken into the travel costs, expert fees and additional expenditures (if any) with associated timelines and a detailed explanation of the deliverables and services you will provide to NALAS. The prices should be stated in EUROS, VAT excluded, following the specified Terms of Payment in this RfP.

## 14. 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 20% of the total price, after the submission of the detailed methodology for execution of the research, agreed time and action plan for the execution of the assignment, finalization of the research and submission of the Short summary of the implementation of the research in the selected countries;
3. Third and final instalment of 60% after submission and approval from of the Final Assessment Study with included comments and suggestions from the NALAS / Advisory Board.

## 15. Modification of Terms

NALAS reserves the right to modify the terms of the RfP at any time at its sole discretion.

## 16. 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.

Also, the selected Vendor will be invited to present the results of the Assessment during the Advisory Board Meeting to be held in March 2013.

## 17. 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.

## 18. 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.