

Request for Proposals and Terms of Reference

Development of the e-Learning Course: Capital Infrastructure Investment Projects in the Water and Sanitation Sector

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”), within the project “Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services (RCDN)”, supported by SECO and BMZ/GIZ requests proposals from interested organisations/companies for the provision of professional services to develop the e-Learning Course “Capital Infrastructure Investment Projects in the Water and Sanitation Sector”.

2. Invitation

Organisations/companies with proven experience and expertise in teaching and learning methodologies, ICT, preferably developing e-learning courses, interactive multi-media products and on-line learning tools are invited to respond to this Request for Proposals.

3. Request for Proposals Terminology

The following terms will apply to this Request for Proposals (RfP) and Terms of Reference (ToR) 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 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 not later than **23 August 2021 (Monday), 16:00** (CET) at info@nalas.eu, with Subject: Offer for development of the e-Learning Course “Capital Infrastructure Investment Projects in the Water and Sanitation Sector”.

5. Enquiries

This Request for Proposal can be downloaded from the NALAS website at www.nalas.eu. For any questions about the content of this RfP, please contact NALAS Knowledge and Communications Manager, Ms. Jelena Janevska, at janevska@nalas.eu, or +389 2 3090818.

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 contractor 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

The project “Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN) for Water and Sanitation Services” aims at increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the water utilities in the Western Balkans, contributing to better service provision with larger numbers of population groups getting access to drinking water and sanitation services and meeting the EU environmental Acquis Communautaire.

The project is jointly financed by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and development (BMZ), and it is administratively embedded in the GIZ Project “Open Regional Fund for Southeast Europe - Modernisation of Municipal Services (ORF MMS)”, commissioned by BMZ.

Three key sets of activities will contribute to achieve the RCDN project outcomes:

- Outcome 1: The Associations of water utilities and municipalities in the Western Balkans, in cooperation with NALAS and IAWD, are enabled to deliver quality capacity development measures to water utilities and municipalities in the frame of the RCDN in a financially sustainable manner.
- Outcome 2: Management and technical staff of water utilities and public officials of municipalities have access to and make use of RCDN’s high-quality, demand-oriented and standardised capacity development products.
- Outcome 3: National Authorities, International Financial Institutions and Donors promote the use as well as contribute to the improvement of the RCDN capacity development offer.

The RCDN builds upon and integrates the existing Capacity Development (CD) activities, on regional as well as national levels, and facilitates scaling-up and further replication throughout the region. Strengthening capacities of associations for collaborative CD delivery is core of the methodological approach. The project provides the necessary assistance for introducing and enhancing functional capabilities, procedures and instruments that allow the RCDN partner associations to deliver fee-based CD products to water utilities and municipalities in an effective manner.

To this end, the project works with 14 associations of municipalities and water utilities from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as their regional networks NALAS and IAWD, to facilitate and coordinate CD initiatives in the region and to support the delivery of CD measures to water utilities and municipalities in the respective countries. It also involves further key stakeholders, such as lending institutions (International Financial Institutions – IFIs, etc.) active in the infrastructure sector which are interested in strengthening capacities to develop and secure their operations in the water and sanitation sector or Donors which may benefit from a regional platform to identify CD needs, dialogue with the stakeholders and their design policies.

Within its rich CD offer, NALAS, as a partner organisation in the RCDN Project Implementation Team, developed a comprehensive training “Capital Infrastructure Investment Projects in the Water and Sanitation Sector” that has been offered face-to-face throughout the region. Aiming to reach wider audiences, and in the view of the COVID-19 crisis, NALAS aims to develop the e-learning course “Capital Infrastructure Investment Projects in the Water and Sanitation Sector”, that will become an integrated part of NALAS e-Academy.

Therefore, NALAS invites organisations/companies with relevant experience and expertise to submit proposal for developing the e-learning course “Capital Infrastructure Investment Projects in the Water and Sanitation Sector”.

8. Scope and Objectives of the Assignment

The e-learning course “Capital Infrastructure Investment Projects in the Water and Sanitation Sector” shall be developed in English language, based on the available participants’ manual for the training “Capital Infrastructure Investment Projects in the Water and Sanitation Sector”.

The course is targeting elected officials, decision-makers and managers in municipalities and public utility companies. The overall objective of the course is to enable participants to prepare, develop and implement capital infrastructure investment projects.

The specific objectives of the course are to provide the participants with the necessary framework, general knowledge and skills to:

- Get familiar with the tasks and roles and responsibilities for bankable project preparation, access to funding and implementation,
- Comprehend the key elements and stages of project cycle management,
- Fulfil the legal requirements and ensure the necessary institutional framework for capital infrastructure project implementation.

After the course, the participants will be able to access funding for bankable capital infrastructure investment projects, fulfil IFIs’ and donor requirements and provide adequate organisation and support in all stages of project cycle management.

The course shall be organised in up to 5 modules and last up to 6 weeks. The specific modules and their content shall be based on the manual, methodologically adjusted and updated by the contractor.

The e-learning course shall include a number of technical and visual solutions to support the learning process, such as readings, presentations, presentations with voiceover, videos, quizzes, exercises, case studies, etc. This e-learning course will contribute to sustain and further implement project results even when the project is completed.

The e-learning course “Capital Infrastructure Investment Projects in the Water and Sanitation Sector” will be part of NALAS e-Academy (<http://nalas-academy.com/>), and thus be developed based on the standards introduced in the existing courses offered by NALAS e-Academy.

Within this ToR the Contractor will:

- 1) *Review the manual for the training “Capital Infrastructure Investment Projects in the Water and Sanitation Sector”, as a base for developing the e-learning course.*
- 2) *Develop the e-learning course instruction design, including:*
 - Developing the curriculum for the course and defining course specific objectives by using the RCDN standardised template Curriculum Form,
 - Defining course structure and sequencing (course plan with modules, sessions and lessons) for meeting the course objectives,
 - Selecting instructional techniques (specific learning tools, such as: readings, presentations, presentations with voiceover, videos, quizzes, exercises, case studies, etc.),
 - Creating interactive course content. If necessary, the contractor shall adjust and update the manual content to meet the objectives of the course.

- 3) *Develop the visual look and complete technical solution for a comprehensive e-learning course.* This shall include technical development of all the elements of the course instruction design, as listed above.

The course must be developed in the Moodle platform. It should ensure appropriate platform for management of the course, including registration of participants, assigning roles (course coordinator, course moderator), system for automatic scoring and review of performance by the course coordinator and facilitator, automatic e-mail notifications (for forum posts, assignments, etc.), calendar of events, and all other functionalities that the latest version of Moodle can provide.

- 4) *Enable testing and validation of the course,* with a focus group organised by NALAS.
- 5) *Improve the course* based on the input solicited during the testing and validation.
- 6) *Provide one virtual training for course coordinators and moderators,* that will include overview of the course content, teaching methods and tools, thus enabling future coordinators and moderators to moderate the course independently in the future.

The developed e-learning course “Capital Infrastructure Investment Projects in the Water and Sanitation Sector” should take into consideration RCDN and NALAS mission, objectives, strategies, specifics, as well as visual identity.

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

All activities within this ToR shall be completed no later than **30 November 2021**, with the following timeframe:

Activity	To be completed by
Develop the e-learning course curriculum and instruction design	20 September 2021
Develop the complete technical solution for the course	25 October 2021
Testing and validation of the course	8 November 2021
Finalization of the course	22 November 2021
Virtual training for course moderators	30 November 2021

9. Deliverables under the contract

As result of the contract, the full comprehensive e-learning course “Capital Infrastructure Investment Projects in the Water and Sanitation Sector” should be developed, in Moodle platform, in English language. In details, this includes:

- a) Developing the curriculum and instructional design for the course;
- b) Developing the visual look of the course;
- c) Developing the full content of the course in English language, including introduction to the course and all online learning tools for each of modules, as specified in details under Section 8;
- d) Developing a fully functional back-end functionalities of the course, as specified in details under Section 8;
- e) Embedding the produced course at NALAS e-Academy (Moodle platform);
- f) Providing training and users manual for administering the course.

All deliverables under this ToR should be approved by NALAS Knowledge and Communications Manager.

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 Company's name, address and contact information;
- b) Up to one page Letter of Introduction, signed by an authorised signatory;
- c) Table of Contents, including page numbers;
- d) Presentation of the company and its suitability for the assignment;
- e) A short summary of the key features of the proposal;
- f) Body of the proposal, including: objectives, approach, 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 expert fees and additional expenditures (if any). The prices should be stated in EUROS, VAT shown separately, following the specified Terms of Payment.

Capacity Guarantee:

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

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 company must meet the following minimum requirements:

- The company has a solid expertise in ICT, developing e-learning courses and developing on-line learning tools;
- The company has prepared/executed at least 3 similar assignments;
- The proposed staff has more than seven years of experience in the field of local government and Public Utility Companies functioning, with focus on sustainability of water and sanitation sector, as well as experience in capacity development at local level, with focus on online learning.

12. Evaluation Criteria and Scoring

Evaluation of proposals will be undertaken by NALAS Evaluation Committee. The proposals will be evaluated and rated based on the criteria set out in this RfP. 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:

- 40% Company's Capacity: relevance of company's and suggested personnel's expertise and experience for fulfilling the tasks under this RfP. Previous experience with NALAS and familiarity with NALAS and RCDN capacity development approach and quality standards will be considered as an asset;
- 30% Technical Offer: proposed approach, solutions, work plan;
- 30% Financial Offer.

13. Terms of Payment

The payment will be done in 2 instalments after receiving all specified documents:

1. First instalment after delivering and approval of the deliverable a) Developing the curriculum and instructional design for the course, based on the budgeted costs for these activities;
2. Second and final instalment of the remaining budget, after completing the assignment and approval of all other deliverables, as described in Chapters 8 and 9 of this RfP. *(to be submitted no later than 30 November 2021).*

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.

18. Ownership

All materials, documents and information prepared, developed or adjusted by the contractor for the purposes of realisation of the assignment under this ToR, remain the property of NALAS. The contractor agrees that no part of the training materials, documents and information may be reproduced or distributed in any form, or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, for any other purposes and objectives than those related to this ToR.

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.