

## Terms of References

### Expert - Local Economic Development and public investment management

Polaris: Supporting Multilevel Governance in Ukraine 2024-2028

#### About SALAR International & its engagement in Ukraine

SALAR International is a subsidiary of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), representing all 290 municipalities and 21 regions in Sweden. As the international branch of SALAR, we work globally to support local democracy and good governance in developing and transitioning countries. Our expertise covers areas such as capacity building in municipal management and service delivery, local and regional development planning, support for local government associations, decentralisation policies and European integration. Geographically, SALAR International's projects cover countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, the Middle East and the Sub-Saharan Africa.

SALAR International has been engaged in Ukraine since 2014, providing support to Ukraine's decentralisation process through three major initiatives focusing on building a robust multi-level governance system, increasing accessibility and quality of services at the local level, and enhancing international cooperation between municipalities from Ukraine and the EU. After the full-scale invasion, SALAR International has added crisis support to Ukrainian municipalities, providing them with material assistance.

#### Description of the assignment context

SALAR International has supported Ukraine's Decentralisation reform since 2014 through the projects PROSTO and Decentralisation Support Project (DSP), funded by Sweden, and also as implementing partner within the U-LEAD with Europe Programme, funded by the EU. To address the changing needs of Ukrainian municipalities and national level stakeholders during wartime, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) in 2024 initiated a broader programme in support of multilevel governance and recovery. This programme is called **"Polaris: Supporting Multi-level Governance in Ukraine"**. It is implemented by SALAR International and planned for four years (July 2024-May 2028).

Polaris Programme aims to work with both short and long-term focus, addressing the needs of the multi-level governance system in Ukraine and in parallel strengthening municipalities' public service provision, as well as their direct engagement in the recovery and reconstruction processes, in line with the requirements of Ukraine's EU accession.

The programme's support is provided through two operational components: one focusing on policy and collaboration with national stakeholders, and the other providing direct support to municipalities. The support encompasses five thematic areas: Education, Fiscal Decentralisation and Budgeting, Administrative Service Provision, Locally-led Recovery, and International Municipal Cooperation. In addition, the programme will provide material support to meet short-term material crisis needs of municipalities. For more long-term material support and funding of implementation of

recovery plans, the programme will coordinate with other international actors and funding institutions.

To uphold previous gains in Ukraine's decentralisation process, it will be important for Municipalities to demonstrate that they can lead local recovery and reconstruction efforts, in dialogue with their respective communities, as well as regional and national authorities. However, many Municipalities in Ukraine do not possess adequate spatial or strategic planning capacity. To overcome this gap, technical assistance is needed to support local planning processes, including the identification of bankable recovery and reconstruction projects.

The work within the Polaris Programme's thematic area "Locally-led Recovery" is focused mainly on recovery planning in 13 selected partner municipalities affected by the Russian aggression. A strong emphasis is placed on: local ownership of the process by Municipalities; evidence-based formal spatial planning and strategic recovery planning drawing from a range of data sources; holistic and integrated planning; sustainability perspectives and future-oriented scenario planning; and the establishment of synergies between local and regional planning.

Based on the recovery planning process, Municipalities will be supported to identify projects that address specific service delivery and infrastructure priorities. Projects should be catalytic by nature, with the aim of stimulating local recovery, as well as further recovery financing. SALAR International will assist Municipalities to follow, and ensure mechanisms to report back to the community on, specific project implementation.

The pilot methodology is being iteratively developed, based on internationally recognised approaches to resilience, recovery and sustainable urban development, tailored to the Ukrainian context and taking account of Ukrainian urban planning and local development legislation, in coordination with the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development of Ukraine. Based on the pilots, SALAR International and partners are also engaging in national policy dialogue on the framework for recovery and reconstruction, also taking account of the requirements of Ukraine's EU integration process.

The duration for support to selected municipalities is provided from April 2025 to June 2026.

### **Organisational set up**

The programme is a joint Swedish-Ukrainian initiative with management structures in both Stockholm and Kyiv. It encourages a flat organisational structure, meaning a high degree of autonomy and responsibility for involved experts, as well as strong local ownership among beneficiaries such as national stakeholders and Ukrainian municipalities.

It is expected that more than 50 people will be working full-time in Ukraine within various thematic teams as well as support units as part of the Polaris Programme. The thematic team for Locally-led Recovery currently consists of 6 people, but the team will be expanded through recruitment of a pool of implementing organisations and thematic experts in the fields of spatial planning, environment, local economic development, etc.

The Polaris programme has its office in Kyiv but implements activities in all regions controlled by the Ukrainian government. Currently, the Locally-led Recovery team has established partnership with 13 municipalities in Kyiv, Sumy, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Mykolaiv regions.

## Role description

This is a short term assignment involves engaging a thematic expert in local economic development. **The expert will take a leading role in identifying and prioritizing catalytic development projects that will have the greatest impact on the development of partner communities. The expert will be engaged to analyze the current situation, needs, and economic development options in partner communities, as well as to assist communities in developing strategic and spatial planning documents that align with their development needs.** The work will include contributing to the refinement and finalization of the methodology, as well as strengthening the capacity of partner communities in this thematic area.

The Expert in Local Economic Development will be part of the Locally-led Recovery team and will work under guidance of SALAR International's local and international Team Leaders, in close cooperation with the other experts and members of the Polaris Programme team, although primarily with the thematic team for Locally-led Recovery.

## Main responsibilities

- To identify and to prioritize catalytic development projects that will have the greatest impact on the partner municipalities' development.
- Analyze regional and national strategic documents to synchronize regional and national interests in local economy development at the partner municipalities level.
- Assistance in collecting and analyzing data necessary to determine trends for forecasting the economic development and growth/degrowth trends of the partner municipalities. Hold individual meetings with identified community stakeholders for data collection and consultations.
- Identify and analyze the economic sectors and value chains crucial for the development of the partner municipalities' territory, spatial aspects of economic development, and propose models for the strengthening of economic activities.
- Participate in the development of a SWOT analysis for partner municipalities within a larger group of experts.
- Participate in the identification of possible future development scenarios of the partner hromadas to inform planning considerations jointly with the broader group of experts.
- Contribute to the formulation of a vision, strategic goals, objectives, and action plans for strategic and spatial planning documents.
- Assistance to partner municipalities in developing/conducting an assessment of the medium-term plan of priority public investments, public investment projects, and programs.
- Provide advisory and training support to partner municipalities in the specific thematic area of local economic development and on entering project information into DREAM.
- Provide advisory support to partner municipalities regarding the specifics of competitions and the preparation of project funding applications, including those funded by international institutions.
- Participate in working meetings and field visits to the partner municipalities.
- Provide written contributions that capture key observations, recommendations, outcomes etc. to inform programme learning, as well as outward communication and advocacy.
- Consult Local-led Recovery team and partner municipalities on applying Ukrainian legislation in the field of strategic and recovery planning, and public investment management at the local level.

## **Qualifications**

- Advanced university degree (master's degree or equivalent) in economy, geography, regional planning, sociology, public policy or a related field.
- Strong analytical, communication, and project management skills, enabling successful execution of complex, multi-stakeholder initiatives.
- A minimum of five years of relevant professional work experience in local economic development, strategic planning on municipal level.
- Proven experience in producing analysis and strategic planning documents.
- Experience in preparing preliminary feasibility studies for projects.
- Experience of capacity building processes targeting Municipalities in matters of economic development.
- Strong command of English and Ukrainian as working languages, ability to deliver documents and professional discussion in both languages.

## **Merits**

- Knowledge of and interest in local self-governance and decentralisation reform processes, as well as public investment management in Ukraine; DREAM knowledge is preferable.
- Knowledge of trends in regional and local development, as well as current development projects in at least in part of the following regions: Kyiv, Sumy, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Mykolaiv.
- Experience in elaboration Strategies and regional planning documents..
- Previous work for Municipalities and programmes of international technical support, financial institutions.

## **Diversity and equal opportunities**

SALAR International embraces diversity and respects human rights in all areas of its work. SALAR International strives to create a gender-equal and diverse working environment. Team members shall respect equal rights of individuals and strive to create an atmosphere where people's differences are accepted and valued. SALAR International supports working arrangements that enable personnel to combine work with family commitments.

## **Conditions**

A consultancy contract will be signed between SALAR International and the expert which will outline the conditions for the position in detail. Please note this position is not an employment position, meaning that applicants must be established as consultants and will be liable to pay all relevant taxes and insurances in Ukraine.

A competitive consultancy fee will be offered to the successful candidate.

**Expected number of working days:** up to 70.

**Duration:** from October 2025 for 7 months with the possibility of extension.

**Location:** Kyiv, partial physical presence in the Program office in Kyiv is required, as well as ability to travel to partner municipalities.

### **Application Instructions**

Interested and qualified candidates should send their CV and motivation letter preferably in English to: [ukraine@salarinternational.se](mailto:ukraine@salarinternational.se) Please indicate in the subject line "Expert in Local Economic Development to Recovery team".

The deadline is **September 29, 2025**. The early applications are encouraged, and applications will be take into account on the rolling base.

Candidates will be considered on a rolling basis, and only finalists will be contacted.

If you have any questions or clarifications, please contact [ukraine@salarinternational.se](mailto:ukraine@salarinternational.se)

Personal information provided by the applicant during the selection process will be processed by SALAR International.

[www.polaris.org.ua](http://www.polaris.org.ua)