

Terms of References

Senior Policy Advisor

Polaris Programme: Support to multi-level governance in Ukraine

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) has 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).

The 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 and the starosta institute, 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 coordinates with other international actors and funding institutions

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.

As of February 2026, more than 60 Ukrainian and international experts are working full-time in Ukraine or remotely from abroad across various thematic teams and support units. A dedicated Policy Team was established in 2025 to promote policy issues and positions arising from the programme's cooperation with local self-government. The Policy Team consists of a Ukraine-based Policy Coordinator and an international Senior Policy Advisor, with input from key experts across the relevant thematic areas.

The Programme has its main office in Kyiv but the support and activities target local self-government in all regions of Ukraine and are implemented in all regions controlled by the Ukrainian government. The support is provided on demand, in most cases through open calls.

Role description

The role primarily involves providing advice on advocacy and policy matters, as well as supporting strategic decision-making and prioritisation related to the complex areas of the Polaris Programme. The Senior Policy Advisor will work closely with both the Policy Team and the Programme Management Team, engage in dialogue with partners and relevant stakeholders, and report as part of the Policy team to the Management Team.

Main responsibilities:

- Monitor reforms in Ukraine and continuously identify areas where further work/reforms are required in relation the thematic areas of the programme;
- Support the Programme's thematic teams with guidance on policy matters and on strategic decisions;
- Support in organisation of regional policy related events;
- Support the Policy Team in developing policy papers and reports within different thematic areas;
- Collect data, reports, and analysis for monitoring and evaluation, contributing to programme performance summaries and reporting;
- Advise the Policy Team and propose consultations on synergies with other national, regional and local initiatives and cooperation with other projects and programmes (other donors/projects, communities, government officials);
- Any other responsibilities and tasks within policy areas as needed.

Qualifications:

- University degree, minimum Master Level, in social/political science, economics, business administration, management, economics, law, development studies or similar;

- At least 10 years work experience in the sphere of policy/advocacy in Ukrainian context;
- Understanding of decentralisation processes, local governance, and public administration;
- Ability to analyse complex policy issues and process data to inform decisions;
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills for drafting reports, proposals, public speaking and correspondence;
- Capacity to build and maintain relationships with stakeholders, government officials and representatives from non-governmental organisations;
- Ability to work in a multicultural environment;
- Fluent in Ukrainian;
- At least intermediate English;
- Proficiency in office software (e.g., Microsoft Office, Google Workspace).

Merits:

- Good understanding of international development cooperation;
- Experience of working with local authorities and/or local government associations;
- Knowledge of EU integration processes

Selection Criteria:

The selection of candidates will be based on the following criteria: demonstrated experience in policy work; motivation and professional approach; and a clear understanding of ongoing and required reforms relevant to the programme's thematic areas.

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.

Location: Kyiv. Partial physical presence in the project office is required.

Duration: 9 months with possibility of extension, full time or part-time.

Application:

Send your application with max 3 page CV and max 1 page cover letter (in PDF) to ukraine@salarinternational.se. Please note "Senior Policy Advisor" in the subject line. The interviews will be conducted on an ongoing basis. Only shortlisted applicants will receive a response by email when the recruitment has been finalised.

For any questions or clarifications, please contact: ukraine@salarinternational.se.

Personal information provided by the applicant in the recruitment process will be handled by SALAR International.

Deadline: 2 March 2026, with interviews conducted on a rolling basis.