

Terms of reference (ToR) for the procurement of services below the EU threshold

CONFIDENTIAL

International Expert on Collaborative Governance, Stakeholder Engagement and Citizen Participation in EU4Municipalities project, Albania		Project number/ cost centre: G-012547-003
		Tender number 10046102
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0. List of abbreviations

AL	Albania
AMVV	Agency for the Support of Local Self-Government in Albania
BMF	German Federal Ministry of Finance
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DC	Development Cooperation
EU	European Union
EU4M	EU4Municipalities
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
GoA	Government of Albania
KDZ	Centre for Public Administration Research (Austria)
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LEDP	Local Economic Development Plan
LGU	Local Government Unit
LSGU	Local Self-Government Unit
MLP	Multi-Level Partnership
MLPM	Multi-Level Partnership Model
MoF	Ministry of Finance
NALAS	Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe
NAMA	National Association of Municipalities of Albania
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
QH	Quadruple Helix
SASPAC	State Agency for Strategic Programming and Aid Coordination, AI
TALGA	Albanian Training Academy for Local Government in
TL	Team Leader
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
WD (wd)	Working Day(s)

1. Brief Information on the project

EU4Municipalities (EU4M) is a Multi Donor Action co-financed by the European Union (EU) and the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) implemented by GIZ, in partnership with NALAS, NAMA and KDZ with the implementation time spanning January 2026 to June 2029 (42 months).

The Action is closely aligned with the EU's priorities and Albania's strategic objectives for **local governance**, particularly within the context of the country's **EU accession process**, thus while working closely with the Minister of State for Local Government, AMVV, MoF, PMO (chief negotiator), SASPAC, but as EU4M name indicates, we will work hand in hand with local partners across Albania - the Municipalities.

EU4M is a **flagship project** focused on delivering tangible results. The Overall Objective of the EU4Municipalities is to **improve local governance and local socio-economic development**. Specific objectives are 1) Improve quality, coverage, and accessibility of municipal infrastructures and services. 2) Strengthen Albanian municipalities as partner in the EU integration process.

This project builds on three pillars/ areas of intervention

- **Grant scheme:** By implementing a grant scheme which will benefit at least 50% of the local government units (LGUs), the project aims to empower LGUs in Albania to plan, design, implement, and monitor actions for the improvement of the quality, coverage, or access to the infrastructure and services of local government through the integration of environmental, social, and gender aspects and enhanced socio-economic opportunities for local communities.
- **Technical assistance** aimed at strengthening multi-level governance and municipal role in the EU Integration. The outcomes will be a Multi-Level Partnership (MLP) Model for EU Funds Access and a concept for Local Economic Development Plan (LED-P) or any other territorial development instrument as per cohesion policy principles is developed, while three municipalities will be assisted to draft new LED-P. Capacity Building instruments range from trainings, to workshops, study visits and peer learning, on thematic clusters such as : EU policies and funding, EU Acquis knowledge and engagement, Project cycle management, Single Project Pipeline , Inter-municipal Cooperation & Partnership Principles, Stakeholder engagement & Citizen participation.
- **Digital transformation:** Support municipalities in improved monitoring, reporting and public access to EU - and other donor-funded projects. These digital solutions enhance data management, accountability and multi-level coordination in the context of EU integration.

EU4Municipalities aims to be a reliable partner for Empowered Municipalities, Liveable Cities and European Future of Albania.

1.1 Specific Context for the assignment

GIZ, the federal enterprise that acts on behalf of the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development, is supporting GoA towards shaping the future of **Albanian municipalities** and strengthening their role in the EU accession process.

Stakeholder engagement and **Citizen participation** are governance approaches that enable municipalities to design, implement & monitor local development, in partnership with the actors

(public institutions, academia, businesses, NGOs and citizens) who shape the local economy and communities. Hence, Stakeholder Engagement and citizen Participation are key driving principles of EU4Municipalities to ensure the project meets real-world needs, enhances democratic legitimacy, fosters local ownership, promotes human-centered approaches and place-based solutions. It builds trust in EU and Albanian institutions, improves policy effectiveness by incorporating local knowledge, and ensures inclusive decision-making.

Through the Grant Scheme for municipalities and Technical Assistance outputs such as the multi-level partnership model (MLPM) and Local Economic Development Plans (LEDPs) concept and processes, EU4M aims to establish Living - City Labs that bring together municipalities and local stakeholders to co-create, test and scale solutions, strengthening stakeholder engagement in local development processes and placing Citizens at the core of interventions.

GIZ is looking for an international consultancy to support the concept definition and application (in practice) of Collaborative Governance, Stakeholder Engagement, and Citizen Participation throughout EU4Municipalities project implementation.

2. Tasks to be performed by the contractor

The overarching objectives of this assignment is to strengthen Albanian municipalities' capacities to build effective partnerships, engage stakeholders (civil society organization, research and academia, citizens, etc) and develop collaborative approaches that enhance access to EU funding opportunities and contribute to Albania's EU integration process through improved collaborative governance, local economic and territorial development.

The contractor is responsible for providing the following services/work packages:

- i. Collaborative Governance Frameworks and Municipal Partnership Models-City Labs**
- ii. Participatory Local Development Planning and Citizen Engagement**

Elaborate tasks to be delivered - the contractor's service below:

2.1 Work Package 1: Collaborative Governance Frameworks and Municipal Partnership Models – City Labs (up to 10 wd)

Objective:

Provide strategic advisory services to strengthen collaborative governance approaches of Municipalities in Albania as EU4M stakeholders & beneficiaries, by promoting inclusive, participatory and partnership-based municipal governance. The contractor will support EU4Municipalities in strengthening municipalities' capacities to apply participatory, place-based and collaborative approaches to local governance by introducing City Lab methodologies; targeting both high level municipal officials (mayors / deputy mayors) as well as technical level municipal officials in cross-sectorial working groups, EU integration officers, etc.

Key Tasks:

- Review the existing EU4Municipalities capacity development framework and identify opportunities to integrate collaborative governance and City Lab methodologies; conduct a short meeting with EU4M for decision making (1wd)

- Review and provide input on the EU4M Municipal City Lab handbook (in collaboration with national consultant). The guidebook should: (3 wd)
 - Introduce practical tools for mapping stakeholders, facilitating dialogue and building multi-sector partnerships.
 - Provide strategic advice on embedding stakeholder engagement & citizen participation throughout the municipal project cycle, from project identification to implementation and monitoring.
 - Advise on institutional arrangements that support long-term municipal innovation and collaborative governance, including best case compendium.
- Within the framework of EU4Municipalities - Municipal City Lab topic - the additional task is to **Design and Deliver/Facilitate** at least two executive-level **workshop(s)** for Mayors/Deputy Mayors and senior / technical municipal officials on: stakeholder engagement, collaborative leadership; co-creation and co-design methods; collaborative governance; urban innovation and experimentation; conflict management and consensus building; citizen-cantered public service design. (6wd)

These activities are closely linked to output 1 of EU4M (grant scheme).

KPI: number of LSGUs / municipalities and municipal staff that have participated in capacity building measures. (Output Indicator 1.3 of EU4M)

2.2 Work Package 2: Participatory Local Development Planning and Citizen Engagement (up to 18 expert wd)

Objective:

Provide strategic advisory services to integrate participatory / stakeholder engagement principles into the National Concept for Local Economic Development Plans (LEDPs) and related methodology of drafting the LEDP, in line with Chapter 22 and EU Cohesion Policy principles; Support the application of the stakeholder engagement / citizen participation approach (thus QH model approach of municipalities engaging civil society organizations, research units / universities, private sector actors and citizens) through pilot local economic planning processes in up to three municipalities in Albania. This will be provided via workshops, training sessions and policy recommendation.

Key Tasks:

- Review the draft national concept for Local Economic Development Plans (LEDPs) developed under EU4M framework (jointly with national/international expertise). (2wd)
 - Advise on integrating stakeholder engagement throughout the LEDP methodology, ensuring alignment with: EU Cohesion Policy principles; place-based development; partnership principle; multi-level governance; integrated territorial development, etc. (3wd)
- Contribute to the LEDP Concept Validation Workshop – “Stakeholder Engagement Framework for Local Economic Development Planning”. (3wd)
- Through workshops and capacity building sessions support the design and facilitation of participatory planning processes in selected municipalities to draft /adopt LEDPs as per cohesion policy supported by EU4M (10wd)
 - Develop practical guidance for municipalities on conducting stakeholder mapping; institutional analysis; participatory visioning; prioritisation workshops; partnership building, etc.
 - Coach municipal teams in applying collaborative planning methods during LEDP preparation.

- If deemed relevant & necessary, facilitate dialogue among municipalities, local businesses, academia, civil society and citizens using Quadruple Helix model approach serving Local Economic development.
- Provide lessons learned and strategic recommendations report to institutionalise participatory governance within future LEDP implementation.

These activities are closely linked to output 2 of EU4M (Technical Assistance).

KPI: number of LSGUs / municipalities and municipal staff that have participated in capacity building measures (Output. Indicator 1.3); A national concept for Local Economic Development Plans has been developed (Output indicator. 2.2); Number of adopted local economic development plans (Outcome Indicator. 2.2)

Certain milestones, as laid out in the table below, are to be achieved during the contract term:

Milestones/process steps/partial services	Deadline/place/person responsible
WP1: EU4M Capacity development framework reviewed, and Municipal City Lab integration opportunities identified.	October 2026 Home country of the expert Expert 1 (1 wd)
WP1: EU4M Municipal City Lab Guidebook reviewed and enhanced with stakeholder engagement and collaborative governance guidance. Note: joint effort of EU4M and national consultancy, coordination is needed	October – November 2026 Home country of the expert Expert 1 (3 wd)
WP1: Collaborative Governance / Stakeholder Engagement and Citizen Participation introduced promoting the City Lab methodologies through at least 2 workshops/trainings for executive- & technical level municipal officials	November 2026 – March 2027 Both home and country of assignment (AL) Expert 1 (6 wd)
WP2: Technical input to the national LEDP concept & methodology provided, including Stakeholder engagement & Citizen Participation approach	May 2027 Home country of the expert Expert 1 (5 wd)
WP2: LEDP Concept Validation Workshop conducted, incorporating the Stakeholder Engagement / Citizen Participation Framework.	May / September 2027 both home and country of assignment (AL) Expert 1 (3 wd)
WP2: Municipalities are supported in applying participatory local economic development planning methodologies.	September 2027 – September 2028 Both home and country of assignment (AL) Expert 1 (10 wd)

Period of assignment: from October 2026 until October 2028.

All services shall be delivered in an integrated and iterative manner, allowing for real-time learning and adaptation throughout the assignment. It is important to note that the international consultant will be potentially collaborating with other national & international experts involved in specific tasks, such as City lab methodology implementation, Development of a National Concept for the Local Economic Development Plan as per Cohesion Policy principles, etc.

Although the input of the consultants will be coordinated by EU4M team, cooperation and synergy among the above is expected.

3. Technical – methodological Concept

In the tender, the tenderer is required to show *how* the objectives defined in Chapter 2 (Tasks to be performed) are to be achieved, if applicable under consideration of further method-related requirements (technical-methodological concept). For this purpose, the bidder should consider the following five factors: strategy, cooperation, steering structure, processes as well as learning and innovation (sections 3.1. to 3.5.)

The technical-methodological concept shall be structured along the following headlines (see also section 1 of the assessment grid)

Note: The numbers in parentheses correspond to the lines of the technical assessment grid.

3.1 Strategy (1.1)

The tenderer is required to critically consider the tasks to be performed with reference to the objectives of the services put out to tender (see Chapter 1 Background information and Context) (1.1.1). Following this, the tenderer presents and justifies the explicit strategy with which it intends to provide the services for which it is responsible (see Chapter 2 Tasks to be performed) (1.1.2).

3.2 Cooperation (1.2)

In the cooperation section (section 1.2 of the assessment grid), the bidder must identify, map and describe the relevant actors/partners for the service in the tender and their interactions (section 1.2.1 of the assessment grid). The tenderer is required to develop a concept that shows how the cooperation with these actors is to be established and put into practice (section 1.2.2 of the assessment grid).

3.3 Steering Structure (1.3)

Section 1.3 of the assessment grid. The tenderer is required to present and explain its approach to **steering** the measures with the project partners (1.3.1) and its contribution to the **results-based monitoring system** (1.3.2).

3.4 Process (1.4)

The tenderer is required to describe the key **processes** for the services for which it is responsible and create an **operational plan** or schedule (1.4.1) that describes how the services according to Chapter 2 (Tasks to be performed by the contractor) are to be provided. In particular, the tenderer is required to describe the necessary work steps and, if applicable, take account of the milestones and **contributions** of other actors (partner contributions) in accordance with Chapter 2 (Tasks to be performed) (1.4.2).

3.5 Learning and innovation (1.5)

The tenderer is required to describe its contribution to knowledge management for the partner (1.5.1) and GIZ and to promote scaling-up effects (1.5.2) under **learning and innovation**. Elaboration of previous experiences and lessons learnt from similar interventions will be an added value. This strategy factor specifically links to work package 3

4. Personnel concept

The tenderer is required to provide personnel who are suited to filling the positions described, on the basis of their CV, the range of tasks involved and the required qualifications.

The below specified qualifications represent the requirements to reach the maximum number of points in the technical assessment.

Key expert 1

Tasks of the key expert

Given the consultancy is based on one key expert input, the task would be, as indicated in Chapter 2, including:

- Overall responsibility for the advisory packages of the contractor (quality and deadlines)
- Coordinating and ensuring communication with GIZ, partners and others involved in the project
- Personnel management, in particular identifying the need for short-term assignments within the available budget, as well as planning and steering assignments and supporting local and international short-term experts
- Regular reporting in accordance with deadlines

Qualifications of the key expert

Education/qualification (2.1.1): University degree (Bachelor/Master) in Business Administration, Economics / Innovation Management, Urban Planning, Public Policy, Political Science, or related studies

Language (2.1.2): C2-level language proficiency in English

General professional experience (2.1.3): 15 years of professional experience in the urban development, local government reform or integrated territorial development.; Proven expertise in participatory and collaborative governance & stakeholder engagement, Experience advising municipalities and public administrations at strategic level

Specific professional experience (2.1.4): 5 years in designing or implementing urban innovation frameworks such as Smart / Green City strategies; knowledge of EU Cohesion Policy, sustainable urban development and integrated territorial planning; facilitation, coaching and executive training.

Leadership/management experience (2.1.5): 5 years of management/leadership experience as project team leader or manager in a company/ organization / institution in urban development projects.

Regional experience (2.1.6): 3 years of experience in projects in Western Balkans region, of which 2 years in projects in Albania. Knowledge of Local government landscape and

Collaboration with Municipalities in the region / country
of assignment

Development cooperation (DC) experience (2.1.7): 2 years of experience in DC projects

Other (2.1.8): Senior political leadership at municipal level, given the target beneficiaries are Municipal officials, including mayors.

5. Costing requirements

Assignment of personnel and travel expenses

Per diem allowances are reimbursed as a lump sum up to the maximum amounts permissible under tax law for each country as set out in the country table in the circular from the German Federal Ministry of Finance on travel expense remuneration (downloadable from the [German Federal Ministry of Finance – tax treatment of travel expenses and allowances for international business travel as of 1 January 2026 \(GERMAN ONLY\)](#)).

Accommodation allowances are reimbursed as detailed in the specification of inputs below.

With special justification, additional Accommodation costs up to a reasonable amount can be reimbursed against evidence.

All business travel must be agreed in advance by the officer responsible for the project

Sustainability aspects for travel

GIZ has undertaken an obligation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂ emissions) caused by travel. When preparing your tender, please incorporate options for reducing emissions, such as selecting the lowest-emission booking class (economy) and using means of transport, airlines and flight routes with a higher CO₂ efficiency. For short distances, travel by train (second class) or e-mobility should be the preferred option.

CO₂ emissions caused by air travel must be offset. GIZ specifies a budget for this, through which the carbon offsets can be settled against evidence.

There are many different providers in the market for emissions certificates, and they have different climate impact ambitions. The [Development and Climate Alliance \(German only\)](#) has published a [list of standards \(German only\)](#). GIZ recommends using the standards specified there. GIZ recommends using the standards specified there.

Quantitative requirements:

Fee days	Number of experts	Number of days per expert	Total	Comments
Designation of TL/key expert/short-term expert pool	1	28	28	

Travel expenses	Quantity	Number per expert	Total	Comments
Travel Budget	1	1	4.850	A budget is provided for travel to the following countries: Albania. A fixed travel cost budget of EUR 4850 is provided. This amount will be settled against evidence. This includes up to EUR 2400 for int'l flights (6 flights to/from Tirana) up to EUR 550 per-diem, up to EUR 1600 accommodation (up to 20 overnights in Tirana , / Albani) and up to EUR 300 on other travel costs For more information on the travel cost budget, see the document entitled 'Price schedule'. Please use the column headed 'Explanatory notes' in the price schedule to itemise travel costs. Travel costs can be settled up to the budget limit.
CO₂ compensation for air travel	6	1	6	A fixed budget of EUR 600 is earmarked for settling carbon offsets against evidence.
Other costs	Number	Price	Total	Comments
Flexible remuneration	1	2000	2000	A budget of EUR 2000 is foreseen for flexible remuneration. Please incorporate this budget into the price schedule. Use of the flexible remuneration item requires prior written approval from GIZ.

6. Inputs of GIZ or other actors

GIZ and/or other actors are expected to make the following available:

- Work spot on GIZ premises (GIZ Tirana Office)
- Transportation on site with own project vehicle
- Logistics for workshops: Workshops costs are covered by EU4M project in the country of assignment.

7. Requirements on the format of the tender

The structure of the tender must correspond to the structure of the ToR. In particular, the detailed structure of the concept (Chapter 3) should be organised in accordance with the positively weighted criteria in the assessment grid (not with zero). The tender must be legible (font size 11 or larger) and clearly formulated. It must be drawn up in English (language).

The complete tender must not exceed 10 pages (excluding CVs). If one of the maximum page lengths is exceeded, the content appearing after the cut-off point will not be included in the assessment. External content (e.g. links to websites) will also not be considered.

The CVs of the personnel proposed in accordance with Chapter 4 of the ToRs must be submitted using the format specified in the terms and conditions for application. The CV shall not exceed 6 pages each. They must clearly show the position and job the proposed person held in the reference project and for how long. The CVs can be submitted in English (language).

Please calculate your financial tender based exactly on the parameters specified in Chapter 5 Quantitative requirements. The contractor is not contractually entitled to use up the days, trips, workshops or budgets in full. The number of days, trips and workshops and the budgets will be contractually agreed as maximum limits. The specifications for pricing are defined in the price schedule.

8. Option

After the services put out to tender have been completed, important elements of these tasks can be continued or extended. The details are listed below:

Institutionalisation and Capacity Development for Local Municipalities with focus on Stakeholder Engagement and Citizen Participation

Nature and scope:

8.1 Work Package 3: Training Curriculum for Local Municipalities with focus on Stakeholder Engagement and Citizen Participation (up to 10 wd)

Objective:

Support the long-term institutionalization of collaborative governance, stakeholder engagement and citizen participation practices within Albanian municipalities by strengthening municipal capacities, developing sustainable learning mechanisms and supporting national institutions (TALGA, NAMA) in embedding participatory governance approaches beyond the lifetime of the EU4Municipalities project. Specifically, prepare a training package on Municipal Stakeholder Engagement to support closing benchmark 22.4 (strengthening partnership mechanisms and stakeholder participation for municipal planning, project preparation and Cohesion Policy processes).

Key Tasks:

- Design training content/curriculum on municipal stakeholder engagement; (2–3 modules). Examples include basics of engagement design, City Lab facilitation, dealing with conflicts/power asymmetries, inclusive approach, monitoring of participation processes.
- Development of training materials: trainer manual, participant documents, case studies from the pilot municipalities, moderation cards, checklists.

- Implementation of ToT cohort and/or Pilot training (blended): face-to-face workshop, accompanied practical assignments (co-moderation), online coaching/supervision; Quality assurance via practical evidence.
- Building a community of practice for continuous learning.

KPI: number of LSGUs / municipalities and municipal staff that have participated in capacity building measures. (Output. Indicator 1.3 of EU4M) and have a better understanding of the chapter 22 (regional /cohesion policy).

Milestones/process steps/partial services	Deadline/place/person responsible
WP 3: (optional) Training package on Municipal Stakeholder Engagement To be detailed jointly by EU4M & consultant if needed / relevant	September – November 2028 Both home and country of assignment (AL) Expert 1 (10 wd)

Requirements:

Exercising the option will depend on a) additional funds for developing more extensive capacity development material or b) a concrete request of project partners in Albania (e.g. the Training Academy for Local Government, TALGA) to support curriculum development for Stakeholder Engagement and Citizen Participation. The decision on continuation is expected to be made in until end of 2027. If the option is exercised, it is anticipated that the contract term will be extended to December 2028.

The option will be exercised by means of a contract extension on the basis of the individual approaches already offered (contract supplement).

Quantitative requirements for the optional services:

Fee days	Number of experts	Number of days per expert	Total	Comments
Designation of TL/key expert/short-term expert pool	1	10		
Travel expenses	Quantity	Number per expert	Total	Comments
Travel Budget	1	1	676,00	An additional budget is provided for travel to the following countries: Albania, in case on demand for consultancy - the 3 rd work package. A fixed travel cost budget of EUR 676 is provided. This amount will be settled against evidence. This includes up to EUR 400 for one

				more int'l flight to/from Tirana, up to EUR 66 per-diem, up to EUR 160 accommodation (up to 2 overnights in Tirana , / Albania) and up to EUR 60 on other travel costs For more information on the travel cost budget, see the document entitled 'Price schedule'. Please use the column headed 'Explanatory notes' in the price schedule to itemise travel costs. Travel costs can be settled up to the budget limit.
Transport	Quantity	Number per expert	Total	Comments
CO ₂ compensation for air travel	1	1	1	A fixed budget of EUR 100 is earmarked for settling carbon offsets against evidence.

8.3. Requirements on the format of the tender for the option

Please describe your approach for the option in the same technical-methodological concept as (Chapter 3) and fill in both spreadsheets in the price schedule both for the main services and the optional services.

9. Annexes

Annex 1: "Communicating and raising EU visibility: Guidance for external action"