

Terms of Reference

ENGAGEMENT OF EXPERTS

Conducting LNOB social mapping and evidence-based policymaking

1. Background

The local governments from the economies of the Western Balkans are facing socio-economic challenges and the economic consolidation is slow and only reaches part of the population. Despite reforms in the area of the rule of law and human rights, many people in the Western Balkans experience multiple discrimination based on gender, language, ethnic background, age or sexual orientation. Traditional roles and prejudices are anchored deep in society and influence the political discourse. The legal infrastructure is in place to foster gender equality in the Western Balkan economies. However, in practice, women still lag behind with respect to equal opportunities and participation in the economic system, employment and education. Also, the members of vulnerable groups often do not have sufficient knowledge about social rights and access to social services, education and healthcare, and mostly depend on assistance from the state. The institutions, and especially the local governments, have so far not been able to support these people sufficiently and to create adequate conditions for equal access to social rights and social services to all disadvantaged groups. Furthermore, local actors do not have sufficient knowledge for conducting social mapping and obtaining data required to engage in planning and evidence-based policy development focused on the needs of these groups.

Social mapping is a fundamental method for presenting knowledge about spaces and the people who live in them. Social mapping helps local governments to develop tailored local policies and social protection measures addressing the specific needs of disadvantaged groups of citizens. Social Mapping as a method is used by social workers and other professionals to collect data on the needs of various LNOB (Leave no one behind) target groups/disadvantaged groups and identify the availability and accessibility of socio-economic resources in the community (for e.g., schools, social services, public spaces, roads etc.). By comparing the knowledge gained from the two perspectives, the local governments would be able to identify the gaps and propose appropriate solutions. Moreover, this process facilitates the collaboration between local governments, institutions and local organizations.

Considering the abovementioned, NALAS and its member associations of local governments (LGA) from the Western Balkans (WB) will support the member municipalities in conducting LNOB Social Mapping in the frame of the project “Bridges of Inclusion”, implemented in cooperation with GIZ on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The LNOB Social Mapping methodology has been tested and implemented in 40+ local governments from the WB in the frame of the previous project support. Therefore, the consolidated methodology will be offered to the local governments to be conducted with the technical assistance provided by experienced experts.

Against this background, Association of the units of local self-government of Republic of North Macedonia-ZELS, is **seeking competent Experts** that will deliver services related to conducting LNOB social mapping necessary for development of integrated socio-economic services and evidence-based policymaking.

The social mapping and evidence-based policymaking shall be implemented in following 4 (four) municipality in the North Macedonia:

Municipality	Target group
1. Bitola	women survivors of gender-based or domestic violence
2. Gostivar	Women survivors of gender-based or domestic violence
3. Kocani	Women and girls from rural areas
4. Rosoman, Caska and Lozovo (one social mapping in the frame of intermunicipal cooperation)	Women and girls from rural areas

The target group for social mapping will be furtherly narrowed down in consultations with municipalities and their service providers following Leave No One Behind principle.

2. Aim and Objectives of the Assignment

The **overall aim of the assignment** is to promote the socioeconomic inclusion and participation of women from rural areas/ women survivors of gender-based violence, by ensuring equitable access to employment opportunities, skills development, social services, and community life. The assignment will contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly through the application of the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle at the municipal level, ensuring that the needs and rights of the most vulnerable populations are systematically addressed in local development processes and service delivery.

The **specific objectives** of the assignment are to:

- i. Support respective Municipality in implementing LNOB social mapping methodology in coordination with the local government staff. The methodology is elaborated within the NALAS e-Learning course "LNOB Social Mapping and Evidence-based Policy Making".
- ii. Support the Municipality in the development of policy recommendations based on social mapping findings and in line with priority SDGs and respective targets.
- iii. Support the Municipality in the integration of the policy recommendations within the respective social protection programme/plan.

3. Responsibilities and deliverables

3.1. The Expert's responsibilities

To ensure the successful delivery of the assignment, the Experts shall perform the following responsibilities and duties throughout the implementation period:

1. **Become familiar with the Social Mapping Methodology through active participation in the NALAS e-Learning Course "LNOB Social Mapping and Evidence-Based Policy Making"**

Municipal staff and representatives of local social service providers from the respective municipality will also attend the course. The training comprises four modules delivered over a four-week period in September 2026.

The Experts shall apply the knowledge and methodology acquired through the e-Learning course to support evidence-based policymaking at the local level, adapting the LNOB social mapping approach and analytical tools to the specific context, needs of the municipality and respective target group.

2. Development of a Concept, Action Plan, Survey Instruments for conducting social mapping and evidence-based policymaking in the respective municipality

Evidence-based policymaking shall be guided by, and responsive to, the needs and priorities of the selected target groups. In close consultation with municipal representatives and local social service providers, the Experts shall develop a Concept for conducting Social Mapping and evidence-based policymaking activities.

The Concept shall be accompanied by a detailed **Action Plan** and the necessary data collection and **survey instruments**, developed in line with the templates and guidance provided through the LNOB Social Mapping Methodology e-Learning Course. These tools shall be adapted to the specific local context and designed to capture the **socioeconomic dimensions** of exclusion and vulnerability of the target group.

In parallel with the development of the Concept and Action Plan the Expert shall also disseminate institutional data questionnaires and NGO resources questionnaires to the Municipality. The development of the Concept, Action Plan as well as the submission of the ready-made digital institutional data and NGO resources questionnaires is a responsibility of the Expert, whereas the collection of data from institutional data questionnaires and NGO resources questionnaires is a responsibility of the Municipality. The data collection based on the Institutional data and NGO resources questionnaires (already developed and digitized) shall be made via the integrated digital tool. For this purpose the Municipality representatives shall receive support from ZELS through the responsible LGA Coordinator and IT Office, supported by GIZ Office. The details of this process shall be discussed and agreed as part of an orientation meeting taking place at least one week prior to the start of the e-Learning course.

Particular attention shall be given to ensuring that the survey instruments adequately reflect the specific needs, barriers, and opportunities of **women and girls**, as well as other vulnerable and at-risk population groups, in accordance with the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle.

The Concept, Action Plan and verification approaches shall be developed¹ during the third week of the e-Learning Course and submitted for review and approval by the respective Municipality and ZELS.

3. Coordination of the implementation of social mapping activities in accordance with the approved Concept and Action Plan.

The Experts shall ensure that the relevant social mapping methodology and survey instruments are effectively applied during the process of data collection (field work). Therefore, regular coordination meetings shall be held with representatives of Municipality during the field activities. The municipal representative will assist the Expert in coordinating the team of surveyors during the implementation of the field activities.

According with the methodology and Concept for conducting Social Mapping, the respective municipality shall identify, recruit, and engage the required number of surveyors. The Municipality

¹ These documents are developed during the third week of the e-Learning Course, whereas the Institutional data and NGO resources questionnaires are disseminated to Municipalities as ready-made questionnaires without any need for further development or adaptation.

shall bear all related costs, expenses, and logistical requirements necessary for the implementation of fieldwork activities. These responsibilities shall not form part of the Expert's obligations under this assignment, however the Expert is responsible for monitoring of the field activities based on the agreed sample on a weekly basis.

The social mapping field activities (data collection) shall be implemented during the period from 12 October to 15 November 2026.

4. Training of the field surveyors on the LNOB Social Mapping Methodology, related data collection instruments (questionnaire) and data entry process.

The Expert shall ensure that the necessary know-how on methodology, survey instruments, data entry process and communication approaches with the respondents is transferred via face-to-face training to the team of field surveyors in the respective municipality.

Having in mind that in this project phase the social mapping shall be conducted through the application of an integrated digital tool developed by GIZ and implemented via ZELS, the Expert is responsible only for the training of surveyors on the use of the questionnaires from a content point of view. The responsibility of ZELS is to provide IT support in the role assignment for access to the digital questionnaires for the surveyors and to onboard them on the proper use of the tool from a technological point of view. The training for both content and technological aspects shall be delivered as part of one-day training on collaborative basis between the Expert and ZELS representatives

The training for surveyors will be in the period from 5 October to 9 October 2026.

5. Data analysis and elaboration of Social Mapping Report

The data collected through the social mapping field activities in the Municipality shall be processed and analysed by the Experts, highlighting key LNOB findings and policy recommendations. Experts shall conduct data cleaning of exported file from the integrated digital tool and shall use Copilot Analyst Agent as a tool during the data cleaning and data analysis phase of the process. For this purpose, Experts will receive orientation workshop upon completion of social mapping field activities. Special attention shall be given to the identification of the needs of women and girls and the formulation of measures and policy recommendations for their socioeconomic participation. This process shall commence at the beginning of November.

The Report shall be prepared in accordance with the instructions, methodology, and templates for data analysis and social mapping reporting provided through the e-Learning course. Prior to the finalisation of the Social Mapping Report, its content shall be consulted with and agreed upon by municipal representatives.

6. Verification of Report Findings and Approval

The Expert shall conduct focus group discussions and consultation events with stakeholders in the respective Municipality to verify the findings of the social mapping exercise and to clarify any outstanding issues identified during the data collection, analysis process and preparation of the Report.

After the consultation process with the stakeholders, the Report shall be completed, consulted, and approved by Municipality and ZELS no later than **13 December 2026**.

The Report shall be prepared in both English, for project purposes, and macedonian language, for use by the Municipality and ZELS.

7. Integration of Policy Recommendations into Local Social Protection Policies

The Experts shall support the Municipality in translating the findings and recommendations of the Social Mapping Report into policy measures and recommendations to be integrated into municipal social protection policies and strategies.

This process shall be planned and coordinated jointly with municipal representatives and implemented in accordance with the applicable legal framework and local government procedures.

The integration of the policy recommendations into the relevant municipal policies and strategies shall be completed by the end of January 2027.

3.2. Deliverables

The following deliverables are expected to be completed during the implementation of the assignment:

1. **Successful completion of the e-Learning Course “LNOB Social Mapping and Evidence-Based Policy Making”**, including demonstrated understanding and application of the methodology.
2. **Concept and Action Plan for conducting social mapping** developed in coordination with the respective Municipality, including the definition of data collection instruments, survey scope, and methodology, with a particular focus on socioeconomic participation of women and girls.
3. Disseminated Institutional data and NGO resources questionnaires to Municipalities.
4. **Coordinated field activities** with municipal representatives, in accordance with the approved Concept and Action Plan and the methodology provided through the e-Learning course. The team of surveyors will be coordinated by the respective Municipality.
5. **Collected data processed and analysed**, highlighting key LNOB findings and policy recommendations for the draft of the Report on Social Mapping.
6. **Social mapping findings and draft report validated** through stakeholder consultations and focus group discussions.
7. **Social Mapping Report developed** in accordance with the template available within the LNOB Social Mapping Methodology, containing key findings, conclusions, and policy recommendations. The Report shall be prepared in both English and the local language and submitted to respective Municipality and ZELS.
8. **Policy recommendations integrated into relevant municipal policies and strategies**, in coordination with the Municipality and in line with applicable local government procedures.
9. **Assignment Report prepared and submitted**, documenting the activities undertaken, results achieved, deliverables produced, and recommendations for further action. The Assignment Report shall be approved by ZELS.

The Expert is obliged to coordinate all activities of this ToR through regular communication with the ZELS and municipal staff responsible for social mapping.

The Expert is obliged to document and provide evidence for each deliverable.

4. Time Frame

The assignment shall be implemented in the period from 3 September 2026 to 15 February 2027, in accordance with the timeframe presented in the table below, which outlines the key activities and their indicative schedule.

Activity	Period
1. Participation in orientation meeting (2 hours online meeting related to roles and responsibilities of Experts and Municipality representatives, timeline, and introduction of LNOB Social Mapping Methodology). The meeting will be held in the proposed period.	7 September – 11 September 2026
2. Participation in the e-learning course on “LNOB Social Mapping and evidence-based policymaking”	14 September – 9 October 2026
3. Development of Concept, Action Plan and survey instruments for conducting social mapping.	28 September – 2 October 2026
4. Dissemination of Institutional data and NGO resources questionnaire to the Municipality	28 September – 2 October 2026
5. Training of field surveyors in collaboration with LGA ZELS Coordinator, IT Office and GIZ Advisor	5 October – 9 October 2026
6. Conducting LNOB Social Mapping (field activities for data collection)	12 October – 15 November 2026
7. Data analysis and elaboration of Social Mapping Report by using Copilot Analyst Agent	1 November – 27 November 2026
8. Verification of Report Findings and Approval of Final Report on Social Mapping	30 November – 13 December 2026
9. Integration of the policy recommendations into the local social protection policies (action plan/programme or similar)	14 December 2026 – 31 January 2027
10. Preparation of assignment report	15 February 2027

5. Concept of service and Expert profile

5.1. Concept of the service

Social mapping is a method typically used by social workers and other professionals in order to map out the distribution of socio-economic resources (for e.g., the availability of health services, social

services or non-profit service providers in a given local community) and also to collect data regarding the needs of the left-behind groups (disadvantaged groups) living in the local community. This concept was upgraded by integrating the Leave No One Behind principle (LNOB) into the social mapping methodology. It was tested and scaled up in 40+ local governments of the Western Balkans. The expectations from the upgraded and consolidated methodology are that it will enable municipalities and other institutions to understand not only who are the disadvantaged groups, but also what are their needs (in order to better address them) and to understand which of the risk factors affect them most. By understanding the root causes of complex social issues municipalities could then propose more targeted measures and focus on the most urgent issues.

In the frame of this assignment, it is expected that the Expert will conduct the social mapping for the respective in the territory of the municipality, to identify their needs versus the risk factors and to propose recommendations that will be integrated within the local policies for social protection, aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 Agenda.

The Expert will be responsible for the overall coordination and implementation of the social mapping in the municipality. The Expert will lead a group of field surveyors, analyze the collected data and prepare the Social Mapping Report in consultation with the municipal staff. The Expert is also responsible for the provision of assistance to the municipal officials in the policymaking process and transforming the social mapping data and findings into policy recommendations as well as their integration within the local policies for social protection.

5.2. Expert's Profile

The **Senior Expert's profile** shall provide sound evidence for knowledge about the development, organization, procedures and conduct of the public survey process, more specifically:

- Professional experience of **at least 5 years in research and survey-related work** in the field of social protection, national and local social protection policies, vulnerable groups, and drafting strategies, including on-field and online data collection, data analyses using SPSS or similar data analyze programs.
- Developed at **least 5 analytical reports** on public surveys, including main findings, cross-tabulations and development of recommendations for improving social protection policies and services on the local level.
- Conducting **at least 2 social mappings** in the local governments will be considered a strong asset.
- Knowledge and experience in the utilization of data for evidence-based policymaking as one of the necessary steps prior to introducing of social protection strategies/policies at the local level. **At least 3 evidence-based policy proposals developed at local or national level.**
- Proficient knowledge about the current status and needs, challenges, trends and opportunities for improvements, particularly in areas related to local governance, as well as economic, social and cultural human rights of particularly disadvantaged groups. **At least 3 years of experience in working with local governments on the economic, social and cultural human rights of disadvantaged groups.**
- Experience in working with associations of local governments and municipal officials. **At least 2 projects** implemented with the involvement of **associations of local governments** will be considered as an asset.
- Working experience in the context of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will be considered as an asset.

Education

The expert should have a Bachelor Degree in an area relevant to public administration and social services (e.g., social sciences, political science, public administration, pedagogy, human resource management or another relevant field). Masters will be considered as an additional and strong asset.

Language and IT skills

Fluency in English, both written and spoken, as all supporting documents and the final social mapping report, shall be delivered in the English and Macedonian language.

MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint).

Experienced in using the SPSS statistical software or similar.

Other

Promptness, high flexibility, ability to work within a team under tight deadlines, and readiness to travel.

Analytical, research, social and communication skills.

6. Proposal

Considering the workload associated with the implementation of the LNOB Social Mapping process, one Expert may be assigned to a maximum of two municipalities. Therefore, interested Experts are invited to apply for the implementation of social mapping in one or a maximum of two municipalities.

Interested Experts are requested to submit a proposal no later than **23 August 2026, 16:00 CET**, clearly **indicating the municipality or municipalities** for which they intend to provide their services.

The proposal has to be submitted in **English language by e-mail, at irena.nikolov@zels.org.mk** and shall contain the following components:

6.1. Technical component

1. Provide CV of the Expert
2. List of Reference for relevant assignments, and
3. Cover Page with description of the evidence demonstrating compliance with each of the Expert profile requirements specified in Section 5.2 of these Terms of Reference.

Note: Please group all documents from this part 6.1. into one (1) single text-searchable PDF document.

6.2. Financial component

The Expert should provide financial offer **for each municipality separately, clearly indicating the name of the municipality** with **gross amount for each service necessary for achieving the deliverables**, as well as, **the overall (total) amount**.

The available budget for this assignment is **up to 3.000,00 EUR** (three thousands euros) **gross**.

The costs shall be expressed in MKD, VAT shown separately (if applicable) within the following table:

Financial Offer		Name of Municipality:		
No.	Deliverable	Gross amount without VAT	VAT	Gross amount VAT included
1.	Concept, Action Plan and Survey Instruments for conducting social mapping developed			
2.	Team of field surveyors trained on the LNOB Social Mapping Methodology and field data collection process			
3.	Social mapping field activities coordinated with respective Municipality, and respective questionnaire desiminated			
4.	Collected data processed and analysed, key LNOB findings and policy recommendations integrated within the draft of the Report on Social Mapping			
5.	Social mapping findings and draft report validated through stakeholder consultations and focus group discussions			
6.	Final Report on Social Mapping submitted to respective Municipality and LGA in English and local language			
7.	Policy recommendations integrated into relevant municipal policies, strategies and plans			
8.	Assignment report submitted			
			TOTAL:	

The assignment-related costs (coordination, office supplies, communication, travel and accommodation costs) shall be integrated within the costs for the services for each of the deliverables proposed by the Expert.

The gross amount should include the personal income taxes and other taxes obligatory under the laws of the Republic of North Macedonia and will be calculated, deducted and paid by ZELS. The expert will receive the amount reduced for the paid personal income tax and other obligatory taxes.

7. Evaluation Criteria and Scoring

The Expert will be selected using the **Quality- and Cost-Based Selection** method. The evaluation will be based on a weighted scoring system comprising:

- **Technical Evaluation (60%)** – assessed against the qualifications, experience, and requirements specified in **Section 5.1** of these Terms of Reference; and

- **Financial Evaluation (40%)** – assessed based on the financial proposal submitted in accordance with the requirements outlined in **Section 6.2** of these Terms of Reference for each municipality separately.

The final ranking of candidates will be determined by combining the technical and financial scores according to the above weighting.

8. Modification of Terms

Association of the local self-government of the Republic of North Macedonia-ZELS reserves the right to modify the terms of the ToR at any time at its sole discretion.

9. Acceptance and Rejection of Proposals

Association of the local self-government of the Republic of North Macedonia-ZELS may not necessarily accept the lowest priced proposal or any proposal. At its sole discretion, ZELS 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. Association of the local self-government of the Republic of North Macedonia-ZELS 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 Expert who have responded. Association of the local self-government of the Republic of North Macedonia-ZELS 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.

Association of the local self-government of the Republic of North Macedonia-ZELS is not obliged to provide information about the selection process.

10. Contract Negotiation

Association of the local self-government of the Republic of North Macedonia-ZELS reserves the right to negotiate specific terms of the contract with the short-listed proponents prior to the final award of the contract. Association of the local self-government of the Republic of North Macedonia-ZELS also reserves the right to negotiate specific terms of the contract with the Contractor as the contract progresses.

11. Ownership

All materials, documents and information prepared, developed or adjusted by the Expert and used for the purposes of preparation, conduct and implementation of the social mapping activities, as well as reporting, remain the property of the Association of the local self-government of the Republic of North Macedonia-ZELS. The Expert agrees that no part of the social mapping 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, without the prior permission of Association of the local self-government of the Republic of North Macedonia-ZELS.

12. Reporting

The assignment report should be submitted, not later than 15 working days after the realisation of all activities and submission of deliverables. The standardized Report Format to be used will be provided as Annex to the Contract.

13. Terms and Payment

The Expert will be hired under Service Contract, signed by Association of the local self-government of the Republic of North Macedonia-ZELS and will be paid in instalments upon submission and approval of the deliverables listed above.

14. Performance indicators

The indicators reflecting the expert's performance are: Timely presentation of results and outputs, quality of task realisation, participants' evaluation results and quality of the reports to be provided to the reference person of this assignment. The expert's performance will be evaluated by Association of the local self-government of the Republic of North Macedonia-ZELS at the feedback session, following the realisation of the assigned activities under the contract. The standardised RCDN Performance Assessment Form will be provided as an Annex to the Contract.

15. Evaluation of work

The performance of the tasks will be assessed by the Association of the local self-government of the Republic of North Macedonia-ZELS