

Terms of reference

Local Short-Term Expert in Education – Implementation of Functional Review in Education (general secondary school) System of Armenia

SALAR Project in Armenia 2022-2026: Support to decentralisation and local self-government reforms (DeaLoG)

Location: Yerevan, with possible travel across Armenia

Duration: 6 months (short-term consultancy), from December 2024 till May 2025

Level of Effort: 25 expert-days

Summary

SALAR International is seeking services of a Local Short-Term Expert in Education (herewith the Expert) to implement functional review in general education system of Armenia to support SALAR's Project in Armenia "Support to decentralisation and local self-government reforms (DeaLoG)". The position shall be a consultancy contract for a period of 6 months.

The Expert should be experienced, professional, self-motivated person with high proficiency in both English and Armenian, who can work effectively in a dynamic and changing environment. Within the assignment the Expert should support the Project and its partners (in particular, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Armenia, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure and the municipalities) in conducting functional review in education system (namely general education) and developing recommendations for decentralisation of tasks and decision making in education system, thus improving the overall general education in Armenia.

The position requires in-depth expert knowledge and understanding of education sector (with the focus on general education) and education governance, with the focus on decentralised delivery of education services, as well as good understanding of multi-level governance concept and local self-government system of Armenia. The Expert shall be capable of applying analytical methods and tools in reviewing the current system and practices and development of respective reform plans and actions; possess integrity, innovation, problem-solving skills, professionalism, strong interpersonal skills and the ability to work as an effective team member.

About SALAR International and DeaLoG Project

SALAR International is a subsidiary to the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), representing all 290 municipalities and 20 county councils in Sweden. We are a leading consultancy company supporting local democracy and good governance in developing and transition countries. Our expertise covers areas such as capacity building on municipal management and service delivery; local and regional development; decentralisation policies; support to local government associations; and European Integration. Geographically, SALAR International's projects covers countries in Central and Eastern Europe as well as Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The DeaLoG Project of SALAR is implemented by SALAR International and funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

The Project aims to support the government of the Republic of Armenia with decentralisation reforms and strengthening of local self-governments building on a longstanding history of local self-governments in Sweden and on the global cooperation experience, expertise and networks of SALAR International.

The Project is developed in cooperation with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure (MTAI) and other government bodies, as well as in consultations with local actors and relevant representative organisations in Armenia.

The overall objective of the Project is to enhance commitment, capacity, and trust among national and local stakeholders for decentralisation and local self-government reforms in Armenia.

Building on these objectives, the project aims to contribute to two underlying shifts:

- Key stakeholders at national and local level develop more positive mindsets towards the advancement of reforms and practical implementation of the decentralisation process.
- The level of trust and communication increases, both between national and local stakeholders, and horizontally between ministries and state agencies and among municipalities.

One of the components of the DeaLoG Project is support to education decentralisation, working a) with schools and municipalities on strengthening horizontal cooperation locally, and b) with central level on designing and implementing decentralisation policies and measures such as clarification, separation and distribution of functions and responsibilities of different levels of government, decision-making frameworks and modalities, fiscal and capacity building issues in general education sector.

Context and background of the assignment

The Government of Armenia has set the decentralisation as one its public sector reform policies and as a logical continuation of another major structural change in the system – the enlargement of municipalities. It is part of the Government’s five-year program, where a number of areas have been identified for deepening the decentralised governance, including education sector, specifically the transfer of the responsibility of use and maintenance of school buildings to municipalities.¹ The latter has been further affirmed by the adoption of the Decentralisation Concept in November 2023.²

From the sector development perspective, decentralisation in general education is also included in the Law on Education Development Program 2030 of Armenia (the Program) as a measure to improve effectiveness of education, with delegation of school management responsibilities to LSGs, especially in the context of territorial administrative reforms (i.e. enlargement of municipalities).³ The associated Action Plan of the Program envisions gradual transfer of management responsibilities to LSGs, setting the target of 11 pilot municipalities where such transfer shall be accomplished by 2030, as well as enlargement of school boards, separation of content and administrative functions within

¹ Government of Armenia 2021-2026 Program, Section 6.6 on Regional Administration and Local Self-Government, <https://www.gov.am/files/docs/4586.pdf>

² Prime Minister’s Decree on Approval of the Concept of Decentralisation of Powers in Armenia, N1111-A, dated 08 November 2023.

³ Law on Education Development Program 2030 of Armenia, adopted on 6 November 202, paragraph 82.

the schools and transfer of the latter to new administrative managers (introducing this system in all schools by 2030).⁴

The scope of the FUNCTIONAL REVIEW

The functional review will consist of two main workstreams:

- a) **Description of models of key decisions** made by different levels of governments and institutions, with regard to **autonomy** (e.g. fully independently, in consultation with a higher level authority etc.) and **mode of implementation** (e.g. shared, joint, exclusive etc.) of the decision-making powers.

The functional review Guidelines⁵ suggests to pay attention to the following key decisions and functions in Armenian education system:

- 1) School attendance (entering the school, attendance, grouping children, instruction time).
- 2) Teachers (hiring of teachers, teachers secondment to regional schools, rights and obligations of teachers, salary regulations, firing teachers)
- 3) School principal (director) and administrative coordinator in charge for financial, economic and administrative management (hiring, rights and obligations, salary regulation, firing)
- 4) Planning and structures (designing programmes of study, selection of programmes of study in a particular school, selection of subjects taught in particular school, definition of course content)
- 5) Allocation of resources to schools and in schools (teacher and principal development)
- 6) Internal evaluation of school performance and operations.

Anticipated results

- State of play/clarifications on decision-making arrangements in Armenian general secondary education system
 - Answers to the question on how decentralised the education sector is in Armenia
 - General vision on future decentralisation policies and strategies
- b) **Review and analysis of functions** performed by the MoESCS and other public bodies (including LSGs) with the focus on general secondary education (policy, regulation, coordination, supervision, service delivery types of functions).

Anticipated results

- Streamlined functions within and across public entities with regard to education
- Recommendations on decentralisation in education and division of competencies and on related functional and structural changes in education sector
- Recommendations on implementation arrangements stemming from decentralisation recommendations, including capacity building measures, human and institutional development, fiscal aspects and legal change plan.

⁴ Government of Armenia Decree N 351, dated 16 March 2023, Action Plan of the Law on Education Development Program 2030 of Armenia, Section 4.1 - Introduction of New Governance Model of General Education Institutions.

⁵ Prepared by DeaLoG Project in 2023-2024.

Purpose of the assignment

The current assignment is aimed at supporting and providing technical inputs to the Project and its partners to conduct the functional review in education sector aimed at clarifying further the role of municipalities in general education and school governance and presenting options for decentralisation in general secondary education system.

The assignment will be guided by and will be based on abovementioned Guidelines and will elaborate further on the questions and issues highlighted therein, concerning each function and decision-making powers under the review.

Note: the functional review of the education system is meant to clarify the separation and distribution of key functions (such as policy and planning, organisation of instruction, standards and curricula, staff/teachers, resources, monitoring and assessments, quality assurance and oversight, data management etc.) and decision-making powers and responsibilities within the public administration system and through this, to identify the ways for improvement of general education system in Armenia.

Task and deliverables

Task 1. Prepare the work plan for implementation of the assignment (within 2 weeks after the commencement)

- Draft the detailed workplan for implementation of the assignment informed by the functional review Guidelines
- Present the work plan and the detailed implementation arrangements of the assignment (methods and strategies) to DeaLoG Project and MoESCS for feedback and approval, including detailed division of tasks between two experts (see section below on the role of the expert)

Task 2. Prepare tools and method for implementation of the assignment

- Design tools and methods for conducting functional review
- Present the tools and methods to DeaLoG Project and MoESCS for feedback and approval

Task 3. Review and analyse the key functions and decisions in education sector

- Review and analyse the decision making arrangements in: school attendance, teacher related functions, functions related to principals and administrators, planning education programs, subjects and classes, allocation of resources to schools and in schools
- Review and analyse the functions of MoESCS and other public entities (including LSGs) with regard to general secondary education

Task 4. Develop recommendations on decentralisation of powers and responsibilities

- Prepare recommendations on:
 - Changes in decision-making arrangement in general education sector
 - Changes in functional distribution within general education sector, and on related tasks and responsibilities
 - Financial aspects of proposed decentralisation measures
 - Institutionalisation of changes (change plan), including human and institutional capacity building
 - Managing the process of decentralisation, as per the recommended changes.

Task 5. Reporting and communication

- Keep Project Team in Yerevan and SALAR International in Stockholm continuously and regularly updated about challenges and achievements. Periodicity of intermediate reports and updates can be discussed and agreed within workplan under Task 1.
- Final report, including description of key activities and all deliverables.

The role of the Expert

The assignment will be implemented by two experts working as one team – the Education expert and Public Administration and Governance expert. The latter will act as a lead expert – in addition to direct inputs, he/she will be responsible for implementation of all tasks and for overall quality assurance of all deliverables as well as for coordination of inputs by Education expert.

Both experts will support general education decentralisation efforts of the Project. The Experts will provide technical (education and decentralisation) inputs, analyses and report drafting as well as assist with facilitation of different discussion formats, knowledge and capacity building events, etc. for the MoESCS, MTAI, other relevant public administration bodies, municipalities and schools.

The Expert will be working closely together with SALAR International's key international and local experts by providing relevant inputs, such as identification of areas for changes for decentralised delivery of general education aimed at enhanced/more sustainable outcomes in education and stronger human development in local communities of Armenia, etc.

Required Skills and Experience

- At least Master Degree or equivalent in Education, Social Sciences or other relevant fields.
- Minimum of 7 years relevant professional experience in education sector management, planning and project implementation.
- Deep knowledge of education system in Armenia with the focus on general education. In-depth knowledge of ongoing reforms in Armenia's education system.
- Good understanding of multi-level governance concept and decentralisation and knowledge of Armenia's local self-government system, and excellent knowledge of decentralisation models in education sector.
- Experience in working with the Government of Armenia and/or development cooperation organisations will be an asset.
- Demonstrated experience in promoting knowledge democratisation and community engagement in education.
- Demonstrated capacity and experience to analyse policy documents and formulate policy recommendations.
- Demonstrated capacity and experience to provide technical assistance to clients in public sector (education sector is desirable), including development and implementation of reform programmes.
- Experience in provision of developmental inputs such as capacity building measures, including hands-on support, on-job trainings, facilitation and coaching
- Ability to work in a multicultural environment;
- Excellent computer literacy and proficiency in relevant applications such as MS Office, internet, etc;
- Fluency in written and spoken Armenian and English.

Conditions & Logistics

A short-term consultancy contract (from starting date until May 2025) will be signed between SALAR International and the Expert, which will outline the conditions for the position in detail. The contract will be based on Sida's Standard Conditions for Short and Long-Term Consulting Services (2002). In line with Sida's Standard Conditions, SALAR/SALAR International's project covers all major costs relating to services provided by the Expert during the assignment, including consultancy fees and costs for participation in project activities (including short trips within country). Please note, this position is not an employment position, meaning that applicants must be established as consultants and will be liable to pay all applicable taxes and insurances themselves.

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

Evaluation of response & selection

Interested applicants should send their proposals, comprising the following documents, to SALAR International no later than December 6, 2024, 18:00, Yerevan time:

- A cover letter with short explanation of the applicant's suitability for the assignment (maximum one A4-page)
- Up-to-date CV indicating relevant experience and qualifications.
- A short (1-page max.) Technical Proposal (Expert's vision and implementation approach on the assignment)

The Expert will be selected based on their professional experience and competences matching the requirements described above.

Proposals and questions should be sent by email to: armenia@salarinternational.se. All documents should be submitted in English.

Mark your email with **Education expert** in the subject.

No compensation is paid for costs incurred for writing the proposal and participating in interviews during the recruitment process.

Questions regarding the assignment and position can be sent to the same email armenia@salarinternational.se. Responses to questions will be shared to applicants by email.

Interviews with shortlisted applicants are expected to be held in person or via Teams. Only shortlisted applicants will receive a response by email after final round of interviews.

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. Consultants 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.