

Terms of Reference for Advocacy Consultant

Expert Services for Development of a Comparative Research Analysis, Position Paper, and Action Plan on topic National Initiative for Sustainable Sludge Management in Kosovo

I. Background

Kosovo's wastewater sector continues to face critical challenges, particularly in the management of sewage sludge. The absence of a national strategy, fragmented legal and institutional frameworks, unclear responsibilities among actors, and limited long-term planning have resulted in uncoordinated and often unsafe sludge disposal practices. These shortcomings pose serious environmental and public health risks and highlight the urgent need for strategic and evidence-based policy development.

In response to this pressing issue, the **Water and Wastewater Works Association of Kosovo (SHUKOS)**—a non-profit association established by the seven Regional Water Supply and Sewerage Companies (RWCs)—has taken the lead in facilitating coordinated sectoral responses. SHUKOS operates under the NGO Law (No. 04/L-57) and is governed by its Assembly and Board of Directors, which includes the CEOs of all 7 RWCs as well as representatives from the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure. The Association plays a key role as a bridge between water utilities and central institutions, and maintains active collaboration with national and international partners, including IAWD, IWA, and the Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN).

This assignment is supported under the **Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN) for Water and Sanitation Services** project, which aims to enhance the capacity and advocacy role of Associations of Public Utilities (APUCs) and Local Governments (LGAs) across the Western Balkans. The RCDN project is jointly financed by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and is administratively embedded in the GIZ project “Open Regional Fund for Southeast Europe – Modernization of Municipal Services (ORF MMS)”.

As part of its engagement in RCDN+, SHUKOS has initiated activities to develop a structured **advocacy mechanism**, with one of the key priorities being the advancement of a **National Strategy for Sustainable Sludge Management**. To support this effort, a **multi-stakeholder Working Group** was established and has already held two meetings, produced initial recommendations and confirmed the need for a more comprehensive policy framework. The Working Group identified institutional fragmentation, legal gaps, inadequate infrastructure, and unclear operational responsibilities as key issues to be addressed.

In line with this, SHUKOS intends to engage a qualified expert to lead the development of three interlinked deliverables:

1. A **Comparative Research Analysis** of sludge management practices, including Kosovo, selected Western Balkan countries (e.g. North Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia & Hercegovina), and relevant EU countries (e.g. Germany, Slovenia, the Netherlands),
2. A **Position Paper** proposing the policy direction and strategic interventions, and
3. An **Action Plan** outlining concrete steps for implementation.

The expert will also work closely with the Working Group, participate in its next two meetings, and present the results at a national **Stakeholder Dialogue Event**. Through this assignment, SHUKOS aims to strengthen its advocacy function and contribute to the development of sustainable sludge management practices in Kosovo, aligned with European and regional best practices.

II. Aim of the Assignment

The **general objective** of this assignment is to **select a qualified and professional consultant to develop a comparative research analysis and a position paper. The consultant will be engaged a) *Conducting a Comparative Research Analysis on sludge management practices in comparable countries (Western Balkans/EU)* b) *Developing a structured and evidence-based Position Paper on the need for a national strategy***

The focus of this set of activities will be to provide evidence-based technical and policy support to the national Working Group, with the aim of advancing the development of a national strategy for sustainable sludge management. Within this process, SHUKOS seeks to contribute to informed policy dialogue by equipping stakeholders with comparative insights and clearly formulated recommendations. The selected expert will play a key role in strengthening SHUKOS's advocacy function by preparing a comparative research analysis on sludge management practices in Western Balkan and EU countries, and by drafting a structured, evidence-based position paper that reflects the specific context and needs of Kosovo. The preparation and development of these deliverables will be based on background documentation, outcomes from initial Working Group meetings, and additional materials provided to the selected consultant.

III. Responsibilities and tasks of the RCDN Consultant

These activities will be facilitated by a consultant. Interested consultant and experts are encouraged to send their application. The consultant should ensure that necessary expertise to provide technical assistance in the development of a Policy / Position Paper and Comparative Research Analysis, which will document the identified problem and issues, summarize the background of the problem, identify solutions and support them with arguments. The task will be carried out in order to support the advocacy activities of the SHUKOS regarding National Initiative for Sustainable Sludge Management in Kosovo.

. According its specific aim, the assignment consists of four sets of activities:

- 1) Development of Comparative Research Analysis
- 2) Development of Position Paper
- 3) Action Plan Development
- 4) Participation and Facilitation in events

The responsibilities and tasks of the consultant are described below.

1) Set of activities referring to development of comparative research analysis

As a part of this set of activities, the consultant is obliged to:

1. Participate in the preparatory talks and consultations (orientation & coordination meetings) related to sludge management practices in Kosovo.
2. Collect and analyse relevant national data (legal, institutional, financial and operational) on sludge management in Kosovo.
3. Review and analyze sludge management strategies and practices in selected Western Balkan countries (e.g., North Macedonia, Albania, or Bosnia-Herzegovina) and at least three EU countries with different

models of sludge treatment and reuse (e.g., Germany for advanced treatment, Slovenia for regional relevance, and the Netherlands for circular economy approaches).

4. Identify similarities, differences, key lessons, and applicable approaches from the international examples that could inform the development of a national strategy for Kosovo.
5. Conduct interviews with stakeholders in Kosovo (Ministries, RWC, WWTPs, and if necessary, with LGU)
6. Synthesize the findings into a structured comparative research analysis, providing a clear evidence base for the forthcoming position paper.

Deliverables of this set of activities:

- Summary of collected data and desk review results.
- Comparative Research Analysis Report (in Albanian and English), including:
 - Review of Kosovo's current sludge management situation
 - A review of sludge management strategies and practices in **3–5 selected international countries**, specifically naming the reviewed countries
 - A comparative table or matrix highlighting key similarities, differences, and potential applications for Kosovo
 - Key findings and conclusions

Please, note that all logistic matters will be organised by the SHUKOS. The expert will be duly informed about all logistic details and will be asked to provide input, as necessary.

2) Set of activities referring to Development of Position Paper

As a part of this set of activities, the consultant of SHUKOS is obliged to:

1. Use the results of the research analysis to define the problem and articulate a structured argument
2. Draft a position paper following and agreed format, including rationale, proposed direction, and recommendations. Methodology for preparation of position papers will be provided upon award.
3. Stakeholder analysis
4. Present the draft to the Working Group and integrate feedback
5. Finalize the Position Paper, incorporating working group comments

Deliverables of this set of activities:

- Draft Position Paper in Albanian and English (structure aligned with the provided methodology),
- Identify all relevant stakeholders for the topic, to assess the level of influence, interest and power of the stakeholders,
- Final Position Paper integrating feedback,
- PPT summarizing the Position Paper for presentation.

3) Set of activities referring to Development of Action Plan for Implementation

As a part of this set of activities, the consultant of SHUKOS is obliged to:

1. Transmit Position Paper Recommendations into practical actions

2. Define activities, responsible institutions, timelines and resources
3. Ensure alignment with Kosovo's current institutional and legal framework
4. Identify monitoring measures
5. Prepare a logical and feasible action plan.

Deliverables of this set of activities are:

- Draft Action Plan (Albanian and English) including:
 - Area of action
 - Specific Measures
 - Timeline
 - Responsible actors
 - Resources needed
 - Monitoring measures
- Final versions of the Action Plan following validation with Working Group and stakeholders.

4) *Set of activities referring to Participation and Facilitation in Events:*

As a part of this set of activities, the consultant of SHUKOS is obliged to:

1. Participation in two Working Group meetings:
 - a. Present progress and drafts
2. Prepare materials for the Working Group meetings (ppts, handouts)
3. Review the specific stakeholder dialogue materials relevant for the selected stakeholder dialogue topics to be delivered,
4. Prepare presentation materials for the Stakeholder Meeting,
5. Present the Comparative Analysis, Position Paper, and Action Plan at the Stakeholder Meeting.

Deliverables of this set of activities are:

- Participation reports from 2 Working Group meetings,
- Describe the proposed solution and support it with arguments,
- Final presentation used during Working Group and Stakeholder meetings,
- Stakeholder Meeting presentation materials (ppt, briefing note)
- Summary report from Stakeholder Meeting including participant feedback.

IV. Expected outputs, estimated consultancy days and proposed timeline

| Working package | Tentative number of days | Explanation |
|--|--------------------------|--|
| Development of Comparative Analyse | 8 | This activity focuses on assessing Kosovo's current sludge management practices and comparing them with selected Western Balkan and EU countries. The aim is to identify relevant lessons and best practices that can inform the development of a national strategy. |
| Development of Position Paper | 4 | Based on the research findings, this activity involves drafting a structured position paper that defines the problem, presents evidence-based recommendations, and outlines potential policy directions, including a stakeholder analysis. |
| Action Plan Development | 2 | This activity transforms the recommendations from the position paper into a detailed, actionable plan. It defines specific measures, responsible institutions, timelines, and monitoring mechanisms. |
| Participation and Facilitation in Events | 4 | This activity ensures expert engagement in two Working Group meetings and one Stakeholder Meeting. It includes preparation of materials, presentation of findings, and documentation of feedback for final deliverables. |
| Total number of days | 18 | |

V. Expert Days

In total 18 working days are planned for the entire assignment:

The expert is expected to provide a proposal of stakeholder mapping.

The contract between the SHUKOS and expert will be signed under the laws of the Republic of Kosovo

VI. Experts' Profile

The SHUKOS / RCDN expert for development a comparative analyses and position paper is highly experienced, with hands-on knowledge of LGU and/or PUCs' functioning and management, including processes, procedures, organisational aspects, the current status and needs for public policy, law and main challenges, trends and opportunities for improvements, particularly in the various specific areas related to Water Supply and Wastewater.

Education: University Degree in an area relevant to the assignment (e.g. social sciences, public administration, business administration, Water Supply and Wastewater engineering and management, etc.).

Professional experience:

- 5 years of professional experience with LGUs and/or PUCs, demonstrating technical expertise in wastewater systems and treatment technologies, with knowledge of related operational challenges.
- Experience with regulatory frameworks and compliance requirements related to water and wastewater sector in Kosovo
- Working experience in developing position papers or related document



- IT skills: MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint).

Other requirements:

- Deep understanding of policy-making processes and government structures
- Experience in drafting policy briefs, position papers, and advocacy strategies
- Ability to analyse and interpret legislation and regulatory frameworks
- Policy advocacy and lobbying techniques.

Language skills: Fluency in Albanian and English

VII. Proposal

The consultant is asked to submit a proposal, **by 27/06/2025**. The proposal has to be submitted in the Albanian language **by e-mail, at info@shukos.org** and shall contain the following sections:

- CVs of the Expert
- Financial offer shall contain the total budget for executing of the advocacy event including: (i) proposed number of day and daily rate per activity, (The prices should be stated in EUR (gross amount)).
- Proposed Research Methodology and Action Plan template

VIII. Evaluation Criteria and Scoring

The proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- 35% Consultants' Profile: Consultants' expertise and experience for fulfilling the tasks under this ToR;
- 35% Proposed Research Methodology
- 10% Proposal: Action Plan Template
- 20% Financial Offer.

IX. Reference Person

The reference person for this assignment is the SHUKOS's RCDN+ Project Manager, Erdonita Humolli.

Email address: erdonita.humolli@shukos.org Project Manager.

X. Modification of Terms

SHUKOS reserves the right to modify the terms of the ToR at any time at its sole discretion.

XI. Acceptance and Rejection of Proposals

SHUKOS may not necessarily accept the lowest priced proposal or any proposal. At its sole discretion, SHUKOS reserve 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. SHUKOS 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 consultants who have responded. SHUKOS reserve 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 to the association and the RCDN.

XII. Ownership

All materials, documents and information prepared, developed or adjusted by the expert and used for the purposes of preparation, realisation and facilitation of the advocacy and lobby activity, as well as reporting, remain the property of the SHUKOS and RCDN. The expert agree that no part of the 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 the SHUKOS.

XIII. Reporting

The reports, including all annexes should be submitted, not later than 10 working days after the realisation of the activity, by the expert.

XIV. Terms and Payment

The expert, will be hired under separate Individual Contracts (IC) each, signed by the SHUKOS and will be paid upon submission and approval of the deliverables listed above. The expert shall provide the IC timesheets (by using the RCDN timesheet [Template A attached to the ToR](#)) together with the deliverables in order to proceed with the payment.

The payment will be based on the actual number of working days, (according to the submitted timesheet) invested for the development of each deliverable, but not exceeding the approved number of days for each of the proposed consultants.



Templates and annexes:

Template A: Time sheet for consultants