

Terms of Reference:

Evaluation of Support to the Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova (CALM) for the development of a Service centre for small water operators (SOMAS at CALM)

1. Background

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) are cooperating with the Government of Moldova to support the population in rural areas and small towns in Moldova with the Water and Sanitation Project ApaSan. Skat Consulting Ltd. is mandated to implement the project, which aims at improving the life conditions of people living in villages by improving their access to water and sanitation services that are sustainable and of good quality.

Skat, through ApaSan, has supported communities and local public authorities in villages to establish structures for sustainable operation and management of the systems. The management model used in most villages was community based operation (Water Consumer Association, WCA) or small municipal or inter-municipal enterprises. Local management will be the key element for the foreseeable future for improving water services in rural areas.

In order to improve the sustainability of locally managed water services, Skat has supported the Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova (CALM) to establish a service centre that provides technical assistance to small water operators (SOMAS). Since May 2017, CALM set-up an advisory and training service for small Water Supply and Sanitation operators ("Suport al Operatorilor Mici de Apa si Sanitatie", SOMAS). Support services are provided to both mayors and small local operators mostly on legal, management and economical aspects (water tariffs). Additionally, to the direct support provided to the LPAs and operators, CALM has been active in contributing to the development of policies and legislations in the water and sanitation sector.

The support to CALM through the ApaSan project has ended in December 2018, the Apasan project will be concluded in May 2019. In November 2019, SDC will start a new project supporting local governance in Moldova "Engaged People – Strong Municipalities (EPSM)", which will also be implemented by Skat Consulting Ltd. (after award by public tender in February 2019). CALM is foreseen as one of main partners of the new project. The detailed interventions of the new project, including possible cooperation with CALM, will be developed until July 2019.

Skat is now commissioning an external evaluation of its support to CALM, in order to assess the impact achieved and to draw lessons learnt and recommendations for sustainable locally managed water services, as well as for the future cooperation with CALM in the framework of the new SDC project.

2. Objectives, scope and methodology

The objectives of the evaluation are:

- Evaluate the achievements of Skat's support to CALM in setting up the service centre providing technical assistance to small water operators, from the point of view of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the support provided to water operators.
- Review the current cooperation modalities between Skat/ApaSan and CALM and assess its managerial efficiency.
- Assess sustainability of the current model of service provision to small water operators through CALM - in the context of CALM's future role and organizational development perspectives and in the context of existing alternatives.
- Draw lessons learned and provide general recommendations for further institutionalization of technical assistance provision to small water operators with the aim of better sustainability of locally managed water services in Moldova.

- Provide rapid assessment of CALM's general organizational potential as a LSG association (association of municipalities), also in the context of assistance provided by other donors/ projects. Give recommendations on further support to CALM in the framework of the new project "Engaged People – Strong Municipalities"

The evaluation should be conducted in a participatory way and involve such methods as: desk research, semi-structured group and individual interviews, field trips with focus group discussions with and observations, as well as a joint workshop between Skat and CALM teams. It should draw on views and opinions of key national stakeholders, other projects, the Apasan team, CALM as an implementer and benefiting municipalities and service providers (at least five).

3. Tasks and deliverables

The tentative tasks for the evaluation are the following:

- Review of documentation (contract Apasan-CALM, ApaSan progress reports, CALM progress reports, EPSM draft ProDoc, records related to assistance provided by CALM to water operators, relevant documentation of affected service operators, etc.) and other background documents
- Briefing with Skat St. Gallen (by phone) and ApaSan team leader
- Elaboration of guiding questions for the evaluation, to be reviewed by Skat
- Mission to Moldova, ca. 1 week incl. travel
 - Group interview with the ApaSan team
 - Group interview with the CALM team
 - Interview with key national stakeholders (to be agreed with Skat team)
 - Focus group discussion with other international projects involved in water and sanitation sector and support to service providers
 - Visits and interviews with selected municipalities and small water operators (logic of selection of those to be discussed with Skat)
 - If appropriate, joint workshop with ApaSan and CALM teams
 - Debriefing with ApaSan team leader
- Draft report
- Final report incorporating comments of Skat

Tentative key questions:

- Did the support from ApaSan to CALM achieve the desired results and impacts?
- What is the perception of ApaSan, CALM and the beneficiaries of the services from CALM regarding the results of the support?
- Was the chosen modality of cooperation appropriate?
- What lessons can be learnt from the cooperation regarding assistance to small water operators?
- What lessons can be learnt from the cooperation regarding the support to the institutional capacity development of CALM?
- What recommendations can be deduced from the cooperation regarding the possible future cooperation with CALM in the framework of the new EPSM project?

4. Requirements

- The evaluation needs to be concluded by end of April 2019, with field visit in March or April (March preferred).
- The evaluation will be carried out by one international expert. Assistance in Moldova for logistics and translation will be provided by ApaSan.
- The expert should have solid experience in evaluating projects related to local governance and municipal service provision (in particular in water sector), previous experience in organization of support services to water service providers, understanding of organizational development (preferably previous experience with LSGs associations).

5. Proposal

- Full CV
- Lumpsum cost proposal (travel expenses will be reimbursed separately)
- Proposal to be sent to Maria Teslaru (maria.teslaru@apasan.md) by latest 06.03.2019