**Terms of Reference**

**Monitoring and advisory support to the Agency for Water Supply and Wastewater and the Ministry of Infrastructure in Albania in regards to the implementation of the Water NIPS project.**

1. Background

In 2014 the Swedish government adopted a Results strategy for Sweden’s reform cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey 2014 – 2020. One of the three result areas is “A better environment, reduced climate impact and enhanced resilience to environmental impact and climate change”.

In line with the Swedish strategy Swedish support to the Agency for water supply, wastewater treatment and solid waste, AKUM, and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy (MIE) is provided to prepare for water investment planning for EU-negotiations (project called Water NIPS). The project has a maximum budget of 20 MSEK and an implementation period of 3 years.  The Water NIPS is currently being procured and is expected to start in September 2020.

The contribution will support more effective sector planning and strengthened capacities for the implementation of drinking water and wastewater treatment infrastructure and related services in line with EU-requirements. When negotiating EU-membership the implementation of Chapter 27, for environment and climate change, will be one of the most expensive chapters for Albania. The high costs mainly refer to the implementation of water sector infrastructure, in particular wastewater collection systems and treatment. No candidate country can realistically manage to implement all the Chapter 27 directives without receiving a transitional period for at least some of the directives and the heavy investment water sector directives always require such a period (10-12 years of implementation time after membership is usually granted the new members). The Commission will require that specific action plans, so called Directive Specific Implementation Plans (DSIPs) are developed as basis for negotiating the transitional period. The DSIPs are not only important for successful negotiations but also very strategic for the country's planning and implementation of the costly infrastructure to be carried out over a 20-25 year period. By developing DSIPs of high quality Albania could save substantial amounts of funding through establishing a system which strengthens effectiveness and cost-efficiency. This would for example refer to phasing infrastructure development in a way that postpones certain investments until when the more substantial cohesion and structural funds are available.

The ministry of infrastructure and energy (MIE) is responsible for policy and large-scale strategy development and implementation in regards to drinking water, waste water and solid waste and has requested support in developing two DSIPs for urban waste water treatment (UWWT) and drinking water (DW) as well as DSIP related measures. AKUM is responsible for technical support to the implementation of policies and strategies in the field of water supply and sewerage, wastewater treatment, territorial planning and waste infrastructure and is managing the procurement and contract implementation.

The embassy finds the project very strategic but also challenging for AKUM and MIE to implement. There is a risk that if Albania is not capacitated and supported during project implementation the full benefits of the technical support will not be absorbed by the Albanian side and the reform in regards to investment planning and strengthening of sector leadership will not take place. The embassy has therefore decided to allocate funding for monitoring and advisory services to AKUM and MIE.

With reference to the above the Swedish embassy needs to procure external advisory and monitoring support which will assist AKUM and MIE (as well as the embassy) in in project monitoring and follow-up

**2. Objective**

The objective of the assignment is to support the increased competence, involvement and ownership of AKUM and MIE during project implementation. The assignment should also contribute to the strengthened dialogue between AMUM/MIE and the Swedish embassy.

**3. Scope of the Assignment**

The Consultant (2-3 experts) will assist with support, monitoring and advice during the 3-year project implementation as follows:

- Support for capacity building within AKUM and MIE;

- Provide advice and mentoring support to AKUM and MIE as needed during implementation;

- Participate and assist in project meetings (procured main consultant) as requested.

- Make a technical assessment of the work carried out by consultants and engagement and leadership of AKUM and MIE approximately every 6 months.

- Facilitate good understanding and engagement of senior management within AKUM and MIE by leading formal and informal meetings with senior management.

- To a limited extent the consultant will provide advice to the embassy and facilitate dialogue and stakeholder engagement.

**4. Methodology**

The consultant shall strive to establish a good working relationship with AKUM, MIE and the procured main consultant and discuss recommendations/observations with the team leader and AKUM/MIE key staff regularly.

The consultant shall have regular meetings/telephone, at least quarterly, with the embassy or provide brief.

The consultant should meet with the embassy twice per year in connection with the reporting but also other times as jointly agreed.

**5. Time schedule and consultant input**

The organization, monitoring and advisory services need to start in June 2020 and will continue during a 3-year period.

The assignment will be carried out mainly in Tirana but might also involve travel within Albania.

**6. Reporting to partners and the embassy**

The consultant will provide the AKUM, MIE and the embassy with brief semi-annual reports (10-15 pages) with a set of recommendations for follow-up and dialogue between MTE and the embassy.

**7. Experience, areas of capability and professional profile of consultant**

The Consultant (2-3 experts) will have:

* An academic degree in an area relevant to the assignment.
* Experience of working with water sector strategic planning and reform-oriented issues in the water sector and providing support in this respect to government actors.
* Good knowledge of the EU-accession process.
* Undertaken activities relevant to the assignment during the last five years and particularly to have professional experience of capacity building and contract management.
* Experience of working with the government administration in the Western Balkans, with Albania is a merit, having good listening skills, being responsive and with experience in facilitation of stakeholder engagement.
* The consultant shall have good written and spoken skills in English and at least one Albanian speaker in the team.