

Terms of References

International Gender Advisor

Polaris Programme: Support to multi-level governance in Ukraine

About SALAR International & its engagement in Ukraine

SALAR International is a subsidiary of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), representing all 290 municipalities and 21 regions in Sweden. As the international branch of SALAR, we work globally to support local democracy and good governance in developing and transitioning countries. Our expertise covers areas such as capacity building in municipal management and service delivery, local and regional development planning, support for local government associations, decentralisation policies and European integration. Geographically, SALAR International's projects cover countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, West Asia and Africa.

SALAR International has been engaged in Ukraine since 2014, providing support to Ukraine's decentralisation process through three major initiatives focusing on building a robust multi-level governance system, increasing accessibility and quality of services at the local level, and enhancing international cooperation between municipalities from Ukraine and the EU. After the full-scale invasion, SALAR International has added crisis support to Ukrainian municipalities, providing them with material assistance.

Description of the assignment context

To address the changing needs of Ukrainian municipalities and national level stakeholders during wartime, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has initiated a broader programme in support of multilevel governance and recovery. This programme is called "Polaris: Supporting Multi-level Governance in Ukraine". It is implemented by SALAR International and planned for four years (July 2024-May 2028).

Polaris Programme aims to work with both short and long-term focus, addressing the needs of the multi-level governance system in Ukraine and in parallel strengthening municipalities' public service provision, as well as their direct engagement in the recovery and reconstruction processes, in line with the requirements of Ukraine's EU accession.

The Programme's support is provided through two operational components: one focusing on policy and collaboration with national stakeholders, and the other providing direct support to municipalities. The support encompasses six thematic areas: Education, Fiscal Decentralisation and Budgeting, Administrative Service Provision and support to starostas, Locally-led Recovery, municipal enterprises and International Municipal Cooperation.

Gender equality is a central cross-cutting issue in the Polaris Programme and is therefore integrated throughout programme implementation. It is promoted and directly addressed in activities with local and national partners, in communication and collaboration with stakeholders, and within the Programme team.

Organisational set up

The programme is a joint Swedish-Ukrainian initiative with management structures in both Stockholm and Kyiv. It encourages a flat organisational structure, meaning a high degree of autonomy and responsibility for involved experts, as well as strong local ownership among beneficiaries such as national stakeholders and Ukrainian municipalities.

More than 50 people are working full-time in Ukraine within various thematic teams as well as support units.

The Programme has its office in Kyiv but the support and activities target local self-government in all regions of Ukraine and is implemented in all regions controlled by the Ukrainian government. The support is provided on demand, in most cases through open calls.

Role description

The gender advisor will work closely with the two Programme gender experts. The role is to support strategic development of gender equality in Programme implementation. The purpose of the work of Advisor is to leverage international experience of gender equality from European countries to drive the programme's outcomes.

Main responsibilities:

- Collaborate closely with Programme gender experts and relevant team members to support the design and delivery of activities and outputs that advance gender equality;
- Provide strategic policy advice, methodological guidance, and practical support to strengthen gender mainstreaming across programme activities;
- Support capacity-building through coaching, advisory inputs, and knowledge sharing to enhance partners' understanding and application of gender-responsive approaches;
- Identify, adapt, and share relevant experiences and good practices from Sweden and other European contexts to inform and inspire innovative inclusive and gender equal approaches for local authorities;
- Participate in key programme events, meetings, and consultations (online) to contribute gender expertise;
- Contribute to the development of analytical products, methodologies, recommendations, and policy-oriented outputs aimed at advancing gender equality at local and regional levels;
- Maintain regular communication and coordination with programme management and gender experts to ensure timely and effective delivery of assigned tasks and outputs.
- Support programme planning, monitoring, reporting, and communication efforts.

Qualifications:

- University degree in Gender Studies, Social or Political Science, Public Administration, Local Governance, or a related field.
- Minimum of 5 years of professional experience in gender equality and inclusion, with demonstrated work in local governance or public sector programmes.
- Proven experience providing strategic advice, methodological guidance, and practical support to strengthen gender mainstreaming in local governance initiatives.
- Expertise in gender analysis, gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation, and the development of evidence-based recommendations and policy-oriented outputs.

- Experience of designing capacity-building activities to enhance the knowledge, skills, and awareness of local authorities' representatives and staff on gender equality and inclusive governance.
- Understanding of gender equality and human rights frameworks, preferably in the Ukrainian or Eastern European context.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Fluency in English (written and spoken).

Merits:

- Experience of gender mainstreaming in urban planning;
- Experience of gender equality post conflict settings and recovery efforts;
- Previous experience working in international technical assistance or donor-funded projects.

Selection Criteria:

The selection of candidates will be based on the following criteria: demonstrated experience in gender equality and gender mainstreaming, strong communication and advisory skills and understanding of the role of local authorities in advancing gender equality, inclusive governance, and equitable service delivery.

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. Team members 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.

Location: Remotely

Duration: September 2026 - May 2027, up to 5 days a month.

Application:

Send your application with max 3 page CV and max 1 page cover letter (in PDF) to ukraine@salarinternational.se. Please note "Gender Advisor" in the subject line. The interviews will be conducted on an ongoing basis. Only shortlisted applicants will receive a response by email when the recruitment has been finalised.

For any questions or clarifications, please contact: ukraine@salarinternational.se.

Personal information provided by the applicant in the recruitment process will be handled by SALAR International.

Deadline: August 1, 2026