

JOB DESCRIPTION

PROGRAMMES LEAD, WESTERN BALKANS

Role	Programmes Lead, Western Balkans		
Reports to	Head, Western Balkans Regional Hub	Direct reports	0
Budgetary responsibility	N/A	Resource responsibility	N/A
Safeguarding	N/A	Key relationships	Head, Western Balkans Regional Hub; Western Balkans Regional Hub staff; Deputy Head, Global Engagement
Contract	1-year fixed-term contract, with a possibility for an extension depending on funding availability	Location	Remote; based in either Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo Montenegro, North Macedonia or Serbia.
Salary	Competitive day rate dependent on experience	Level	5

**** This role is subject to confirmation of funding ****

About the Strong Cities Network

Launched at the United Nations in 2015, Strong Cities is an independent global network of more than 220 cities and other local governments dedicated to addressing all forms of hate, extremism and polarisation at a local level. The Network fills a critical gap in efforts that have traditionally overlooked the unique roles that sub-national governments can play in preventing and responding to these threats, complementing both existing security-led measures and grassroots efforts led by civil society stakeholders.

Strong Cities' strategic priorities are:

- Strengthen interaction among cities within and across different country and regional contexts to allow for local leaders and governments with shared interests to learn from each other;
- Promote effective national-local coordination to ensure that relevant national policies and programmes are informed by local government needs and priorities and facilitate more local ownership and thus local application of them;
- Support cities to develop or strengthen mandates and programmes to prevent and respond to hate, extremism and polarisation, which leverage the range of local services, interests, networks and skills that exist within cities;
- Enhance engagement between cities and young people so that youth have the skills, confidence and opportunity to engage with local governments and that cities in turn have

the frameworks, understanding and tools for policy and practice that is participatory and representative; and

- Elevate the voices and leadership of mayors and other local leaders at regional and international levels, so that national and multilateral approaches are connected to and better understand the realities on the ground.

This role will sit within the Network's Western Balkans Regional Hub, which leads and coordinates the network's engagement with local governments and other relevant stakeholders in the region as part of a wider Strong Cities effort to deliver on its [2023-2025 global strategy](#).

The Strong Cities Network is hosted by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD). Recruitment for this role will be managed by, and the successful candidate employed by, ISD. For more information on ISD's recruitment policies and processes, visit the [ISD website](#).

Role

The purpose of this role is to support Strong Cities' engagement with cities and relevant partners across the Western Balkans. The successful candidate will be a core member of the Western Balkans Regional Hub team, fostering strong and effective relationships with municipalities across the region. The role primarily focuses on engagement with member municipalities across Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia to ensure the network is driven by – and ultimately responds to – the needs and gaps that cities themselves identify in their ability to prevent hate, extremism and polarisation at local levels. With a focus on regional engagement, there will be a need for strong internal coordination with Central Team colleagues, so that the Central Team and Regional Hubs are functioning as a cohesive Management Unit serving Strong Cities members around the world.

Key Responsibilities

- 1. Strengthen and maintain effective long-term relationships with member cities (20%)**
 - Engage with members and other cities in the region on the implementation of the Strong Cities global strategy 2022-2025.
 - Conduct outreach to municipalities to (re-)engage, inform and involve mayors, other local leaders and local government practitioners in Regional Hub activities with a view to build and maintain strong and lasting relationships.
 - Carry out day-to-day communication with mayors and local practitioners in the region, sharing updates, facilitating their participation in upcoming events and activities, and responding to questions, concerns and needs of Strong Cities members.
 - Ensure that regional contacts in the centralised database are maintained and kept current.
 - Facilitate onboarding of new/prospective member cities in coordination with Central Team colleagues.
 - Keep track of upcoming election periods and identify other political events which may necessitate handover with/induction of new relationships with a different mayoral administration, working to minimise disruption of Strong Cities activities.
 - Capture and update key monitoring and evaluation data that enables us to track the quality and consistency of member engagement.

2. Identify, develop and deliver regional programming that responds to the needs of cities (25%)

- Build a consistent profile of member needs/gaps in preventing and countering hate, extremism and polarisation at the city level across the region, including through consultations, interviews, focus groups, informal discussions and roundtables, desk-based research and literature reviews and other media.
- Ensure that the Strong Cities' global strategy is implemented in line with the needs, priorities and concerns of cities in the Western Balkans.
- Promote and staff a Western Balkans Regional Hub Help Desk function to respond to member requests for support and expertise.
- Coordinate with multilateral and other organisations that deliver relevant capacity building programmes to share and scale up lessons learned across the Western Balkans that are pertinent for municipal and other sub-national-level policy and practice.
- Design, deliver and support the evaluation of key regional engagement, training and networking activities including regional workshops, exchanges, webinars and mayoral fora.
- Support the allocation of technical support funds for local initiatives based on member needs in close coordination with the Central Team.

3. Facilitate city peer-learning through the identification and exchange of good practices (35%)

- Identify the thematic priorities for cities and other sub-national authorities across the region through engagement and needs/gaps assessment processes.
- Work with Central Team colleagues to develop policy learnings, city practice spotlights, good practice case studies for updating Strong Cities' Mayoral and Cities guides and recommendations that draw on the experiences of cities and other sub-national authorities in the region.
- Develop policy briefings, training manuals, guidelines, blog posts, and quick-turnaround research analysis briefings for dissemination to regional cities and global membership.
- Support the delivery of regional workshops which will unite mayors with relevant national and local stakeholders on key thematic priorities determined in accordance with local needs.
- Lead the organisation and delivery of regional webinars on thematic issues that speak to the priorities of members, and ensure regional voices are represented in global-level webinars where relevant.
- Ensure active involvement of Western Balkans International Steering Committee members in its work, coordinating closely with Central Team colleagues.
- Ensure that members in the Western Balkans are represented in/engaged with Strong Cities and relevant partner activities at global and multilateral levels beyond the region.
- Support an annual Strong Cities Western Balkans recalibration by identifying member needs, tracking progress towards promoting the Strong Cities mission in the region, and key policy/practice take-aways to inform discussion at the global level.

4. Project management (15%)

- Contribute to weekly regional and global Strong Cities internal team meetings.
- Support the drafting of donor reports.

- Support monitoring, evaluation and learning efforts at the regional and, where necessary, global levels.
- Follow Strong Cities procurement processes for contracting goods and services.
- Use institutional and external project management tools to effectively manage projects and activities to time, quality and budget.
- Ensure consistent internal coordination with regional and Central Team colleagues.

5. Development (5%)

- Contribute to the identification of development opportunities and partnerships.
- Contribute to concept notes and proposal writing.

Outcomes (the way success will be measured)

- Strengthened relationships across regional municipalities demonstrated by increased engagement data and consistent representation in regional and global activities.
- Strong partnerships developed with regional organisations and relevant government agencies.
- Effective and successful delivery of regional workshops, webinars and other regional/international activities to a high standard.
- City needs in the region are addressed through the successful design, planning and delivery of joint Strong Cities Network/municipal-led initiatives.
- Positive 360 feedback from colleagues and senior staff, working collaboratively to support the wider team to deliver on the Strong Cities strategy.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Expectations

All staff, consultants and volunteers are expected to:

- Commit to ISD's vision, mission and [Guiding Principles](#);
- Foster diversity, inclusivity and equality of opportunity at ISD;
- Demonstrate respect for others and safeguard those who are vulnerable;
- Carry out their duties in accordance with ISD's policies and procedures; and
- Adhere to risk management and security instructions at all times.

Competencies

These reflect ISD's [Guiding Principles](#) which we expect all members of the team to embody, regardless of seniority and role. How these competencies are assessed is outlined in ISD's Performance Review Process.

Guiding Principles	Competencies
Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal integrity• Focus on quality
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respect for others• Commitment to the team
Agility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Efficiency and effectiveness• Problem solving
Courage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic thinking• Growth mindset

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

ISD endeavours to recruit a range of candidates to strengthen our team and contribute to our organisational culture. We particularly welcome applications from candidates currently underrepresented across the organisation – including those from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, those with disabilities and members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Specific Requirements

These requirements are a priority for this specific role, and form part of our assessment during recruitment, probation and ongoing performance management. They are also a framework for focusing on continuing professional and personal development.

	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge, training and qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bachelor's degree in international relations, political science, security, law, diplomacy or relevant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Master's degree in international relations, political science, security, law, diplomacy or relevant.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of counter-terrorism, preventing/countering violent extremism, rule of law, peacebuilding, conflict mitigation or international cooperation. • Relevant qualifications in international affairs or other relevant fields. • Knowledge of key security, development, governance, peacebuilding or related issues in the Western Balkans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of existing Strong Cities capacity-building and other engagements in the Western Balkans. • Knowledge of local government structures in 1-2 relevant countries.
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant experience in developing and/or delivering peacebuilding/preventing violent extremism/local governance programmes with a range of stakeholders. • Experience in network building • Previous experience in either working with or in national/local governments, civil society and/or international organisations on prevention initiatives. • Knowledge of regional, national and local P/CVE and/or other relevant frameworks, strategies and structures. • Experience organising and leading meetings and events with national government and/or local officials. • Experience in planning, organising and delivering regional or other events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in working with a diverse, international team. • Experience in business development.
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent written and spoken communication skills. Ability to speak independently and confidently with city officials. • Native or working proficiency in at least one of the main Western Balkan languages – Albanian, Bosnian/Croatian Montenegrin/Serbian (BCMS), and/or Macedonian. • Fluency in English (verbal and written). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working proficiency in more than one of the main Western Balkan languages.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Willingness and ability to drive work both independently and in collaboration with a global team.• Highly organised with the ability to be flexible, multi-task and respond proactively.• Ability to independently conduct open-source desktop research.• Intercultural and interpersonal awareness.• Ability to travel regionally, and at points globally, for scheduled and <i>ad hoc</i> activities and meetings.	
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