

TOR for Regional Expert

Head Office / Secretariat of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South-Eastern Europe (SWG) – Skopje

Terms of Reference (ToR) for Engagement of Regional Expert for coordination of activities in the cross-border region “Prokletije – Bjeshket e Nemuna”

1. Introduction

The Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG), as a platform for networking and regional co-operation, has been established during the Agricultural Policy Forum 2005 (“Rural Development Opportunities for Co-operation in the SEE”) held in Macedonia and Serbia in June 2005.

With the International Agreement in March 2009, the SWG is registered as an International Intergovernmental Organization, with its managing and coordinative body – SWG Head Office/Secretariat based in Skopje, Macedonia. On September 7th 2009, the Law on Ratification of the SWG Agreement has been decisively completed by the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia.

The main SWG strategic framework is composed of the following elements:

SWG vision is to promote innovative and sustainable agriculture and rural development through regional cooperation, to improve rural livelihoods in the SEE countries.

Mission - to increase horizontal cooperation among respective countries and territories of South Eastern Europe, by coordinating regional initiatives related to agriculture and rural development and supporting the process of social and economic development of rural areas in SEE region.

General objective of SWG is to facilitate close cooperation between the Ministries of Agriculture and other stakeholders in the field of agriculture and rural development and to support EU integration in SEE. The SWG has four specific objectives on which the organization has focused its work:

1. To improve the common understanding on agriculture and rural development policies;
2. To assist the improvement of implementing structures and systems for agriculture and rural development, with specific emphasis on cross border cooperation;
3. To improve the understanding and use of implementation tools for agriculture and rural development;
4. To identify and share information and application of good practice in agriculture and rural development to broaden the rural agenda.

2. Background

The engagement is foreseen within the project “Regional cooperation and networking in the field of agriculture, rural and economic development of cross-border areas”.

The project aims at fostering regional cooperation among institutions and stakeholders in the field of agricultural and rural development along with facilitation of the process of a balanced territorial development of the WB countries on the path towards EU integration. The objective

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of the project is to strengthen the horizontal and vertical coordination and networking among all stakeholders (public, private and civil), needed to encourage inclusive economic growth and sustainable rural development during the EU accession process of the Western Balkans.

Since its introduction, the ABD approach has proven to be an efficient type of action for enhancing regional cooperation and fostering integrated economic development of rural cross-border regions in the WB. This success comes from the fact that the approach is people-centred, based on understanding the realities of the rural population and on the principle of their participation in determining priorities for intervention. It is also holistic in that it is non-sector oriented and it recognizes multiple actors, strategies and outcomes. Its activities are devoted to different dimensions of sustainability such as environmental, economic and social.

The ABD approach has been operationalised with functional Project Management Units (PMU) in four cross-border regions of 'Drina-Tara' (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia), 'Drina-Sava' (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia), 'Prespa' (Albania and Macedonia) and 'Sharra' (Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo*) as well as a Regional PMU Office in Belgrade. With baseline analysis as well as a strategic plan prepared, the project will support the application of the ABD approach and the establishment of similar structures in additional three regions: 'Krsh' (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro), 'Pcinja - Krajishte' (Serbia, Bulgaria and Macedonia) and 'Prokletije – Bjeshket e Nemuna' (Albania, Kosovo* and Montenegro). The PMUs act as a coordination bodies for the stakeholders and established stakeholder groups (SHG) in each of the region. The stakeholder groups function as a latent Local Action Groups (LAGs) with a regional multilateral character in the cross-border regions following the principles of the EU LEADER approach. The SHGs consist of representatives from local governments, the business sector (private actors and business organizations, including agricultural holdings and/or cooperatives) and civil society organizations (NGOs) other than business organizations.

During project implementation, the SWG will promote regional cooperation as a platform, with coordination of the regional structures in the seven-target cross-border areas, through facilitation of capacity building process, as well as dissemination of knowledge and information on key economic developmental issues. The structures will retain their prominent role of strengthening and promoting local ownership by increasing participation within communities and build the sense of involvement and ownership that can instigate local development. The SHGs, in close cooperation with the PMUs, will have the task of identifying local development opportunities and elaborating related strategies, promoting new forms of rural cooperation and partnerships, facilitating the process of preparing applications for support from IPA II instruments and other relevant donors and partner organizations and national support schemes.

In the frame of the local actions, the project will support capacity building measures and active building of local competences. These activities will enable local stakeholders to perform more effectively and thus better manage available resources for the intended purpose of improving the quality and quantity of products and services provided. Improved local competences will in particular contribute to better management and strengthening of short value chains. These local development efforts are further to be strengthened through facilitation and support of cross-border People to People (P2P) activities. The P2P actions are excellent tools for

**This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence*

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practicing partnerships and cooperation among stakeholders and contributes to strengthening networking, cooperation and promotion of cultural, traditional and natural heritage, as well as enhancing the economic potentials of the rural cross-border regions. These activities will contribute to an increased sense of joint identity, belongingness and networking in the cross-border areas which will be further promoted.

On behalf of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group, the SWG Head Office/Secretariat as a managing and coordinative body will be responsible for the project implementation.

3. Specific situation

The **aim of the engagement** of the Regional Expert is to coordinate the activities related to implementation of Area Based Development Approach and other SWG general activities in the **cross-border region “Prokletije – Bjeshket e Nemuna” and respective countries**, as well as the work of the Stakeholder Group of the cross-border region “Prokletije – Bjeshket e Nemuna”.

The Regional Expert will facilitate the cooperation and communication between the Stakeholder Group of the cross-border region “Prokletije – Bjeshket e Nemuna” and SWG Head Office/Secretariat and the SWG Assembly.

Also, the Regional Expert is responsible for the activities in the cross-border region “Prokletije – Bjeshket e Nemuna”.

The Regional Expert is engaged on a consultancy basis.

4. Tasks of the Regional Expert

In particular, the tasks of the Regional Expert are the following:

1. **Undertaking contacts to Stakeholder Groups (SHG) of the cross-border region “Prokletije – Bjeshket e Nemuna”**, local authorities and other interested parties in order to discuss the achievements up-to date, as well as to explore and encourage possibilities for joint and/or complementary actions under the established strategies and programmes.
2. **In cooperation with the Stakeholder Group of the cross-border region “Prokletije – Bjeshket e Nemuna” and the SWG Head Office/Secretariat, prepare planning of meetings for the SHG (at least 3 SHG meetings).**
3. **In coordination with the Project Manager arrange national and regional meetings of the Stakeholder Group of the cross-border region “Prokletije – Bjeshket e Nemuna” and relevant working groups**, prepare meeting programmes, ensure participation of key stakeholders, provide logistic support, prepare meeting reports.
4. **In coordination with Project Manager, facilitate the work of the SHG** in close cooperation with the Chairman and Vice Chairmen.
The work of the Coordinator during the meeting will be to facilitate the discussions and participate with input in the discussions.
5. **In coordination with the Project Manager, provide support to stakeholders in generation of ideas and preparation of project proposals for different call for proposals with special emphasis on Calls under IPA II.**

The Regional Expert, in close coordination with Project Manager, will provide support

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to stakeholders (regional and local public administration, civil and business sector) for preparation of project proposals for different calls, such as calls for proposals within CBC Programmes, IPARD programme, different national agriculture and rural development programmes, as well as calls for proposals of different international donor organizations). Special emphasis will be given on Calls within IPA II. The support will be provided to stakeholders based on the public call for consultative meetings and meetings for fine-tuning of project ideas. The support could also be provided on-line with e-mail exchange of application documents, as well as organization of individual and group consultative meetings with stakeholders preparing applications for different calls. However, the staff of SWG Project Management Units will not be responsible for preparation of full project proposals and compilation of necessary accompany documentation.

6. **In coordination with the Project Manager and in cooperation with SWG Head Office/ Secretariat, prepare capacity building measures (at least 1 capacity building event) of Stakeholder Group of the cross-border region “Prokletije – Bjeshket e Nemuna”,** perform training need assessment, prepare training programmes, ensure participation of key stakeholders, provide logistic support, prepare reports, etc.
7. **In coordination with the Project Manager, provide capacity building trainings** for the members of the **Stakeholder Group of the cross-border region “Prokletije – Bjeshket e Nemuna”** for preparation of project proposals, development of short value chains and creation of image of products, services and regions. The specific topics for the capacity building measures will be identified in close cooperation with the SWG Head Office/Secretariat and the Stakeholder Group.
8. **Develop knowledge and continuously generate information** about existing support instruments potentially available to support projects in the cross-border region “Prokletije – Bjeshket e Nemuna”.
9. **Inform stakeholders about different calls for proposals and available funding opportunities both on country and national level.**
Electronic communication tools (e-mail, web-sites, social media), as well as SHG meetings will be used for performance of publicity activities.
10. **In coordination with the Project Manager, convene the Working Groups (WGs) meetings to discuss priorities** within the sector/theme under their responsibility.
11. **Identify relevant stakeholders** (institutions, organizations, donors, individuals etc.) from the **cross-border region “Prokletije – Bjeshket e Nemuna”** to be further involved in the activities of the SHG and the implementation of the Area Based Development (ABD) Approach in the Western Balkans.
12. **Develop communication lines** along with the SHG representatives to ensure full transparency and involvement.
13. **Establish an adequate platform for informing** all potential stakeholders in the area about SHG meetings and the activities of the SHG, including the strategies and established project pipeline and the results of the meetings.
As a general rule, all persons with a legitimate interest in the activities should be involved.
14. **Elaborate a stakeholder analysis** or mapping to have a clear overview of capacities and competences in the SHG to be able to draw on their resources when/if possible.
15. **In coordination with the Project Manager, establish cooperation with other local/regional entities** (RDAs, NGO’s etc.), where such entities exist and have a capacity and willingness to support the work on projects.

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16. **Establish contacts, communication and cooperation with IPA implementing structures** in the cross-border region of “Prokletije – Bjeshket e Nemuna”.
17. Along with the SHG members, facilitate and participate in the organization of **people-to-people actions in the cross-border region “Prokletije – Bjeshket e Nemuna”**.
18. Support the stakeholders in preparation of P2P events and monitor the implementation of such events in the **cross-border region “Prokletije – Bjeshket e Nemuna”.and respective countries;;**
19. Administration and technical functioning **of the Project Management Unit of the cross-border region “Prokletije – Bjeshket e Nemuna”**, which also includes approval of payments as per the provided Power of Attorney.
20. Assist and facilitate other activities of the SWG in coordination with SWG Head Office/ Secretariat.

5. Reporting and outputs

The Regional Expert will deliver:

- Monthly technical report on the performed activities with detailed time sheet for worked hours;
- Mission reports after executed field missions.

The Technical reports should be prepared in English language.

The following **outputs** are foreseen for the Regional Expert within this ToR:

- Meetings conclusions;
- Documents, project proposals and other documents which are result of the activities in the region, activities of the SHG and WGs;
- Technical reports on the performed activities.

6. Place of assignment

The place of assignment of the Regional Expert is the cross-border region “Prokletije – Bjeshket e Nemuna”.

7. Timeframe

The Regional Expert will be engaged for the period **January – December 2018**.

8. Experience and Category of the Regional Expert

The proposed Regional Expert shall have the professional qualifications and experience required to successfully cover all the tasks as indicated in this ToR.

Qualifications and skills

- University degree in economics, management, sociology, agriculture or equivalent. Master level is considered to be an advantage;
- Fluency in both written and spoken English;
- Knowledge of one language of the region or more is an advantage;
- Flexible work approach to manage the day to day work load;
- Strongly output orientated;
- Strong coordination and facilitation skills;
- Team leader and team worker;
- Proven experience and knowledge in community/regional/rural development;
- Experience in project design and strategic planning;

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- High quality analytical and document drafting skills;
- Computer skills in office applications;
- In-depth knowledge of the economic, social and institutional context in the cross - border region.

General professional experience

- At least 3-5 years of relevant professional experience;
- General experience demonstrating sound knowledge of the situation in South East Europe, the Region, European integration and EU enlargement

Specific professional experience

- 3-5 years of proven experience in working in local/regional or rural development; Experience in applying participatory methods in developmental activities at local or regional level;
- Experience in support in development or development of Strategic Plans for rural/local or regional development;
- Experience in working with LEADER or LEADER-like principles in the process of development of local strategies;
- Experience in facilitation and coordination of groups of stakeholders;
- Experience in management of time-sensitive projects and organizing and supporting complex training events;
- Experience in implementation of at least one foreign funded project.