

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 Regional Expert – Agri-Food

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:

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

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2. Background

In December 2014 the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development approved the realization of a 3-year regional programme entitled “Rural development by integrated forest and water resource management in South-East-Europe (LEIWW)”.

The programme targets the Western Balkans countries/territories: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Lead executing agencies are the ministries responsible for agriculture and rural development, through their membership in the SWG, which is the main implementing partner, along with GIZ. The three central fields of activity are 1) Regional intersectoral coordination processes at the interface between rural development/agriculture, environment, forests and water, 2) Integration of environmental objectives into national rural development and agriculture policies in line with the targets of EU accession processes, and 3) Planning and implementation of integrated forest and water management in selected cross-border pilot regions.

One of the main objectives of the LEIWW project is to foster income generation through sustainable use of natural resources via implementation of the Area Based Development (ABD) approach in the selected cross border rural regions. The main mechanisms for supporting the cross-border economic development under the current LEIWW project are the ABD Grant Scheme and the People to People Activities (P2P), as funding instruments for small scale projects, organisation of regional trade fairs and events for regional cooperation in the selected rural regions as well as capacity development approaches on local, national and regional levels. These mechanisms shall be developed into sustainable value chain projects (development and promotion) in an upcoming project phase.

3. Specific situation

Tourism and agri-food sectors have significant contribution in sustainable development, economic upliftment and social benefits for the rural population. Prior to investing, the state of the condition of respective resources, their attractiveness and levels of demand, must be known. The output, therefore, foresees the development and application of a mechanism for assessing the tourism and agro-food potential in 7 target rural cross-border areas: Prespa, Sharra, Drina-Tara, Drina-Sava, Prokletije - Bjeshket e Namuna, Pcinja and Krsh.

The assessment will present the possibilities for the stakeholders in the cross-border regions for development of value chain projects in tourism and agri-food sectors. The action foresees organization of regional working group meetings and engagement of regional and international experts on preparation of the methodology and performing the regional assessment.

The major outcomes of the assignment are:

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

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- Regional methodology and approach for the assessment of potential for diversification of economic activities in rural cross-border areas through short value chain development in the tourism and agri-food sectors in the 7 target ABD regions;
- Assessment of potential for diversification of economic activities in rural cross-border areas through short value chain development in the 7 target ABD regions;
- Recommendations for sustainable development interventions related to making use of the potential for diversification of economic activities in rural cross-border areas through short value chain development in the tourism and agri-food sectors in the 7 target ABD regions.

For accomplishment of the above-mentioned outcomes a Works contract is foreseen.

4. Scope of work

The assignment includes the following tasks:

- Collection (supported by the SWG regional offices staff), assessment and elaboration of the relevant data/information on potential for diversification of economic activities in rural areas through short value chain development in the agri-food sector in the target ABD cross-border regions;
- Assessment of the potential for diversification of economic activities in rural areas through short value chain development in the agri-food sector and recommendation of at least 2 value chains with the highest potential from each of the target ABD cross-border regions;
- Provision of recommendations for sustainable development interventions related to making use of the potential for diversification of economic activities in rural areas through short value chain development in the agri-food sector for each of the target ABD cross-border regions;
- Participation at the Kick-off Meeting, Interim Meeting and Final Meeting;
- Continuous cooperation and consultation with the Senior Expert and the International Expert engaged under the assignment;
- Assisting SWG and GIZ in any other related issues.

The Contractor might be required to perform additional tasks that are deemed necessary for the completion of the defined assignment.

The recommended value chains are to be comparable between the regions to allow a transparent selection process. Among the main comparing features should be the potential to generate new value added, income and employment for men and women, mobilization of private and public investments as well as their capacity to use local natural resources in ways that are environmentally, socially and culturally sustainable.

All activities will be closely coordinated with the SWG within the programme “Rural development by integrated forest and water resource management in South-East-Europe (LEIWW)”.

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Access to political stakeholders, thematic networks and target groups as well as strategies, policies and assessments will be assured by SWG.

The working language for the assignment is English.

5. Reporting and deliverables

The expert reports to the SWG Secretary General and the SWG Project Manager.

The following deliverables are foreseen for the expert within this ToR:

Deliverable	Timeframe/Deadline in 2018
Participation at the Kick-off Meeting	Beginning of March
Collected, processed and elaborated data/information on potential of the value-chains in the agri-food sectors (from desk research and field research)	March - April
Participation in Stakeholders Groups meetings in each of the 7 target regions to reflect on the preliminary findings	Middle of May
Contribution to the draft assessments and recommendations (agri-food part) for each of the 7 target regions	End of May
Interim Meeting – presentation of the draft assessments, receiving feedback from the participants	End of May
Contribution to the final reports (agri-food part) for each of the 7 target regions	End of June
Final Meeting – presentation of the 7 assessments	End of June

6. Place of assignment

The place of assignment of the expert is the Western Balkan region.

7. Timeframe

The contract will cover the period from 1 March until 31 July.

8. Payments

The payments for realization of this Contract shall be effected following the submission of all deliverables and confirmation of approval by SWG, in one final installment.

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The payment of the agreed remuneration shall be effected upon submission of original invoices to the SWG Head Office/Secretariat, accompanied by the above mentioned deliverables.

9. Other provisions

The travel and accommodation costs for the expert for participation in event organized within the project will be covered by the SWG Head Office/Secretariat.

The expert shall not use for own purposes or transfer to third persons any information related to the engagement and work, considered to be a business secret of the Head Office /Secretariat of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South-Eastern Europe (SWG) – Skopje.

The expert, besides the agreed remuneration, will have no other claims from the Head Office/Secretariat of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South-Eastern Europe (SWG) – Skopje.

10. Required expertise

- University education related to agriculture, rural development, sustainable development, economics or closely related discipline; PhD would be considered as an advantage;
- Professional experience in value chain assessment;
- Professional experience in diversification of economic activities in rural areas;
- Extensive understanding of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), IPARD and relevant policies related to diversification of economic activities in rural areas;
- Professional understanding of regional / rural development approaches, including LEADER;
- Ability to work in a team;
- Experience in working with and knowledge of the situation in the South-East European countries;
- Proficiency in preparation of comprehensive reports;
- Fluency in the English language, advanced writing and communication skills.