

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

Terms of Reference

Regional expert on rural tourism as a means for economic diversification of rural areas in SEE

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.

2. Background

In September 2018 the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development approved the realization of a 3-years regional programme with the title “**Support to economic diversification of rural areas in Southeast Europe (SEDRA)**”.

The project aims at strengthening the institutional capacities of selected stakeholders in Southeast Europe for supporting EU-compliant economic diversification in rural areas.

The renewed EU accession process is the main incentive for harmonisation and adaptation of the rural development policies and instruments of the six Southeast European countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) to the needs of their rural regions and the people living there. An explicit aim of the EU is to strengthen economic and social cohesion through its structural policy, its common agricultural policy (CAP) and their accompanying instruments.

The project contributes to improvement of the technical, methodological and implementation capacities for evidence-based rural development policies for economic diversification, facilitates community-led area-based development, as well as, value chain development.

The regional project includes the Southeast European countries/territories and the lead executing agencies are the ministries competent for agriculture and rural development, through their membership in the regional organisation Standing Working Group for Regional Rural Development (SWG RRD), which at the same time is the main implementing partner.

The three central project outputs are:

- 1) Regional cooperation and policy advice,
- 2) Sustainable business models, and
- 3) Community-led and area-based development strategies.

3. Specific Situation / Scope of assignment

The project aims at the formulation of regional recommendations for evidence-based and EU compliant policy on diversification in rural areas, which are expected to be adopted and supported by administrative or legislative measures by national authorities responsible for implementation in SEE countries. The logic is that only an enabling policy framework agreed on the regional level and implemented on the national level can enable EU-compliant economic diversification in rural areas.

Rural tourism is one of the topics that are selected within the project, as part of the economic diversification agenda in SEE countries. The focus will be on streamlining tourism with agriculture and rural development within the EU framework for rural development programmes.

The objective of this assignment is to develop a regional approach for the assessment of the policies for diversification of economic activities in the rural areas of the SEE, with focus on rural tourism development, as well as to propose policy framework for economic diversification through rural tourism in line with EU policies.

* 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

The major outcomes of the assignment are:

- Regional methodology and approach for assessment of policies for diversification of economic activities with focus on rural tourism in the countries/territories of the SEE;
- Evaluation of the relevant policy frameworks in place and provision of recommendations for their improvement and alignment with EU policies;
- Regional report consisted of six national reports and one cross-country synthesis report on the status, gaps and constraints regarding the economic diversification policies with focus on rural tourism and provision of recommendations for an alignment of regional / national priorities with EU policies.

The work will be conducted by an experts' team, consisted of:

- One Regional Expert
- Six National Experts (one from each of the countries/territories of the Western Balkans)
- One International Expert

The experts' team will be supported by inputs from stakeholders from the public, private, and civil sector from the WB region.

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

4. Tasks of the Consultant

The assignment includes the following tasks:

- Development of methodology for assessment of the policies for economic diversification in rural areas, with focus on rural tourism in the SEE countries/territories;
- Development of methodology for assessment of the relevant institutional, policy and legal frameworks in the SEE countries/territories;
- Preparation of an outline for the cross-country synthesis report;
- Preparation of an outline for the national reports;
- Quality control and feedback to the national experts on the collected national data/information and submitted national reports;
- Development of cross-country synthesis report, including recommendations for improved policies, as well as institutional and legal set-up for economic diversification of the rural areas in SEE, with focus on rural tourism;
- Participation at the Kick-off Meeting, Interim Meetings and Final Meeting;
- Presentation of major outcomes of the report at the Agricultural Policy Forum 2019 and/or Ministerial Meeting 2019;
- Continuous cooperation and consultation with the National and the International Experts 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.

All activities will be closely coordinated by SWG within the programme “Support to economic diversification of rural areas in Southeast Europe (SEDRA)”.

The working language for the assignment is English.

5. Reporting and Deliverables

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

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

Deliverable	Timeframe/Deadline
1. Methodology for assessment of the policies for economic diversification in rural areas and relevant frameworks	23 January 2019
2. Participation at the Kick-off Meeting	23 – 25 January 2019
3. Cross-country synthesis report outline	28 February 2019
4. National reports outline (provided to national experts)	28 February 2019
5. Feedback on the first draft national reports	30 June 2019
6. First Interim Meeting	June 2019
7. First draft cross-country synthesis report	30 September 2019
8. Second Interim Meeting	October 2019
9. Feedback on the second draft national reports	31 October 2019
10. Final Meeting	February 2020
11. Final cross-country synthesis report	28 February 2020

1. Place of assignment

The place of assignment of the expert is the SEE region.

2. Timeframe

The expert should accomplish the deliverables from the date on which the last party signs the contract until 28 February 2020.

3. Payments

The payments for realization of this Contract shall be completed in two installments, as follows:

- First installment after completion, submission to and approval by SWG of the deliverables: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7;
- Second installment after completion, submission to and approval by SWG of the deliverables: 8, 9, 10 and 11.

The expert has to submit the deliverables in electronic version to SWG Secretary General and the responsible SWG Project Manager. The payment of the agreed remuneration shall be done upon submission of original invoices to the SWG Head Office/Secretariat, accompanied by the above-mentioned deliverables.

4. 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.

5. Expert profile

Qualifications and skills:

- A university degree in tourism, economics, agriculture, or closely related discipline relevant to the assignment. PhD will be considered as an advantage;
- Fluency in English;
- Computer literacy;
- High quality analytical and document drafting skills;
- Excellent communication and reporting skills;
- Ability to work in a team.

General professional experience:

- Proven professional experience in policy assessment.

Specific professional experience:

- Proven professional experience in policies on economic diversification in rural areas, with focus on rural tourism;
- Proven experience in drafting strategic documents;
- Understanding of the EU Common Agricultural Policy, with focus on economic diversification in rural areas;

- Understanding of the situation as well as the relevant legislative and policy framework in the Western Balkan region.