

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

Terms of Reference

for Expert on Fruits for the

National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development for the period 2021-2027

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 Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy is in the process of drafting of new National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development which should cover the upcoming planning period from 2021-2027.

The fruits are the third most important crop production subsector of Macedonian agriculture production after tobacco and fruits. The fruit production varies and oscillates through years, that results to unstable trend and fluctuation (increase/decrease) in production capacities and yields. The trends can be described as positive in general but not sufficient despite the favorable climate and natural conditions and potentials for cultivation. The fruit production has not been using the full capacity and potential. According the number of trees, the apples are predominantly fruit with 52.53% from all fruit trees in 2019. Second are plums with 19.13% and third are peaches with 7.11% from all fruit trees in 2019.

Considering the above the Ministry needs to be assured that the policy objectives and actions for the forthcoming period appropriately treat this subsector. MAFWE capacity for conducts

* 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

profound sub-sectorial analysis remains limited especially when it comes to projection of long-term strategic planning, thus the technical assistance is required.

Based on the above mentioned, SWG will support the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy of the Republic of North Macedonia for conducting the National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development for the period 2021 – 2027.

General objective

Engagement of relevant technical assistance from the academic or research institutions to contribute in drafting the chapter of the National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development for the period 2021-2027 (NSARD 2021-2027) related to fruits subsector.

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

4. Tasks of the Consultant

The expert should provide adequate contribution to the NSARD 2021-2027 in the area of fruits subsector by performing the following specific activities in the respective area:

- Analysis of the implementation of the NSARD 2014-2020 Operational Plan with assessment of the degree of realization and explanation for continuation in the next strategic period;
- Analysis of the current situation and trends for the period 2014-2020 in the fruits input supply, production, marketing, horizontal and vertical integration, domestic and international competitiveness, impact to the environment and management of natural resources, impact of the climate changes, related research and development, and other relevant factors that determinate the overall competitiveness by summarizing the findings, including SWOT analysis;
- Identifying the key deficiencies, problems, and challenges ahead of subsector and assessing the priority needs for change and improvement of the situation, explaining the reason for the choice made. The findings shall be cross-checked with the most important interested parties in the subsector within formal consultations (minutes shall be taken and MAFWE be informed for holding the meeting in advance);
- Selection of appropriate policy interventions to address the identified needs. Interventions in the form of policy measures should be designed to address a specific situation identified by the previous activities. The proposed policy measures should be linked to the fulfillment of one or more of the Specific Objectives of the NSARD 2021-2027 given in the Annex 1 to this ToR.

The policy recommendations shall be described by the expected change and effects of the intervention; indicator and quantified target; possible needs for institutional, legal and ICT systemic changes; the time frame and funds for implementation per years. The template for description of the measures is presented in the Annex 2.

The expert should consult the current and past studies carried out by relevant international and domestic institutions on the fruit sub-sector and/or undertake own research.

The recommendations for the future policy interventions shall be harmonized with the new EU policy in this area envisaged for the period 2021-2027 as stipulated in the new draft EU regulations, and other policy documents.

The contributions to the strategy should include the respective measures and activities from the Work Program of the Government of RS Macedonia for the period 2020-2024 and be aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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

5. Reporting and Deliverables

The expert should deliver the final report within specified deadline comprised of sections as requested above. The quality acceptance of the report shall be assured by the MAFWE. During drafting, the expert will sustain continuous contacts with MAFWE relevant staff and request for necessary data and documents for the analysis if needed.

The expert shall organize consultation with the Sub-sectorial Standing Group on Fruits in cooperation with MAFWE. The minutes from the meeting shall be attached as an integral part of the final report.

6. Place of assignment

The place of assignment of the expert is the North Macedonia.

7. Timeframe

The expert should accomplish the deliverables from the date on which the last party signs the contract until 30 November 2020. The assignment shall be carried out in a period of 15 working days.

8. Working language

The working language for the assignment is Macedonian.

9. Expert profile

- Formal education of PhD in the area of agriculture and food sciences, preferably in the fruits sub-sector sciences in specific or closely related discipline relevant to the assignment;
- Extensive knowledge and practical experience in fruit subsector of minimum 10 years professional engagement in educational and/or research institution;
- Previous specific experience in drafting of National Strategy of Agriculture and Rural Development in the country and other national programmes will be taken as an asset.
- Excellent communication and reporting skills;
- Computer literacy;
- Ability to work in a team.

Annex 1: Specific Objectives of the NARDS 2021-2027 (in Macedonian)

Прилог 1. Преглед на специфични цели на НСЗРР 2021-2027

СЦ1. Поддршка на одржливиот приход на земјоделските стопанства и нивната отпорност во насока на подобрување на сигурноста во обезбедување на храна во државата;

СЦ2. Зајакнување на пазарната ориентацијата и зголемување на конкурентноста, со особен фокус на истражување, технологија и дигитализација;

СЦ3. Подобрување на положбата на земјоделците во синџирот на додена вредност на земјоделските производи;

СЦ4. Придонесување кон ублажување на климатските промени и прилагодување кон истите, како и поголема примена на одржливата енергија;

СЦ5. Поттикнување на одржлив развој и ефикасно управување со природните ресурси како што се вода, почва и воздух;

СЦ6. Придонесување кон заштита на биодиверзитетот, подобрување на услугите на екосистемот и зачувување на природните живеалишта и пределите;

СЦ7. Привлекување на млади земјоделци и олеснување на развојот на бизнисите во руралните средини;

СЦ8. Промовирање навработување, раст, социјална вклученост и локален развој во руралните средини, вклучително и био-економија и одржливо шумарство; и

СЦ9. Подобрување на одговорот на земјоделството кон барањата на општеството за здравствените аспекти на храната, вклучувајќи ги безбедноста, нутритивниот состав и одржливоста на храната, храна која завршува како отпад, како и благосостојбата на животните.