



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

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **Tourism Product Development Expert**

##### **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 North 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, North Macedonia. On September 7<sup>th</sup> 2009, the Law on Ratification of the SWG Agreement has been decisively completed by the Parliament of the Republic of North 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. Specific Situation / Scope of assignment

“Support to the Inbound Tourism Development in the Western Balkans Cross-Border Rural Areas” is a 15-month project implemented by SWG and co-financed by the USAID Economic Development, Governance and Enterprise Growth Project. The objectives of the project are:

- To increase the level of integration of ecotourism, rural tourism and adventure tourism value chains in rural cross-border regions of the Western Balkans and strengthen the cooperation among their participants
- To build the capacity of ecotourism, rural tourism and adventure tourism value chain participants to meet the requirements of the target market
- To apply marketing approach in inbound tourism development in the Western Balkans
- To perform advocacy of relevant policy recommendations related to inbound tourism in rural areas in the Western Balkans.

## 3. Activities relevant for the expert's tasks

### Product Development

The purpose of this activity will be to bring together ecotourism, rural tourism and adventure tourism stakeholders from rural cross-border regions of the Western Balkans to jointly develop attractive and value-added tourism packages based on each region's competitive advantage. It will consist of the following sub-activities:

- **Workshops** (with physical or online presence) - The participants will be presented with the opportunity of and will be provided with guidelines on developing joint tourism tours covering at least 2 Western Balkan countries. The workshops will provide an opportunity for stakeholders from different countries of the region to initiate cooperation and establish partnerships. The participants would include, but not limited to:
  - Micro and small enterprises: accommodation facilities, traditional food producers (including fresh and processed fruit and vegetables), local tour operators/travel agents
  - NGOs: association of mountain guides, mountain biking association
  - Local authorities
- **Development of tours** – Groups of stakeholders jointly propose regional ecotourism, rural tourism and adventure tourism tours covering at least 2 Western Balkan countries;
- **Selection of tours** - Guidelines will be developed, which will clearly identify the criteria for selection of tours. The selection procedure will be comprised of three stages: 1. Administrative check, 2. Evaluation 3. Final selection.
- **Score cards** – for testing different segments of each selected tour (accommodation, gastronomic offers, experiences etc.);
- **Trainings** – Based on the results from the testing, tourism experts develop customized training programs and deliver training sessions for specific value chain groups of participants.

### Promotion and Sales

The purpose of this activity will be to promote and eventually sell developed regional ecotourism, rural tourism, and adventure tourism tours to targeted potential international customers. It will include the following sub-activities:

- **Logo** - Design of the logo of the Tours of the Western Balkans
- **Brochures** - Production of brochures of the selected Tours of the Western Balkans
- **Web-site** - Developing of a web site promoting the Tours of the Western Balkans
- **Social media** - Some of those that already exist and will be used are: Facebook pages for each of the target cross-border rural regions<sup>1</sup>, SWG Secretariat Facebook and Instagram pages<sup>2</sup>. SWG website will also be used for promotion<sup>3</sup>.
- **Trade fair** - Representatives of the selected tours represent the Western Balkans with a stand at a relevant international trade fair and establish connections with potential customers (specialized tour operators).
- **Follow-up** – communication with potential customers to plan further actions for placing the regional tours in the offerings of the foreign international tour operators.

The experts' team will be composed of:

- Tourism Product Development Expert
- Tourism Marketing Expert.

In terms of logistics and organization the experts will be supported by the staff of the SWG regional offices in the countries/territories of the Western Balkans.

#### 4. Tasks and deliverables for the Product Development Expert

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

Tasks/Deliverables	When
Prepare guidelines for tour development	31-Oct-20
Provide expert's support in tour development to workshop participants (6 in total, 1 in each WB country/territory)	15-Nov-20
Provide expert's support in selection of tours	31-Dec-20
Score cards development	31-Jan-21
Support Tourism Marketing Expert in preparation of brochure/s of the selected Tours of the Western Balkans	28-Feb-21
Support Tourism Marketing Expert in development of a specialized website to promote the Tours of the Western Balkans	28-Feb-21
Support Tourism Marketing Expert organization of trade fair participation	Feb-Mar 2021
Develop training courses based on the testing results	1-Mar-21

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/swgdrinatara>  
<https://www.facebook.com/swgdrinasava>  
<https://www.facebook.com/swgprespa>  
<https://www.facebook.com/swgsharra>  
<https://www.facebook.com/swgprokletijebjeshketenemuna>  
<https://www.facebook.com/swgkrsh>  
<https://www.facebook.com/swgpcinjakraishte>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/swg.secretariat>

<https://www.facebook.com/swgrrd>

<sup>3</sup> <http://seerural.org/>

## **6. Place of assignment**

The place of assignment is the Western Balkans region.

## **7. Timeframe**

The Expert should accomplish the deliverables in the timeframe from 19 October 2020 until 30 November 2021.

## **8. Working language**

The working language for the assignment is English.

## **9. Expert's profile**

- At least university degree in tourism, hospitality or closely related economic or social science discipline relevant to the assignment;
- Proven practical professional experience in development of tourism products;
- Proven professional experience in development and delivery of training programs;
- Understanding and in-depth knowledge of the tourism potentials of the rural areas of the Western Balkans;
- Competence in applying marketing approach in tourism;
- Fluency in English. Fluency in local languages of the Western Balkans is an advantage;
- Computer literacy;
- Excellent oral and written communication skills;
- Ability to work in a team.