



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

**TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)  
for Regional Expert on IPARD and CAP in Western Balkans**

## **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 Republic of 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, Republic of 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. 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\*, North 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**

The project strengthens the regional and national capacities in SEE states and the whole region through facilitating theme-specific policy dialogues and providing technical expertise on issues related to the economic diversification as a key strategy for rural development.

The project supports strengthening of the capacities of local and sub-regional stakeholders to support rural development in SEE. The capacities of public-private stakeholder networks (LAG/SHG) will be strengthened, in order to support development and implementation of community-led, LEADER and area-based development strategies and to sustainably secure their funding through national schemes and EU instruments for pre-accession assistance.

The target group of the project is the rural population in the selected project countries, especially in border areas, which is especially affected by poverty, due to the structural weakness of such areas as well as stakeholders (public, private and civil society) involved in the realisation of rural development policies and programmes.

The project also aims to develop sustainable business models in structurally weak border regions. This includes improvement of the production and marketing of agricultural and wild products, local crafts and culinary traditions, digitalization, and sustainable tourism. The support is realized through capacity building and targeted investments for relevant key stakeholders from the private sector that will facilitate the cooperation and networking process.

The project addresses two value chains: traditional products and tourism (rural, mountain and adventure tourism). One of the foreseen specific aims for the development of value in products and services being offered in the Drina-Tara, Drina-Sava and Krsh cross-border regions is improving marketing and distribution channels for traditional products and tourism to the local, regional and international markets.

**The overall objective of the project of which this contract is to provide coaching and support to relevant national stakeholders on IPARD measure and preparation of the Agriculture and Rural Development sectors to implement the EU Common Agriculture**

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\* 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

## **Policy (CAP) in order to prepare the candidate and potential candidate countries from Western Balkans for EU accession.**

### **4. Scope of work**

The purpose of the engagement of which this contract is a part is to strengthen the institutional capacities of competent authorities within the respective Ministries of Agriculture from Western Balkans in order to implement the Rural Development component of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPARD II) and provide guidelines for future implementation of IPARD III.

The engagement also foresees improving capacities of the relevant agriculture and rural development players to transfer IPARD related knowledge in a sustainable manner to potential recipients and users.

In particular, the **tasks** of the assignment are as follows:

- Review and assess the existing national legal framework regulating the tasks, responsibilities and competences of the Advisory services and their role in the implementation of the IPARD II Programme for the period 2014-2020.
- Collect, analyse and present the best examples (at least three) from the MSs of the advisory services role and tasks in the implementation of MS RDPs
- Provide proposal and recommendations on improving the effectiveness of tasks and competences of Advisory service in accordance with IPARD II Programme and IPARD III.
- Develop coaching agenda and plan for online and in-person trainings.
- Provide national/regional online or in-person coaching to defined target groups (topics to be covered should include but not be limited to raising awareness of IPARD programme, application procedures, explanation of available measures/calls, access to finance, steps from planning to realization, common mistakes in the application process....)
- Raise awareness on IPARD to end users and potential beneficiaries.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the initial workshops might be organized online, depending on the health situation in the regions and the recommendations of the governments.

All activities will be closely coordinated with the programme “Support to economic diversification of rural areas in Southeast Europe (SEDRA)” both GIZ and SWG RRD.

Access to regional and local stakeholders, thematic networks and target groups will be assured by GIZ and SWG.

### **5. Reporting and deliverables**

The following **deliverables** are foreseen for the Contractee within this ToR:

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Timeframe/Deadline in 2021</b>
Report on the assessment and best examples	15 <sup>th</sup> April 2021
Report on the coaching agenda and plan	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2021
Delivery of coaching and trainings sessions	30 <sup>th</sup> May 2021
Technical Final Report	30 <sup>th</sup> May 2021

The reports from the assignment should be delivered in English.

### **6. Commencement date and period of execution**

#### **6.1 Total working days**

Up to 26 working days have been planned for this assignment.

## **6.2 Period of the assignment**

1<sup>st</sup> April– 30<sup>th</sup> May 2021

## **6.3 Working language**

English.

## **7. Requirements**

The Expert will be expected to meet the following requirements:

### **7.1 Qualifications and skills**

- A bachelor's degree in economics, law, agricultural sciences, or other related field (where the bachelor's degree has been awarded on completion of minimum 3 years of study in a university or equivalent institution), or, alternatively, 5 years of professional experience in the fields of advisory services or agriculture and rural development (in addition to the number of years of professional experience required under the requirement for general professional experience)
- A Master/PhD in above mentioned disciplines is an advantage.
- Fluency in written and spoken English;

### **7.2 General professional experience**

- At least 7 years, preferably 10 years of postgraduate professional experience in the fields of advisory services or agriculture and rural development.

### **7.3 Specific professional experience**

- Minimum 5 years of relevant experience in working/supporting advisory services in candidate countries and/or potential candidate countries from WB
  - Familiarity with IPARD framework and IPARD programmes will be considered an advantage
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