



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

Terms of Reference

Tourism 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 7th 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

In November 2021 the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development commissioned the realization of a 30-month project with the title “Promotion of Economic Diversification in Rural Areas of South Eastern Europe (SEDRA II) in SEE - Value chain capacity building on agriculture and rural tourism to promote rural employment opportunities”.

The project strives to contribute to balanced socio-economic development of rural areas in the Western Balkans, through efficient regional cooperation and strengthened regional capacities for rural economic diversification and employment. The overall goal of the project is to stimulate competitiveness and employment in the region through strengthening capacities and promoting entrepreneurship. This will ultimately increase the attraction of the areas, improve the market access, encouraging young people and women to get more involved and contribute to reduced out-migration.

The project objective is to enhance economic diversification by facilitating capacity building measures in the tourism sector with a potential of levitating gainful employment opportunities. The project focus is on strengthening the economic inclusion of the rural and marginalized population, supporting the rural formal/informal sector, fostering sustainable natural resource management practices, as well as, promoting women & youth entrepreneurship in rural areas.

The Secretariat of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in Southeast Europe is responsible for implementation and management of the project. It will be implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo*.

3. Project activities relevant for the expert’s tasks

To achieve the project goal a number of capacity building and promotional activities will be conducted, such as:

- Trainings on identified topics for targeted tourism service providers in the rural areas
- Familiarization (FAM) trips for targeted foreign tour operators for the Explore Balkans regional cross-border tours (explore-balkans.com).

4. Tasks and deliverables for the Tourism Development Expert

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

- Targeted trainings for rural tourism providers to address issues such as: improved rural accommodation experience, logistics and online payments, improved tour activities, cooperation along the rural tourism value chain (up to 9 trainings on at least 3 topics)
- Supporting organization of FAM trips for targeted foreign tour operators for the Explore Balkans tours through direct advice to the service providers for increasing the quality level of the Explore Balkans tours, in preparation of the FAM trips.

The expert will receive the necessary logistical and organizational support by the staff of the SWG regional offices in the countries/territories of the Western Balkans.

* 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

For accomplishment of the above-mentioned outcomes a Works contract is foreseen. The total number of days foreseen for the engagement is approximately 43 (+/- 10%).

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 15 June 2022 – 1 March 2024.

8. Working language

The working language for the assignment is English.

9. Expert's profile

- A university degree in tourism or closely related economic or social science discipline relevant to the assignment;
- Proven practical professional experience in rural tourism development activities;
- 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;
- Fluency in English and in local languages of the Western Balkans;
- Computer literacy;
- Excellent oral and written communication skills;
- Ability to work in a team;
- Ability to travel around the Western Balkans region;
- Ability to drive (B category).