

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

**Request for Applications for Vocational training funding**

**Issuance Date: September 28, 2022**

**Applications Closing Date: Ongoing until March 31, 2023 16:00 hours CET**

**Evaluation: On a monthly basis starting September 28, 2022 until March 31, 2023**

**Subject: Request for Applications (RFA) Number: SWG 2022-001 Vocational Training**

Dear Prospective Applicants,

The Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) is seeking applications from qualified applicants in the Western Balkans countries/territories of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia to apply for funding costs for vocational training in tourism, agriculture and other cross-cutting sectors like Business Development and ICT, identified as important for economic diversification in the rural areas.

The RFA is comprised of the following main sections:

- 1. Project Description**
- 2. Eligible applicants**
- 3. Illustrative activities to be financed under**
- 4. this RFA**
- 5. Award Administration Information**
- 6. Submission Requirements**
- 7. Application Review Information**

Subject to availability of funds, SWG intends to fund cost for certificate obtained for vocational training in tourism, agriculture and other cross-cutting sectors like Business Development and ICT, identified as important for economic diversification in the rural areas, for training to be obtained between September 28, 2022 and ending on March 31, 2023.

This RFA is a two-stage application process. In the first stage, applicants are asked to submit an Application for Vocational training funding in the attached format, which will be reviewed by SWG's Evaluation Committee. Applicants will be notified if their application for training qualifies for reimbursement. In the second stage the applicant will send SWG the certificate obtained upon which SWG will reimburse the applicant for funding of up to 300 EUR gross including all related taxes of the training cost.

Awards will be made to the responsive applicants whose applications best meet the requirements of this RFA on a 'first come first served' basis.

SWG requires that the Application for Vocational training funding be submitted electronically (e-mailed) to SWG Secretariat at [swgsecretariat@swg-seerural.org](mailto:swgsecretariat@swg-seerural.org) starting September 28, 2022 until March 31, 2023.

---

\* 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

SWG reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of SWG, nor does it commit SWG to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Further, SWG reserves the right to reject any or all applications received. All preparation and submission costs are at the Applicant's own expense.

## 1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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 adopted 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.

In November 2021 the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development awarded SWG a 38-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 is implemented under an agreement between SWG and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) for the Western Balkans countries/territories of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo\*.

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

---

\* 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 market access, encouraging young people and women to get more involved and contribute to reduced out-migration.

The project's 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.

## 2. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

**Employed and unemployed individuals in tourism, agriculture or related sectors from one of the 6 Western Balkans countries/territories** of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo\* who are willing to obtain new skills for employment in the tourism, agriculture and other cross-cutting sectors like Business Development and ICT, identified as important for economic diversification, in the rural municipalities.

Municipality is defined as rural:

- if its population density is below 150 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> OR
- if its population is not more than 10,000 people OR
- are situated 600 m above sea level.

Please see the list of eligible municipalities in Annex 3.

SWG encourages **Vocational training Centers and Businesses** to share this announcement with their future students and employees, respectfully.

The following will have an advantage in getting the support over other applicants:

- Young people (below or equal to 40 years old)
- Women
- People with disabilities
- Returnees- Stayed in Germany or another country for more than 3 months after 2001

## 3. ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIVITIES TO BE FINANCED UNDER THIS RFA

Vocational training, on-the-job training, internship, coaching, start-up support, study trips accredited by an authorized state institution as a vocational training in the sectors of tourism, agriculture and other sectors identified as important for local economic diversification in the respective cross-border rural areas. The vocational training should be taken in order to find new or additional local employment in tourism, agriculture and other sectors or to increase the business development of the MSME they are employed by.

### **Illustrative training courses:**

- Training in producing, processing and marketing of agriculture products
- Certified tourism professions (guides, chefs, waiters, sommeliers, etc)
- Starting a business
- Business Management
- Finance Management

---

\* 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

- ICT, Digital Marketing and related
- Business plan development
- Other

#### 4. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

- a) **Place of assignment:** The place of assignment is the 6 Western Balkans countries/territories.
- b) **Timeframe:** The applicant should obtain a certificate in the timeframe from September 28, 2022 – March 31, 2023.
- c) **Communication language**  
The communication language with SWG for the assignment is English and the respective country/territory language.
- d) **Training language:** The training course language may be in one of the local languages.
- e) **Maximum reimbursed amount:** SWG will reimburse up to 300 EUR Gross. VAT is non-eligible and thus it will not be reimbursed, but deducted from the Invoice and will be considered as participant's co-funding. The 300 EUR Gross also includes all taxes, required to be paid by the national legislation in the country of residency.
- f) **Application format:** All applications must be submitted in the format provided. Applications written in a different format will not be considered. (see Annex 1 and Annex 1.a).
- g) **Payment disbursement:** Funds will be reimbursed by wire transfer to the recipient's bank account from SWG.
- h) **VAT:** VAT is a non-eligible cost, thus SWG will NOT reimburse VAT.
- i) **Application language:** All application documents may be submitted in English or in one of the local languages of the respective country/territory.
- j) **Number of applications:** One applicant can submit only one application.

#### 5. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

SWG requires that the Application for vocational training co-funding be submitted electronically (e-mailed) to SWG Secretariat at [swgsecretariat@swg-seerural.org](mailto:swgsecretariat@swg-seerural.org) starting September 28, 2022 until March 31, 2023 every first working day of the month.

Applicants must submit the following documents:

- **ANNEX 1. APPLICATION FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING signed copy in PDF**
- **ANNEX 1.a in MS Excel**
- **CV**
- **Document proving Accreditation of the training program obtained by the Training Institution or their website.**

Please state “Your name - Vocational Training Application” in the Subject field of your e-mail.

SWG will retain all materials and documents submitted by applicants. It will not use this information for purposes other than application review and will not share it with other persons or institutions.

After the evaluation process, the decision will be communicated to the Applicants via e-mail.

## 6. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Applications should be send on an ongoing basis starting September 28, 2022 and ending March 31, 2023.

SWG evaluation committee will review the applications and will inform the applicants on the status of their application no later than 30 days after their submission.

**Payment:** Reimbursement of up to 300 EUR excluding VAT of the allowable expenses supported by:

1. Copy of ID document
2. Copy of the Invoice from the Certificate issuing institution
3. Copy of Certificate obtained
4. Copy of Proof of payment document
5. Request for Reimbursement (Annex 2)

The payment will be made 30 days after approval of request for payment and supporting documents.