



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

Terms of Reference

REGIONAL COORDINATOR AND NATIONAL EXPERT FOR NORTH MACEDONIA FOR ANALYSIS OF THE STATUS OF SOILS AFFECTED WITH CLIMATE CHANGE IN AGRICULTURE AND THE LEVEL OF ADAPTATION OF THE WB COUNTRIES/TERRITORIES

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.

Regional Expert Advisory Working Groups (REAWGs) are permanent part of the SWG structure. They are comprised of relevant national, regional and international experts, as well as representatives of relevant authorities to analyze specific agricultural and rural development policy issues and provide national and regional policy recommendations. Through the work of the REAWGs SWG contributes to enabling evidence-based policy making in the agricultural sector in Western Balkans.



2. Background

In August 2021 the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development approved the realization of a 3-years regional project with the title “Support to Economic Diversification of Rural Areas in Southeast Europe (SEDRA II). The project's target group is the rural population in WB-6, especially in seven less favoured cross-border rural areas: Sharra (Albania, Kosovo and North Macedonia), Prespa (Albania and North Macedonia), Drina-Tara (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia), Drina-Sava (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia), Krsh (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro), Prokletije-Bjeshket e Nemuna (Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro), Pchinja-Krajishte (Bulgaria, North Macedonia and Serbia). The project strives to strengthen the regional and national capacities through facilitating theme-specific policy dialogues providing technical expertise on issues related to rural economic diversification in SEE countries in their EU approximation process. The project activities are focused to the further support of the regional platforms for political and policy dialogue and mechanisms for more intensive and broader cooperation, strengthening the regional stakeholders' competencies and expertise related to the EU CAP and Green Agenda for Western Balkans as per adopted Action plan, as well as further alignment of the agriculture and rural development policies of the SEE countries to the EU CAP.

The project overall goal is to encourage competitiveness and employment in the Western Balkan region through strengthening networking capacity for rural development and promotion of the economic diversification and competitiveness of rural areas. Participation of the local actors in less favored rural areas in promotion of the cross-sectoral innovation and inter-regional knowledge exchange through the implementation of local projects, will ultimately contribute to inclusive, environmentally and climate friendly economic diversification, 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 impact logic is that increased regional value creation and local resilience building, especially in less favored rural border areas, will change the socio-economic decisions of poor and vulnerable population groups in particular so that they see improved prospects for themselves and their families. The project is focused 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 as an international intergovernmental organisation, consisting of governmental institutions responsible for agriculture and rural development in respective Western Balkan countries and territories is responsible for implementation and management of the project. It will be implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo* .

The German Federal Ministry for Food and Agriculture (BMEL) also maintains a long-lasting relationship to the corresponding Ministries in the WB countries. In this context, there is a regular exchange between BMEL and the respective Ministries and with the Standing Working Group (SWG), in which BMEL has an observer status. Further, the BMEL and a range of German Federal States administrations (e. g. Free State of Bavaria) supports the WB countries through expert missions via Twinning and TAIEX projects funded by the EU.

Since 2018 BMEL has supported SWG in implementing the project “**Facilitation of exchange through advice on harmonized wine regulations in all Western Balkan Countries**” (November 2018 – October 2021). During the implementation of this project the partnering organizations discussed the opportunities and the need for extending the policy facilitation within the Western Balkan countries to other relevant topics under the agriculture and rural development framework. Those discussions resulted in a follow-up joint project: **Germany - Western Balkans Agricultural**



Policy Dialogue (APD-WB), with main objective to strengthen policy frameworks for agriculture and rural development in Western Balkan countries/territories for the implementation of the EU-Green Agenda for Western Balkans and the alignment with CAP 2020 reforms. The timeframe of the project is 42 months (07/21 – 12/24).

3. Specific Situation / Scope of assignment

Climate change affects agriculture in a number of ways¹. Changes in temperature and precipitation as well as weather and climate extremes are already influencing crop yields and livestock productivity in Europe. Weather and climate conditions also affect the availability of water needed for irrigation, livestock watering practices, processing of agricultural products, and transport and storage conditions. Climate change is projected to reduce crop productivity in parts of southern Europe and to improve the conditions for growing crops in northern Europe. Although northern regions may experience longer growing seasons and more suitable crop conditions in future, the number of extreme events negatively affecting agriculture in Europe is projected to increase.

Sofia Declaration on the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans adopted in 2020 followed by the Action plan within the Pillar IV Sustainable Agriculture in Action 50 sets up activity - Support investments in renewable energy production and technologies as well as GHG emission reductions and adaptation to climate change measures in agriculture.

In that sense SWG as main regional coordinator for that activity is setting up Regional Expert Advisory Working Group on Climate Change Adaptation in Agriculture. Expert teams will be consisted of different types of experts from the Region on the Western Balkans.

The experts' team will be supported by inputs from representatives from relevant national authorities.

4. Tasks of the Contractee

Regional coordinator

- Identify the necessary elements for a country case study (national report) on “Adaptation to climate change in agriculture - status, gaps and recommendations in Western Balkan countries/territories”, design the research methodology and provide a template for the national experts
- Participate in the technical meeting with the national experts, leading the section on “The status of soils affected with climate change in agriculture and the level of adaptation of the WB countries/territories” and integrate relevant suggestions from the national experts into the country case study (national report) template
- Review and comment the section on “The status of soils affected with climate change in agriculture and the level of adaptation of the WB countries/territories” within the country case study (national report)
- Prepare the section on “The status of soils affected with climate change in agriculture and the level of adaptation of the WB countries/territories” for the cross-country comparative analysis “Adaptation to climate change in agriculture - status, gaps and recommendations in Western Balkan countries/territories”.
- Contribute to overall conclusions, key priorities and recommendations related to the section on “The status of soils affected with climate change in agriculture and the level of adaptation of the WB countries/territories” for the cross-country comparative analysis “Adaptation to climate change in agriculture - status, gaps and recommendations in Western Balkan countries/territories”.

¹ Climate change adaptation in the agriculture sector in Europe – EEA Report 04/2019

National expert:

- Prepare the section on “The status of soils affected with climate change in agriculture and the level of adaptation of the WB countries/territories” and to prepare a national report (case study) for North Macedonia containing the following main inputs:
- Status of soils affected with the negative impacts of climate changes in agriculture
- Short overview for the existing adaptive capacities of the producers and best adaptive practices,
- Highlight the existing gaps and challenges to meet the requirements of the newly adopted EU strategic and legal documents,
- Short overview of the existing institutional and legal setup as well as the strategic and programming framework aimed to support the adaptation measures for soil health protection,
- Prepare a short overview for the existing soil data quality and availability relevant for analysis of the climate change effects on soils,
- Summarize the main conclusions and key recommendations for effective adaptation of soils to climate change.

5. Reporting and Deliverables

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

| Deliverable |
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| 1. Identify the necessary elements for a country case study |
| 2. Participate in the technical meeting with the national experts |
| 3. Review and comment the section on “The status of soils affected with climate change in agriculture and the level of adaptation of the WB countries/territories” within the country case study |
| 4. Prepare the section on “The status of soils affected with climate change in agriculture and the level of adaptation of the WB countries/territories” |
| 5. Contribute to overall conclusions, key priorities and recommendations related to the section on “The status of soils affected with climate change in agriculture and the level of adaptation of the WB countries/territories” for the cross-country comparative analysis |
| 6. Prepare the section on “The status of soils affected with climate change in agriculture and the level of adaptation of the WB countries/territories” and to prepare a national report (case study) for North Macedonia |

The foreseen effort for the abovementioned deliverables is up to 26 days in the period May 2023 - May 2024.

The working language for the assignment is English.

Expert’s profile

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- University degree in agriculture, biotechnical sciences, or closely related discipline relevant to the assignment. PhD will be considered as an advantage.
 - Fluency in English
 - Substantial research experience in soil science and soil mapping
 - Proven professional experience in soil contamination research
 - High level analytical and document drafting skills
 - Understanding of the situation as well as the relevant legislative and policy framework in the respective country/territory



- Excellent communication and reporting skills
 - Computer literacy
 - Ability to work in a team.
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