



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

Terms of Reference (ToR) for Expert on Policy Dialogue

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. Background

In November 2021 the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development approved the realization of a 3-years regional project with the title “**Promotion of economic diversification in rural areas of Southeast Europe (SEDRA II) – Evidence based policy development**”.

The project aims at facilitating evidence-based policy development and regional dialogue for improved policy making. Development of evidence-based policies is crucial since its purpose is to

inform the process and advocate a systematic approach. Attention is being paid to how policies developed at national level can be tailored to local conditions, as well as to framework conditions and policies that are shaped at the regional or territorial level.

3. Specific situation

Western Balkan countries need to understand the policy environment and how it is changing, particularly with the upcoming mid-term framework objectives of the new EU agenda for agriculture and rural development. Within the EU approximation stands the importance of the Berlin Process and the fostered initiatives under its framework that need to be incorporated into the future policy development route to all WB countries. On issues related to agriculture and rural development, this incorporates the latest Sofia Declaration on Green Agenda and the Economic and Investment Plan for WB.

In order to improve the reform status and policy making Western Balkans should continue and expand the inter-institutional co-operation in order to consolidate its capacities in order to cope with the changes and developments in the EU agricultural and rural development policy. Yet, the guiding principle in addition to the EU approximation should be that developmental logic prevails and replaces redistributive logic, which is clearly not yielding satisfactory results. New forms of communication should be promoted in order to encourage active stakeholder exchange platforms, which would allow for better coordination of the diverse rural actors, both in vertical (government bodies at different levels – national, regional and local) and in horizontal terms (entrepreneurs, professional associations, farmers, etc.).

In order to achieve the objective, SWG's mission as a platform for political dialogue on agricultural and rural development policy, is supporting and promoting evidence-based policy making in SEE and it performs that through its structure through implementation of high-level regional platforms for political dialogue, e.g., Agricultural Policy Forum, Annual meeting of the Agriculture Ministers as well as meetings within the framework of the Berlin Process.

Within the framework of this assignment, specific short-term advice, expertise and technical assistance will be provided to the SWG Head Office/Secretariat which will contribute to the process of ensuring an appropriate design of the requested documents for the key policy dialogues concerning agriculture and rural development and will ensure it through ownership and involvement.

For accomplishment of the above-mentioned outcomes a Works contract is foreseen.

4. Scope of work

The assignment includes the following tasks:

- Provision of advice in selection of key relevant topics for the Agricultural Policy Forum and Annual Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture
- Provision of consultancy in drafting the policy briefs for the key policy dialogues (APF and MM)
- Provision of assistance in preparing political declaration for the Ministers Meetings

The Contractor might be required to perform additional tasks that are deemed necessary for the completion of the defined assignment.

All activities will be closely coordinated by SWG within the project SEDRA II.

5. Reporting and deliverables

The expert reports to the SWG Secretary General – Mr. Boban Ilic and the SWG Senior Project Manager – Ms. Bogdanka Gjorshoska.

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

Deliverable	Timeframe/Deadline in 2024
Provision of advice in selection of key relevant topics for the Agricultural Policy Forum and Annual Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture	13 May
Provision of consultancy in drafting the policy briefs for the key policy dialogues (APF and MM)	27 May
Provision of assistance in preparing political declaration for the Ministers Meetings	15 July

6. Place of assignment

The place of assignment of the expert is **SEE**.

7. Timeframe

The expert should accomplish the deliverables from the date on which the last party signs the contract until **30 October 2024**.

Period of engagement of the experts is 12 (twelve) days.

8. Other provisions

The travel and accommodation costs for the expert for participation in event organized within the project will be covered by the SWG Head Office/Secretariat.

The expert shall not use for own purposes or transfer to third persons any information related to the engagement and work, considered to be a business secret of the Head Office /Secretariat of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South-Eastern Europe (SWG) – Skopje.

The expert, besides the agreed remuneration, will have no other claims from the Head Office/Secretariat of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South-Eastern Europe (SWG) – Skopje.

9. Expert profile

Required Skills and Experience

- A minimum of seven years of experience in a field related to the assignment (agriculture, rural affairs, European affairs);
- Expert knowledge of the EU acquis communautaire in the field of the Common Agricultural Policy.
- Experience in providing strategic and policy advice to agricultural and rural development institutions.



- Direct experience in an EU candidate country or in an EU Member State, dealing with agricultural issues at governmental level;
- Demonstrated and exceptional inter-personal skills.
- Proven experience in drafting strategic documents.
- Fluency in English.
- Computer literacy.
- Ability to coordinate a team.