



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 LEADER – Follow up on the implementation of EU LEADER Approach defined in the LEADER Road Maps

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

The project strengthens the regional and national capacities in SEE countries 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 also supports strengthening of the capacities of local and sub-regional stakeholders to support rural development in SEE. The capacities of civil-public-private stakeholder networks will be strengthened, in order to support development and implementation of community-led development strategies and to sustainably secure their funding through EU instruments for pre-accession assistance.

The objective of the assignment is provision of regional expertise related to overall progress of LEADER implementation in the Western Balkan countries/territories defined in the LEADER Road Maps and provision of conclusions on the current state and recommendations on future steps for accelerating LEADER implementation in the Western Balkans.

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

4. Scope of work

The assignment includes the following tasks:

- Preparation of an outline for the states’ progress and follow up of the National Road Maps;
- Assessment of the collected national progress reports related to LEADER in the WBs;
- Quality control and feedback on the national progress reports related to LEADER in the WBs;

- Continuous cooperation and consultation with the national experts engaged under the assignment;
- Prepare regional report on the overall progress of LEADER implementation in the Western Balkan countries/territories including conclusions on the current state and recommendation on future steps for accelerating LEADER implementation in the region.

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 regional report on the overall progress of LEADER implementation in the Western Balkan countries/territories including conclusions on the current state and recommendation on future steps for accelerating LEADER implementation in the region.	30 November

6. Place of assignment

The place of assignment of the expert is **Western Balkans**.

7. Timeframe

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

8. Payments

The payments for realization of this Contract shall be effected following the submission of all deliverables and confirmation of approval by SWG, in one final installment.

The payment of the agreed remuneration shall be effected upon submission of original invoices to the SWG Head Office/Secretariat, accompanied by the above mentioned deliverables.



9. 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.