

TOR for Regional Consultant

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

Terms of Reference (ToR) for engagement of Regional Consultant

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:

1. To improve the common understanding on agriculture and rural development policies
2. To assist the improvement of implementing structures and systems for agriculture and rural development, with specific emphasis on cross border cooperation
3. To improve the understanding and use of implementation tools for agriculture and rural development
4. To identify and share information and application of good practice in agriculture and rural development to broaden the rural agenda.

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2. Background

The SWG strategic framework and operational plan defines the scope for development in the upcoming mid-term period and focuses on the priority needs for regional agriculture and rural development. The main SWG work during upcoming period of few years will be organized through activities implemented in the following areas:

- Networking and capacity enhancement of SWG Member Institutions,
- Facilitating regional cooperation between other rural stakeholders in the SEE region,
- Implementing **area based development approach (ABD) in the SEE region.**

Area Based Development (ABD) is considered to be an innovative approach enabling break-through in sustainable growth of rural cross-border regions in the WB countries.

ABD is perceived as suitable for targeting defined geographical areas in cross-border regions in the Western Balkans, characterized by specific complex development problems. The approach as its core principles uses methodology, which is inclusive, participatory, and flexible and ensures integration and coherence. It is suitable in particular for areas where one or several of the following development situations are present: poverty gap, post-natural or human disasters, post-conflict environment and exclusion issues.

Therefore, the SWG concluded a contract with the EC for Project Preparation Facility for preparation of a project proposal for implementation of ABD in several cross-border regions of the Western Balkans. The result of the Project Preparation Facility should be a project fiche and technical annexes related to the selected cross-border regions (in-depth analyses and development action plans for each of the regions), which would provide a basis for multi-annual project covering a number of Western Balkan countries. The project fiche should clearly outline the both the process and content of implementation of the ABD approach in selected cross-border regions.

3. Specific situation

The aim of the engagement of the regional consultant is to assist the international consultant and the SWG Head Office/ Secretariat in all aspects related to implementation of this project.

5. Tasks of the regional consultant

In particular, the tasks of the regional consultant are the following:

1. Assist the international consultant in undertaking contacts to potential donors, national and local authorities in order to explore and encourage possibilities for joint and/or complementary actions under the established strategies and programmes with particular immediate focus on the Drina-Tara area;
2. Facilitate the process of assessing the potential target areas and preparations of the draft ABD strategies and programmes which includes the assistance to drafting the project fiche and annexes. In this context the consultant should travel at least once to all target areas;
3. Participate in the work of the project Steering Group;

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4. Arrange meetings with stakeholders and assist the international consultant in facilitation of discussions on the ABD in broader forums, raising awareness and undertaking discussions with stakeholders on main priorities to be targeted under the defined strategies, and continuing refining the methodological details of application of the approach;
5. Support the external group of experts in assessment of the situation on the ground and preparation of the ABD strategy and programme;
6. Assist SWG Head Office/ Secretariat in building-up structures necessary for implementation of the ABD approach in a particular region.
7. Arrange and provide transport in the SEE region for him/ herself and the international consultant during the field visits.

5. Reporting

The regional consultant is responsible to the SWG Secretary General – Boban Ilic and the SWG Head of Operations – Ms. Irena Dzimrevska.

The regional consultant will deliver:

- Methodology and work plan consolidated with the work plan and methodology of the international consultant after signing the Contract;
- Technical reports on the performed activities after each field mission.

6. Timeframe

The regional consultant will be engaged for the period November 2011 – June 2012 for up to 40 working days out of which at least 30 days field work.

7. Profile required (experience, references and category as appropriate) of the Regional Consultant

Qualifications and skills:

- Relevant university degree in agriculture and rural development, economic, law, political sciences and related;
- Expertise and knowledge in agriculture, rural development and economic development issues, performance of assessments, preparation, development and implementation of strategies, international donor community operations, project preparation and related issues;
- Fluency in English both written and spoken and at least one local language of the South-East European countries;
- At least 10 years relevant professional experience.

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8. Financial issues

Beside the expert fee the offer should include lump sum for accommodation and travel costs during field visits in SEE region.

The financial offer should include all taxes and levies that may arise from the engagement of the regional consultant which are full responsibility of the regional consultant.