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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1. Beneficiary countries

N. Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo, Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia,

1.2. Contracting Authority

Network of Organizations for Rural Development of Kosovo (NORDK)

1.3. Countries background

Common characteristics of the rural areas of the Western Balkans

The Western Balkans is one of the richest parts of Europe in terms of natural resources. However, the Western Balkans as a whole faces numerous challenges related to economic development, unemployment, poor infrastructure and social services etc. A decline in the population, mainly in remote and less fertile areas, and population ageing both have a strong negative impact on the rural labour market. A common trend in all countries of the region is migration from rural areas to urban and coastal areas as well as abroad. Those moving to rural areas are mainly retired. The unfavourable education structure, poor qualifications and lack of knowledge and skills among the economically active population represent a serious constraint for the future rural economy. The labour market is characterised by poor labour force mobility, resulting in a lack of alternative employment and income opportunities. Agriculture based on low-intensity grazing and farming remains the predominant activity in most rural areas. Agricultural employment shares are among the highest when compared to EU countries. Rural households, particularly those with limited resources, have limited access to the agricultural markets, labour markets and financial markets, as well as limited access to information and knowledge. Therefore, their chances of overcoming the poverty risk are significantly reduced. Poor diversification of economic activities and income and low employment in the private sector are major issues for rural areas. Economic services and social infrastructure are poor and underdeveloped. This affects the quality of life of rural people as well as the competitiveness and the social fabric of rural areas.

1.4. Current situation in the sector

Although the share of agriculture in the economy has been decreasing since 2000, it is still far greater in the Western Balkans than in the EU on average, in terms of both added value and employment. The small scale and fragmented nature of private farming remains a general characteristic of agriculture in most Western Balkan states, particularly in the south. The average farm size ranges from 1.2 ha in Albania to less than 4 ha in Serbia. Other factors hampering the development of agriculture are: poorly-developed market structures, inadequate infrastructure, low share of market production, lack of knowledge and skills and failure to meet food safety standards. Agricultural production was in decline, owing to transition and even war in some countries, but since 2000 agricultural production has started to increase again, mainly due to investments in production technology. However, the output in most countries is still lower than in the pre-transition period. Despite some shortcomings, most of the Western Balkan countries have fairly high natural potential for agriculture (relatively inexpensive labour, land and water resources, and good climate and soil conditions for certain products such as tobacco, some fruits and vegetables, wine, cereals and meat).



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All the countries in the region have high aspirations to join the EU. In this respect they all face similar challenges in transforming and modernising their highly fragmented agri-food sectors to ensure they can be competitive in the EU market. Pre-accession support for agriculture and rural development - IPARD is the 5th component of IPA - the wider EU instrument for preparation and assistance for enlargement. Investment measures under IPARD are difficult to apply as they require full local structures to be in place for implementation and control. This results in high project rejection rates and a need for significant investment in the preparatory phase, both by the country and the potential beneficiaries. The IPARD management and control principles and procedures could be simplified in order to encourage the Western Balkan countries to make better use of measures which would have a direct impact on rural development, such as improving rural infrastructure, diversifying economic activities and training.

1.5. Related programmes and other donor activities

The Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy (NAGE) project is not part of previous activities or actions implemented by the partners together, but the participation in rural policy-decision making processes and grassroots empowerment, involvement and capacity building is something that each of the partners work on, on national level. Additionally, as founders of the non-formal Balkan Rural Development Network (BRDN), the partners have cooperated and worked together on similar joint actions, which concern advocacy and networking. The project is also aligned to the recently prepared BRDN Development strategy (2018-2022), one of the priority areas of which is implementation of common advocacy and networking actions, and grassroots mobilisation, in order to facilitate the EU approximation process of the concerned countries.

The NAGE project will also complement newly commenced activities of the WE Effect funded project entitled “Develop capacities of BRDN network to become accountable actor for development of sustainable rural areas in the Western Balkan Region”, which has the main focus on institutional capacity building of the Balkan Rural Development Network.

2. OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE & EXPECTED RESULTS

2.1. Overall objective

The overall objective of the project “Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy-NAGE” of which this contract will be a part is as follows: **Support to enhance the policy and decision-making impact of the Balkan Rural Development Network (BRDN) and its constituents, through involvement in the agricultural and rural program and policy reform processes for introduction of the green economy concept.**

The specific objectives are:

Specific objective 1: Strengthening of the grassroots’ CSOs capacities in generic work, advocacy and networking, to be able to sustain their role of agricultural and rural reform advocates, in transparent and accountable way;

Specific objective 2: Introduction of the concept of green economy as unique cross-cutting entrepreneurial model for rural diversification and sustainability;





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Specific objective 3: BRDN and its constituents use evidence-based policy development and rights-based advocacy to foster the national EU CAP approximation processes and promote *green economy*

Intermediary project outcome which will be achieved as a result of the delivery of the action is Strengthened BRDN's networking and advocacy capacities, increased recognition, broadened impact and strengthened participation in policy decision-making processes

2.2. Purpose

The purpose of this contract is as follows:

Evaluation and ranking the project proposals received on NAGE project sub-granting call for support of small civil society organizations for project initiatives in the field of green economy.

2.3. Results to be achieved by the Contractor

The Contractor should deliver consultancy services for:

- Analysis, evaluation and ranking of project proposal initiatives in the field of green economy submitted by small grassroots organizations from Kosovo within the NAGE Call for sub-granting

that will contribute to the achievement of the following project's expected result:

- **Designed and implemented transparent sub-granting program that will encourage rural and agricultural CSO diversification towards social and green entrepreneurship, as way to open pathway towards green economy, while also ensuring CSO sustainability.**

3. ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS

3.1. Assumptions underlying the project

Factors outside project management's control that may impact on the output-outcome linkage as listed in the Project's Logical Framework are:

- Trust and good communication between the project partners and their grassroots constituents with the project stakeholders
- The rural population and grassroots CSOs recognise the need for green entrepreneurship and approximation to the EU CAP in regards to environmental protection and diversification, and are highly motivated to acquire knowledge and engage in green entrepreneurship;
- Willingness of the national/local authorities to support and multiply green economy initiatives which contribute in facilitating the implementation of commitments to the EU adjustment processes regarding environmental protection policies of the EU CAP
- Political will to encourage wide-stakeholders' and grassroots participative involvement in public decision-making and reform processes in regards to agricultural and rural development.
- Availability of EU funds for implementation of green economy projects as unique cross-cutting entrepreneurial model for rural diversification and sustainability



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The specific assumptions regarding this contract are:

- The selected contractor has qualified staff to provide needed services in timely and quality manner;
- The Project staff remain the same throughout whole implementation period and are providing necessary information and data to the selected contractor;

3.2 Risks

Potential risks as listed in the Project are:

- The representatives of rural CSOs have less time to attend promotional events
- Low level of reaction to awareness rising campaigns
- Targeted stakeholders from beneficiary countries are not interested to take part in the capacity building efforts, because of lack of time and lack of information
- Topics of networking, finance and marketing are not appealing to the potential participants
- The end users may perceive the green economy concept as a push towards higher standards and strict regulation, which will burden them financially, and therefore refuse to participate.
- The EU CAP approximation and green entrepreneurship legal framing, based on evidence, is perceived as expensive and non-urgent, so the policy-decision makers are reluctant to the project findings.
- The green entrepreneurship projects cannot be sustained by the CSOs after the end of the project due to insufficient allocation of resources.

The specific risks that are relevant to this contact are:

- Not all planned experts for providing input in developing each target country portfolio of the comparative study are available with the planned deadline for final output

4. SCOPE OF THE WORK

4.1. General

The concept of green entrepreneurship is new to the Balkan countries, and therefore sensitisation and awareness raising that will evoke the interest in the topic, not only of the end beneficiaries, but also of the policy and decision-makers, is very important. Being faced with many diverse challenges, farmers and rural population, as particularly vulnerable group of citizens of the project-represented countries, every day is faced with the challenge of sustainability and providing for based livelihood. Consequently, the investments in environmental protection measures are many times perceived as additional burden that further worsens the fragile financial situation of the households. Hence, there is a need to initiate a change in the mind setting and make the rural population see opportunities in the factors that are currently recognised and described as threats. In order to achieve this, RDN and all partnering networks, as members of BRDN, have been working on sensitising and increasing the awareness of the rural Civil Society Organizations as well as end-beneficiaries and the general public on the importance of support of the process of green farming and entrepreneurship and sustainable rural diversification. In parallel, the project partners through NAGE project are enhancing the process of introducing the green economy topic by supporting sub-granting of rural CSOs to design and implement small project initiatives in the area of green economy.



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4.1.1. Description of the assignment

Award of small grants for the implementation of initiatives of civil society organisations from the target countries will enable implementation of projects important for local communities and at the same time, strengthening the capacity of smaller civil society organisations through a comprehensive process, including trainings, mentoring activities and practical application of the knowledge gained. With the Call, the Rural Development Network of North Macedonia as a Contracting Authority plans to award 6 grassroots organizations from North Macedonia with grants to pilot green entrepreneurship projects.

The scope of this contract is conducting analysis of applications submitted by grassroots CSOs and ranking of project initiatives in order to contribute in the selection of 6 most feasible green entrepreneurship initiatives to be awarded with the sub-granting scheme.

4.1.2. Geographical area to be covered

Kosovo

4.1.3. Target groups

The provided services by this Contract will target:

- Grassroots organizations particularly CSOs engaged in the area of rural diversification, environment protection, agriculture etc. as applicants in the sub-granting.

4.2. Specific work

The Contractor should provide the following consultancy services:

Perform the second phase of applications' evaluation i.e. evaluation of project proposals' quality, including the proposed budget and the capacity of the applicants for implementation of project initiatives that passed the administrative check

The assignment includes the following tasks:

- ❖ Analysis of project proposals initiatives in the field of green economy submitted by small grassroots organizations from N. Macedonia received within the NAGE Call for sub-granting
- ❖ Independent and impartial evaluation of project proposals against selection criteria defined in the NAGE Sub-granting Guideline for Applicants
- ❖ Ranking of all project proposals and recommendation for awarding 6 most reasonable project proposals
- ❖ Preparation of reserve list of project proposals, which is to be used if an awarded grantee fails to commence with implementation of the activities within the planned project timeframe.
- ❖ Prepare a report providing expert's input and rationale for the evaluation, ranking and suggested selection of project proposals.



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Two experts will be engaged to conduct simultaneous evaluation of all project proposals. The envisioned level of effort for the tasks is 3.5 days, per evaluator. The engaged experts shall have three days for project proposal evaluation, and half a day for reporting.

4.3. Project management

4.3.1. Responsible body

The Network of Organizations for Rural Development of Kosovo, will be responsible for managing the contract. NORDK will be responsible for conducting the first phase of evaluation i.e. **Opening, administrative check of the project proposals and verification of eligibility of the applicants. After receiving the ranking of project initiatives from both evaluators, the Contracting Authority will compare the lists, cross check the scoring and with arithmetical means determine the final ranking of initiatives to be awarded.**

4.3.2. Management structure

NORDK is responsible for developing the terms of reference and the tendering documentation for the required service. As Contracting Authority, it will invite potential consultants, in accordance to this ToR, and will make the selection of the best candidate.

4.3.3. Facilities to be provided by the Contracting Authority and/or other parties

NORDK will provide facilities if necessary for performing of the required service. The Contracting Authority will ensure that Contractor is adequately supported. In particular, it will ensure that there is sufficient administrative and logistical support to enable the Contractor to focus on their primary responsibilities. It must also transfer funds as necessary to support the Contractors' work under this Contract

5. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

5.1. Location

Location of assignment is Kosovo.

5.2. Start date & Period of implementation of tasks

The intended start date is 25.05.2020 and the period of implementation of the contract will be until 08.06.2020.

6. REQUIREMENTS

6.1. Staff

6.1.1. Key experts

All experts who have a crucial role in implementing the contract are referred to as key experts.



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The profiles of the key experts for this contract are as follows:

Key Expert 1: Evaluator

Qualifications and skills

- The expert should have a University Degree in Agriculture, Economics, Environmental sciences, Business Administration, Humanities or related field.
- Good communication, presentation, facilitation and interpersonal skills;
- High quality analytical skills;

General professional experience

- Preferably 5 years' experience in agriculture and rural development, but a minimum of 3 years required,
- Fluent knowledge of Albanian and English language,
- Experience in working with rural businesses and CSOs will be considered an advantage.

Specific professional experience

- Engagement on at least two (2) EU or other donor funded projects or participation in at least two projects that involve analysis, examination and compilation of findings, comparative assessment, definition of conclusions and recommendation etc.
- Capacity to analyse and evaluate initiatives with high potential for enhancing agriculture and rural development activities in the area of green entrepreneurship
- Understanding of the situation with 'green'/environment friendly endeavours and activities in the Western Balkan region

All experts must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities they take on.

6.1.2. Other experts, support staff & backstopping

CVs for experts other than the key experts should not be submitted in the tender. The Contractor shall select and hire other experts as required according to the needs. The selection procedures used by the Contractor to select these other experts shall be transparent, and shall be based on pre-defined criteria, including professional qualifications, language skills and work experience.

The costs for backstopping and support staff, as needed, are considered to be included in the tenderer's financial offer.

6.2. Office accommodation

Office accommodation for each expert working on the contract is to be provided by the Contractor.

6.3. Facilities to be provided by the Contractor

The Contractor shall ensure that experts are adequately supported and equipped. In particular, it must ensure that there is sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting provision to enable experts to concentrate on their primary responsibilities.

6.4. Equipment

No equipment is to be purchased on behalf of the Contracting Authority from this contract.



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The contractor will provide all the equipment necessary for timely and quality implementation of the tasks described in these Terms of Reference.

7. REPORTS

7.1. Reporting requirements

The Contractor will prepare final report on the implementation of the tasks, upon completion of this contract. The approval of the final report by the Contracting Authority will be the basis for issuing the final payment as indicated in the Special Conditions.

The consultant will submit the following reports in English in one original and one copy:

- **Ranking list of evaluated project proposals according to criteria from the sub-granting Guideline for applicants.**
- **Final report** of maximum 5 pages (main text, excluding annexes). This report shall be submitted up to 5 days after implementation of tasks. The report shall contain a sufficiently detailed description. The detailed analyses which underlie the mission's recommendations will be presented in annexes to the main report. The final report must be provided along with the corresponding invoice.

The required formats of the reports will be communicated to the Contractor by the Contracting Authority after the signature of the contract.

7.2. Submission and approval of reports

The report referred to above must be submitted to the Project Manager identified in the contract. The Project Manager is responsible for approving the report in a reasonable time period.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

8.1. Definition of indicators for this Contract

- Evaluation of project proposals conducted from 25.05.2020 to 08.06.2020
- Ranking list of evaluated project proposals according to criteria from the sub-granting Guideline for applicants - 08.06.2020
- Report submitted – 08.06.2020.

The indicator of the successful implementation of the contract is “Services provided in timely and quality manor, as required in these Terms of Reference”.

8.2. Special requirements:

N/A.