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## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 1.1. Beneficiary countries

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

### 1.2. Contracting Authority

Rural Development Network of Republic of Macedonia (RDN of RM)

### 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).

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 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;

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:

- By organizing journalist contest and promoting best practice examples of the green economy concept in relevant media outlets, enhance awareness of the end-beneficiaries and sensitise the general public in the non EU project represented countries on the importance of support of the process of green farming and entrepreneurship and sustainable rural diversification

## **2.3. Results to be achieved by the Contractor**

The services provided by the Contractor will contribute to the achievement of the following deliverables:

- Promotion and visibility of the awarded journalist story presenting best practice example of green economy concept in relevant media outlets

## **3. ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS**

### **3.1. Assumptions underlying the project**

- 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

#### **Risks**

- 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.

## **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, as described earlier, the investments in environmental protection measures are many times perceived as additional burden that further worsens the fragile financial situation of the households.

Therefore, NAGE project is designed so 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, the project partners will implement a media campaign and will work with professional media representatives to increase the awareness of the end-beneficiaries and sensitise the general public in the non EU project represented countries on the importance of support of the process of green farming and entrepreneurship and sustainable rural diversification.

#### **4.1.1. Description of the assignment**

The Scope of the Contract is to select a communication or PR expert, who will be responsible to assist the project in achieving activity's main goal – increased visibility of specific green economy and green entrepreneurship undertakings and enhanced awareness of the end-beneficiaries and sensitizing of the general public to initiate a change in the mind set on these issues.

#### **4.1.2. Geographical area to be covered**

N. Macedonia,

#### **4.1.3. Target groups**

Direct target groups: Grassroots CSOs, members of the project partner organisations, rural stakeholders, local and national media representatives in all countries

Indirect target groups: Rural population; local and national policy decision-makers; scholar and academic community; business sector and entrepreneurs.

### **4.2. Specific work**

The Contractor should undertake the following tasks:

- Preparation of Call and application for journalist contest containing criteria and specifics related to journalists story standards
- Communicate the contest to relevant media: written media, on-line newspapers and portals, specialized newspapers/portals, social media
- Prepare a report/list of communicated media
- Allocate 2 journalists in the Evaluation committee as qualified members to conduct independent and impartial evaluation of the received journalists stories and selection of the winning story
- Contact relevant media outlets and secure that the awarded story is published in at least 5 media outlets
- Prepare “press clipping” of all media that published the story
- Prepare short report on the assignment

### **4.3. Project management**

#### **4.3.1. Responsible body**

Rural Development Network of NM will be responsible for developing the Terms of Reference and the tendering documentation for the required service. As a Contracting Authority, RDN of NM will invite potential communication and/or PR experts, in accordance to this ToR, and will make the selection of the best candidate.

#### **4.3.2. Facilities to be provided by the Contracting Authority and/or other parties**

NORDK is not responsible for providing facilities to the Contractor for performing of the required service. However, 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.

## **5. LOGISTICS AND TIMING**

### **5.1. Location**

Location of assignment is Kosovo.

### **5.2. Start date & Period of implementation of tasks**

The intended commencement date is October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and period for implementation and completion of the contract no later than December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

## **6. REQUIREMENTS**

### **6.1. Staff**

Note that civil servants and other staff of the public administration of the partner country, or of international/regional organisations based in the country, shall only be approved to work as experts if

well justified. The justification should be submitted with the tender and shall include information on the added value the expert will bring as well as proof that the expert is seconded or on personal leave.

### **6.1.1. Key experts**

All experts who have a crucial role in implementing the contract are referred to as key experts. The profiles of the key experts for this contract are as follows:

#### **Key expert 1: Communication/ PR Expert**

Qualifications and skills:

- ✓ The expert should have a university degree in marketing, communication, PR or equivalent experience in these areas

General professional experience:

- ✓ Minimum 7 years of experience in communication and visibility, marketing and PR
- ✓ Minimum 5-year experience in preparation of communication strategies, marketing plans and PR
- ✓ Fluent knowledge of English language whereas knowledge of local languages will be considered an advantage
- ✓ Ability to work in multicultural environment,
- ✓ Experience in communication and visibility planning of EU funded projects, will be considered an advantage

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

### **6.2. Office accommodation**

Office accommodation is to be provided by the Contractor.

### **6.3. Facilities to be provided by the Contractor**

N/A.

### **6.4. Equipment**

No equipment is to be purchased on behalf of the Contracting Authority from this contract. 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 one final report upon completion of this contract. The consultant will submit the report in English. The Contracting Authority will communicate the required formats of the reports to the Contractor after signing of 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**

The specific performance measures envisaged for this contract are:

- Prepared Call for journalist contest and sent to relevant media
- Published/promoted awarded journalist story presenting best practice example of green economy concept in at least 5 relevant media outlets

that will contribute to the achievement of the following deliverables:

- Promotion and visibility of the awarded journalist story presenting best practice example of green economy concept in relevant media outlets to increase the awareness of the end-beneficiaries and sensitise the general public on the importance of support of the process of green farming and entrepreneurship and sustainable rural diversification.