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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

Rural Development Network of North Macedonia (RDN of NM)

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



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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 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;





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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:

- **Development of specific documents and policy briefs to attribute the processes of national agriculture and rural development policy amendments in the WB countries for achieving enhanced introduction and/or advancing of green economy model by ensuring participative approach that will satisfy the rural networks' constituents' and rural stakeholders' needs and interests.**

2.3. Results to be achieved by the Contractor

The Contractor should deliver consultancy services for:

- Provision of EU expert's input to the Regional Working Group which is responsible for:
 - a) preparation of report/document defining feasible policy recommendations for facilitation of approximation process of the Western Balkan countries to the EU CAP segment related to green economy and entrepreneurship
 - b) formulation of Roadmap (Action plan format) to Green economy in WB countries
- On-line participation in National Forums in 6 WB countries to discuss the roadmap with the relevant stakeholders, legislators and policy decision-makers, as well as with representatives of the grassroots CSOs,

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

- **Initiated comprehensive and CSO participatory policy development process through identification of the gaps of the national agricultural and rural development programs to the CAP 2013-2020 and analysis of the impact to the natural environment and sustainable development**

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:





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- 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

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



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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, will work 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. In parallel, the policy and decision makers in the target WB countries need to be sensitized on the importance of the green economy topic for achieving sustainable rural development and urged to undertake specific measures on policy level that would advance green economy and entrepreneurship.

4.1.1. Description of the assignment

The scope of this contract is development of viable policy solutions and recommendations accompanied by development of attainable Roadmap (Action plan) for gradual advancement of green economy and green entrepreneurship in the WB countries. The proposed solutions are expected to assist the WB countries in their EU approximation processes i.e. in adjusting the existing WB countries' national agriculture and rural development regulation to the EU CAP's segment on the green economy cross-cutting issues.

The foundation for successful execution of this assignment rests in the comprehensive comparative analysis entitled "State of affairs for fostering green economy in agriculture and rural development: Comparative analysis of national programs and measures in Western Balkan countries and Croatia", which was developed by NAGE project in the course of 2020. This document provided thorough identification, analysis and comparison of the non-EU member countries' legal documents, national programs and measures for agriculture and rural development regarding green economy against the Croatian legislation on the same topic. It identified the progress gaps and precisely illustrated the hindrances, driving forces and boosters that each of the project-represented countries applies on national level, and that supports and facilitates the process of approximation to the EU CAP, particularly in regards to the green economy cross-cutting issues.

The analysis also served as a source of current information on the status of green economy topic discussed at public debates organized within the NAGE project in all of the Western Balkan countries. The debates contributed to opening dialogue with the relevant stakeholders carrying out the environmental and green economy advocacy process while engaging the grassroots organisations and encouraging participative rural policy decision-making processes. Croatia was also analysed and presented at the public debates, and referred to as a benchmarking country in regards to the policy amendments, negotiations and participation in the decision-making process.

The policy solutions and recommendations along with the Roadmap to Green Economy to WB countries should derive from the facts and statistics elaborated in the comprehensive comparative study complemented with the findings from each of the public debates organized in the WB countries. These two documents (The defined policy solutions and recommendation and the Roadmap) are envisioned as concise, policy brief documents that tackle specific segments of the extensive





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comparative study, and as such will have practical, hands-on usage i.e. the first document will elaborate and list feasible policy solutions on green economy, while the Roadmap will serve as an Action plan for further implementation and advancement of Green economy in WB.

The development of the stated documents will be achieved by engaging relevant stakeholders (academic and research community, NGO sector etc) and establishment of **Regional Working Group** that will work on synthesising feasible policy recommendations and a Roadmap to Green Economy in WB, while considering and adjusting to the EU policy requirements defined with the CAP.

- The Regional Working Group will consist of one RWG Coordinator and six National Working Group Coordinators (in each of the 6 WB countries), who will cooperate and provide input to the RWG Coordinator.
- Each National Working Group will consist of NWG Coordinator and 3 members, who will cooperate and provide input to the NWG Coordinator. The working groups will work on national level, but will communicate and coordinate with each other on regular basis.
- The Regional Work Group will be continuously assisted by a Croatian expert who will cooperate with the RWG Coordinator, share experience and provide recommendations for facilitation of the EU CAP approximation process.

4.1.2. Geographical area to be covered

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

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 as well as other various stakeholders relevant to rural development in all project-involved countries who will use the documents as green economy advocacy and lobbying tool in front of the policy-makers.

4.2. Specific work

The Contractor should provide consultancy services for the following activities:

- Provision of EU expert's input to the Western Balkan's Regional Working Group which is tasked to develop feasible policy recommendations and a Roadmap to Green Economy in WB
- On-line participation in National Forums in 6 WB countries to discuss the Roadmap to Green economy with the relevant stakeholders, legislators and policy decision-makers, as well as with representatives of the grassroots CSOs,

The assignment includes the following tasks:

- Participation in Regional Working Group in an advisory role, contribute to Policy recommendation and Roadmap documents' methodology development, share experience and





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EU country perspective in synthesizing feasible regional policy recommendations and Roadmap development

- Preparation of short Power Point presentation on findings/general conclusions in the Western Balkans' Roadmap to Green Economy and their compliance with EU CAP policy on green economy
- On-line participation in National Forums in 6 WB countries to provide insight on feasibility of the proposed concept in the Roadmap and discuss the Roadmap to Green economy with the relevant stakeholders, legislators and policy decision-makers, as well as with representatives of the grassroots CSOs
- Continuous cooperation and consultation with Regional Working Group Coordinator and provision of recommendations in the process of compiling inputs from all countries into single Policy recommendation and Roadmap to Western Balkan's Green Economy

4.3. Project management

4.3.1. Responsible body

The Croatian Rural Development Network (CRDN) will be responsible for managing the contract.

4.3.2. Management structure

CRDN is responsible for developing the terms of reference and the tendering documentation for the required service. As Contracting Authority, it will invite potential consultancies, 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

CRDN is not responsible for providing facilities to the Contractor for performing of the required service.

5. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

5.1. Location

The Croatian expert will perform the assignment in the relevant country.

5.2. Start date & Period of implementation of tasks

The intended start date is May 25th, 2021 and the period of implementation of the contract will be until September 15th, 2021. Please see Articles 19.1 and 19.2 of the Special Conditions for the actual start date and period of implementation.

6. REQUIREMENTS

6.1. Staff



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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. Experts will be responsible for delivery of services from their respective counties and producing reports from conducted activities to the key experts.

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

Key Expert 1: Specialist in preparation of comparative studies

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 and document drafting skills;
- Sensitivity to and responsiveness to all partners, respectful and helpful relations with project staff;

General professional experience

- Preferably 10 years' experience in agriculture and rural development, but a minimum of 7 years required,
- Preferably 10 years' experience in research, analysis, document drafting and preparation of studies but a minimum of 7 years required.
- Fluent knowledge of Croatian and English language,
- Experience in working with rural businesses and CSOs will be considered an advantage.

Specific professional experience

- Engagement on at least five (5) EU or other donor funded projects or participation in at least two projects that involve research and analysis, examination and compilation of findings, comparative assessment, definition of conclusions and recommendation etc.
- Extensive knowledge of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the pre-accession assistance of EU
- Participation in the evaluation of Rural Development Programs in at least one EU country and at least one country from the geographical area covered by the project, as defined under section 4.1.2 of this document.
- Understanding of the situation as well as the relevant legislative and policy framework in the Western Balkan region and capacity to analyse and evaluate national agriculture and rural development policy. References in conducting such studies in at least three countries from the geographical area covered by the project, as defined under section 4.1.2 of this document.
- Experience in management/ implementation of national/ regional/ international projects that involve environment friendly activities
- 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



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The costs for backstopping and support staff of the hired expert (should there be any), as needed, are considered to be included in the tenderer's financial offer.

7. REPORTS AND DELIVERABLES

7.1. Reporting and deliverables

The Contractor will report to the Regional Working Group Coordinator and the relevant NAGE Project Manager. The following deliverables are foreseen for the expert within this ToR:

Deliverables	Timeframe/Deadline
Participation in Regional Working Group in an advisory role, contribute to Policy recommendation and Roadmap documents' methodology development (RGW deadline May 31), share experience and EU country perspective in synthesizing feasible regional policy recommendations (RGW deadline July 20) and Roadmap development (RGW deadline July 31)	• May 31 – July 31, 2020
Preparation of short Power Point presentation on findings/general conclusions in the Western Balkans' Roadmap to Green Economy and their compliance with EU CAP policy on green economy	• August 25-30, 2021
On-line participation in National Forums in 6 WB countries to provide insight on feasibility of the proposed concept in the Roadmap	• September 1-15, 2021

7.2. Submission and approval of reports

After submission of deliverables, a short 2-pages report must be submitted to the Project Manager identified in the contract by September 17th, 2021. The Project Manager is responsible for approving the report in a reasonable time period.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

8.1. Definition of indicators

The specific deliverable foreseen with this project activity and relevant for this Contract is

- Defined feasible policy recommendations for facilitation of approximation process of the Western Balkan countries to the EU CAP segment related to green economy and entrepreneurship and
- Prepared Western Balkans' Roadmap to green economy
- On-line participation in National Forums in 6 WB countries to provide insight on feasibility of the proposed concept in the Roadmap



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The specific performance measures envisaged in the project and included in the logical framework, relevant for this Contract are:

- **Indicator:** # of raised advocacy issues in regards to the approximation of the national agricultural and rural development programs to the CAP 2013-2020, so that they comply with the environmental protection policies of the EU
- **Target:** Up to 7 raised advocacy issues on approximation of the national agricultural and rural development programs to the CAP 2013-2020

8.2. Special requirements: N/A

The price ceiling for offers is 3.900 euro.

