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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 **provision of accurate overall administration of the NAGE project sub-granted small-scale projects in the field of green economy.**

## 2.3. Results to be achieved by the Contractor

The Contractor should deliver services for:

- Overseeing documentation from all sub-granted projects regarding their compatibility with proper procedures of procurement, budget spending, supply of supporting documents and overall administration of implemented activities.

that will contribute to the achievement of the following deliverables:

- Successful implementation of 36 small-scale green economy initiatives with proper administrative and financial management practices

## 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.





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- 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 sub-grantees responsible for implementation of small scale projects have the needed capacity and knowledge to provide proper procurement procedures, recording and administration of executed activities within the planned deadline for achieving final projected 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



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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.

### 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 NAGE project sub-granting call, the Rural Development Networks of N. Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Albania awarded 36 grassroots organizations from the Western Balkans with grants to pilot green entrepreneurship projects.

The scope of this contract is provision of accurate and complete overall administration services including proper record keeping and documentation of the activities within the thirty six (36) awarded green entrepreneurship project implemented by sub-granted grassroots organization from West Balkans countries.

### Geographical area to be covered

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

### Target groups

The provided services by this Contract will target:

- 36 awarded grassroots organizations particularly CSOs engaged in the area of rural diversification, environment protection, agriculture etc. as implementers of green entrepreneurship initiatives within the sub-granting.

## 4.2. Specific work

The Contractor should provide the following consultancy services:

- **Provision of administration services, record keeping and documentation to thirty six sub-granted small civil society organizations for proper implementation of their project initiatives in the field of green economy**

The tasks include the following-

- Detailed observation of the 36 awarded projects: the project idea, projected activities, budget, timeframe of implementation, needed resources, planned deliverables etc.
- Contact implementing CSOs and prepare plan/schedule for regular communication with sub-grantees based on the timeframe of implementation of each sub-granted project
- Review planned implementation procedures of each project and propose mechanisms for appropriate administrative and financial management practices
- Review status of project performance and procurement procedures' implementation





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- Provide overall administration of documents, review and completion of supporting and financial documentation

Hiring a short-term consultant for sub-granting administration would guarantee enhanced inspection of received documents from sub-grantees, control of procurement procedures and supplied supporting documentation, and improved overall administration of the sub-granted projects. This will in turn result in reducing and timely resolving of irregularities in the administrative and financial management of the sub-granted projects and decrease the risks of generating ineligible costs.

### 4.3. Project management

#### Responsible body

The Rural Development Network of N. Macedonia (RDN) will be responsible for managing the contract.

#### Management structure

RDN 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.

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

RDN of NM 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 Republic of N. Macedonia.

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

The intended start date is 10 September, 2020 and the period of implementation of the contract will be until 10 May, 2021.

## 6. REQUIREMENTS

### 6.1. Staff

#### Key experts

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



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

**Key Expert 1: Sub-granting administration specialist**

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, environmental protection but a minimum of 3 years required,
- Fluent knowledge of Macedonian 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 sub-granting and delivery of support to sub-grantees, and accurate administrative and financial management of the sub-granted projects;
- Capacity to evaluate information/findings/data and related supporting documentation of activities contributing to successful documentation of green entrepreneurship

The expert must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities he/she takes on.

**Other experts, support staff & backstopping**

N/A

**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**



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The Contractor will prepare one periodical report on the implementation of the tasks, and final report upon completion of this contract. The approval of the periodical report will be the basis for payment of the first instalment of the Contract and the approval of the final report by the Contracting Authority will be the basis for issuing the final payment.

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

- **Periodical report** of maximum 3 pages (main text, excluding annexes). This report shall be submitted up to 5 days after completion of half of the Contract period (4 months)
- **Final report** of maximum 5 pages (main text, excluding annexes). This report shall be submitted up to 5 days after implementation of tasks.

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

The specific performance measures envisaged for this contract are:

- Provided administrative and financial management support to 36 grant awarded CSOs

that will contribute to the achievement of the following deliverables:

- Successful implementation of 36 small-scale green economy initiatives with proper administrative and financial management practices

The price ceiling for offers is 8,096.00 euro.

