



TERMS OF REFERENCE for *Preparation of Strategy for development of Agricultural Cooperatives*

Background

CARE International is a federation of international non-government organizations implementing its programs for fighting poverty and social injustice in more than 80 countries throughout the world. CARE has been active in the Balkans region since 1992. Over the years, CARE’s program has expanded and elaborated to meet the changing needs of the region’s vulnerable population. Its aim in the Balkans today is to ensure social, economic and political rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups are recognized and fulfilled, contributing to sustainable peace in the region. CARE’s work in the Balkans revolves around the two programme strategies: social and economic inclusion and gender equality.

Macedonian Enterprise Development Foundation (MEDF) is a non-governmental organization which has a vision of decreased poverty, increased employment and established social cohesion. Its mission is support of the development of SMEs. It has vast experience of 20 years in promoting entrepreneurship, supporting businesses, project management, capacity building, developing partnerships as well as providing financial services to SMEs (micro and small loans). Since 1998, through its financial intermediaries, MEDF has distributed 50.7 million EUR to 14,525 clients, most of them farmers.

The project *Support to Development of Agricultural Cooperatives in North Macedonia* is funded by the European Union and implemented by CARE and MEDF. The project aims at contributing to higher productivity and competitiveness of the agriculture sector. To improve the current situation in the segment of agricultural production of individual farmers, the project works on the increase of market competitiveness and cooperation among farmers in North Macedonia, through creating favourable conditions for the development of the existing and creation of new agricultural cooperatives. Project outputs – expected results are:

- **Op 1:** Legal framework regulating agricultural cooperatives is revised, through a joint work of the project team and associates, MAFWE and a cooperatives’ umbrella organisation.
- **Op 2:** Capacity of a selected umbrella organisation of Macedonian agricultural cooperatives strengthened.
- **Op 3.1:** Increased awareness on benefits of cooperatives, among farmers, businesses and general public.
- **Op 3.2:** Data base created with information on existing agricultural cooperatives willing to expand and farmers’ groups willing to establish new cooperatives and receive support for development.
- **Op 4:** Technical and financial support provided for the development of 8 existing and creation of 12 new cooperatives



In cooperation with the Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, representatives of agricultural cooperatives and other stakeholders involved in the project, a consensus was reached that there is a need for developing a strategic document for agricultural cooperatives in North Macedonia.

For this task, CARE plans to engage external consultants (one international – leading consultant and one local – assistant consultant) to undertake the preparation process and design a Strategy for the Development of Agricultural Cooperatives for North Macedonia.

The international expert will undertake their work online, while the data collection in the country will be done by the local consultant. The document should be agreed and approved from CARE and the Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy (MAFWE).

Aims and objectives of the consultancy

The overall objective of this consultancy is to develop a seven-year Strategic Plan for Development of Agricultural Cooperatives (2022 – 2028), aimed to support MAFWE in their effort to strengthen the agricultural sector in the country.

The assignment has two specific goals:

1. Detailed and comprehensive review of the current situation regarding agricultural cooperatives.

Preparation of this assignment should include:

- a. desk research on existing legislature, policies, programs etc. regarding agricultural cooperatives in North Macedonia and EU (international and local consultant);
- b. quantitative field research, which may include individual meetings with various stakeholders (state representatives, institutions, representatives of agro-cooperatives and their umbrella organisations etc.) focus group discussions, interviews with stakeholders on all levels (including MAFWE and their agencies, European Delegation, farmers’ associations, agricultural cooperatives, eventually individual farmers, the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food etc.). The field research will be undertaken entirely by the Local Consultant with inputs from the engaged International Consultant and in close cooperation with CARE’s Project Manager and MAFWE;
- c. Analysis of the gathered documents and data.

2. Design of the Strategic Plan for the Development of Agriculture Cooperatives in the country, including (international consultant):

- a. Consultations with MAFWE and the Working group formed within CARE’s project;
- b. Drafting of the strategic document for the public discussions;
- c. Facilitating public discussions and gathering recommendations;



- d. Design of the final Strategy for the Development of Agricultural Cooperatives for North Macedonia for official adoption, including the Action Plan for the Development of Agricultural Cooperatives for year one of implementation (2022).

Consultant's outputs/scope of work

The scope of work for the Consultants will include but not be limited to the following:

- Provide the detailed Consultancy plan to CARE, for revision and adoption;
- Review of the documentation and inputs relevant for the preparation of the Strategy for the Development of Agriculture Cooperatives. CARE, MEDF and MAFWE and their agencies will provide a segment of the documentation;
- Mark the best practices from the EU which could provide inputs to the Strategy;
- Mapping of stakeholders and analysis of the particular roles and influences;
- Review MAFWE's operations to date, with the main focus on the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development (Unit for Agricultural Cooperatives), to obtain context information;
- Undertake a consultative process and analysis, to identify the focus areas for the development and to develop strategic objectives and key result areas for the same;
- Propose a Strategy for achieving the Strategic Objectives and key results;
- Develop a Results and Resources Framework for the plan period;
- Facilitate focus groups and public discussions, individual meetings and consultations with various stakeholders to validate draft strategic plan;
- Design the Strategic plan and submit to CARE and MAFWE, draft and final version;
- Hand over to CARE the entire original quantitative and qualitative data documentation collected for the purposes of the consultancy (memos, minutes, eventual interview recordings, documents, etc.), upon the acceptance of the strategic document and prior to finalization of the payment.

CARE's AND MAFWE outputs

- Provide to the Consultants the documentation available and relevant for the consultancy – initial and upon Consultant's request.
- Agree on the assessment plan with the Consultants.
- Coordinate with the Consultants throughout the consultancy period.
- Provide support to the Local Consultant in organizing interviews, focus groups and public discussion with key stakeholders.

Methodology

The leading international consultant will have the role of bringing the EU best practice, having the overall picture of the local environment, processes, documents, power relations among stakeholders that will be of influence in the strategy design. In addition, the leading consultant will be in charge of coordinating the work of the local consultant, planning his/her work in the field based on local inputs. The leading consultant will be in charge of writing all project outputs and of the required revision of the designed documents.



The local, assistant consultant will participate in the consultancy processes, but will mostly be in charge of collecting and analysing local data (qualitative, quantitative, documents, situation analysis of the environment for the development of agricultural cooperatives in N. Macedonia), preparing the information for the lead consultant.

The local and international expert should ensure regular communication, information sharing and continuous mutual consultations.

The Consultants will base their work on the relevant documentation, best practices from the EU, data and inputs collected (part of which will be provided by CARE and the MAFWE).

The analysis necessary for the process of designing the Strategy will be based on both quantitative and qualitative data: quantitative data should be extracted from the official databases of various local and national institutions, foremost from MAFWE's; qualitative data will be collected at the meetings/interviews with various stakeholders relevant for the development of agricultural cooperatives.

The consultancy will be done in constant communication with CARE's Project Manager and MAFWE's relevant staff. The Consultants have the obligation to coordinate all field activities with CARE and MAFWE prior to undertaking them. The Consultancy plan, the draft of the Consultancy Report and the Final Consultancy Report will be the subject of CARE's (and MAFWE's) revision.

More detailed information on the planned process and its timeline is available in **Annex 1 of this ToR: Action Plan for Strategy Development.**

Language and outline of the reports and consultancy

All outputs of this consultancy should be written in English language. The Consultants will ensure excellent quality of the written language.

The Local Consultant will perform the field data collection communication in local languages. CARE will provide interpretation service, if needed.

Schedule and logistics

The Consultants will be engaged from the March 25, 2021 through August 31, 2021 for 45 person-days (30 days reserved for the international – leading consultant and 15 days for the local consultant).

Tasks	Deadline	Responsible
Design of the consultancy plan	March 25, 2021	International consultant
Review of various documents relevant for the consultancy	April 19, 2021	International and local consultant
Data collection - field work in the country i.e. individual meetings, public discussion's etc.	May 27, 2021	Local consultant
First draft of the Strategic document	July 18, 2021	International



		consultant
Comments from relevant actors on the first draft	July 31, 2021	Relevant stakeholders
Second draft of strategic document	August 16, 2021	International consultant
Final Strategic document submission	August 31, 2021	International consultant

The 60% of the payment for the work defined in the Contract will be made upon the delivery of first draft of the strategic plan to both international and local expert. The remaining 40% of the amount will be paid after the final product is delivered to CARE, with all necessary supporting documentation (report, questionnaires if any, etc.) as per CARE’s administrative procedures.

CARE will provide logistical support to the Consultants for the named consultancy which may include support in organizing meetings, provision of additional data and information.

Cost

The Consultants shall suggest a total fee for the entire consultancy in Euros and the number of days predicted for the work under the above-mentioned schedule (30 days maximum for the international and 15 days maximum for the local consultant). The offered price/bid should be expressed in gross i.e. to include costs such as taxes and related costs of the bidder (travel, meetings etc.). The project is financed by the European Union and registered in the Central Donor Assistance Database of Republic of Macedonia (CDAD) with number of confirmation 07/01-18/3764 exempting the project from VAT, and the selected bidder should respect the procedure for tax exemption for all occurred costs.

Management and organization

The Consultants will report to Dragan Perić, CARE’s Project Manager.

The International Consultant must comply with the following criteria:

- Minimum master’s degree (PHD is desired) in a relevant field in the area of planning of public policies, development studies or similar discipline.
- Extensive knowledge and experience in agricultural development in the EU, with minimum 5 years of prior engagement in this field.
- Particular rich knowledge in principles of agricultural cooperative entrepreneurship, with extensive knowledge of the best practice examples from the EU.
- At least five years of professional experience in strategic planning and management.
- Excellent written and verbal knowledge of English language.
- Proven excellent analytical skills.
- Proficiency in designing of strategic documents, with at least 5 years of experience.
- References on the related work (which should be submitted with the consultancy bid).



- Demonstrate excellent interpersonal and professional skills in interacting with government and development partners.

The Local Consultant must comply with the following criteria:

- Masters degree in a relevant field in the area of planning of public policies, development studies, agricultural development or similar discipline.
- Excellent knowledge of the social, political and economic landscape in North Macedonia, in particular in the sector of agricultural development.
- Knowledge about institutions/networks/organizations relevant for the issues of agriculture development in North Macedonia.
- Excellent techniques and experience in conducting field research and data collection, through interviews, focus group discussions, participatory presentations etc.
- Excellent techniques of data analysis;
- Excellent written and verbal knowledge of English language.
- References on the related work (which should be submitted with the consultancy bid).
- Demonstrate excellent interpersonal and professional skills in interacting with government and development partners.

Interested candidates are invited to apply and should submit:

- Current CV
- Draft methodology and implementation plan for the consultancy
- Bid (financial offer)
- References

To the following e-mail address: care.macedonia@care.org

For eventual additional information, please contact: care.macedonia@care.org.

Deadline for applications is March 23, 2021