

Terms of Reference (ToR)

for international and local consultants to prepare the Strategy of the Advisory Service for Agriculture and Rural Development 2023-2026 in a frame of the programme "Sustainable and inclusive rural economic development (SIREN)", funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC).

1. Background

13 years after independence, Kosovo still faces many challenges, among them weak institutions, high unemployment and labour market inactivity (particularly among women and girls), migration, persisting gender inequality across different sectors, as well as discrimination of minority groups. The agriculture sector is characterized by limited production and organizational capacity, lack of access to know-how & skills as well as environmental risks. SIREN aims to facilitate more sustainable and inclusive market systems and contribute to poverty reduction for rural populations, particularly women and marginalized groups.

Since October 2003, the Advisory Services Sector has been established in the rural development department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD), aiming at expanding the network and increasing the capacities of the Advisory Services in an institutional and permanent form. Over time, the advisory service was developed and with the regulations of 2013 was upgraded to the level of a Department. Also, with the strategy 2012-16 and with the law on advisory services were organized as a public-private pluralist service.

With the support of the project funded by the European Commission "Support in strengthening the Advisory Services of the MAFRD and improving the technical services provided by the MAFRD laboratories" the Strategy 2014-20 was prepared, and administrative instructions were drafted regulating this sector. Thus, with the strategy and laws, the Kosovo Advisory System for Agriculture and Rural Development has been established. This system is centred in the Department for Technical Advisory Services and extends throughout the territory of Kosovo as a public sector through the advisory information centres in each municipality and private organizations, which are licensed organizations dealing with agricultural advice. Currently, the strategy 2014-20 has expired and the Department for technical advisory services is making efforts to prepare the new strategy 2022-28.

The SIREN project, among others, targets agriculture advisory services, capacity and organizational development of national and local institutions. One of the key documents of the advisory service for the Agriculture Strategy for Advisory Service of MAFRD expired in 2021. This plan brings together a report on the status of advisory services for agriculture in Kosovo, makes a SWOT analysis and identifies specific objectives and action points. The MAFRD calls for the preparation of the Strategy for Advisory Service for Agriculture and Rural Development (SASARD) 2023-2026 now, for the drafting of which it seeks support from SIREN and consultants.

The consultants that are performing these TOR will facilitate and actively contribute to, in terms of leading the process and document development, the preparation of SASARD 2023-2026 during the period of July 2022 until 15 December 2022, under the guidance of CaCH and MAFRD - Department for Agricultural Policies and Markets.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Advisory Service is to improve Kosovo's agricultural sector, as well as to increase agricultural productivity, processing and marketing in a sustainable way. Advisory services are important to help the MAFRD in achieving the objectives determined in the Agriculture and Rural Development Plan.

Main Objective:

To draft a strategy for advisory services in Agriculture and Rural Development, which will be used as a working guide for the Kosovo advisory system for agriculture and rural development, to increase the skills of local staff in drafting the strategies and exchange of best practises with EU countries.

3. Main tasks:

The expert will work in cooperation with the team for drafting the defined strategy selected by the Department of Technical Advisory Services and formalized by the decision of the General Secretary of the MAFRD. The expert's work will be supervised by the representatives of Caritas Switzerland in close cooperation with the Team Leader.

The main initial partners for this input are the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, the Department for Technical Advisory Service, and the Strategy Drafting Team.

Having in mind that it is about the compiling of the Strategy of Kosovo's advisory system for agriculture and rural development, the indirect partners will be the representatives of the private sector and municipalities.

Caritas Switzerland (CACH) in cooperation with MAFRD and consultants plans further workshops to facilitate the implementation of future activities by the various stakeholders for advisory service/extension development. Furthermore, the consultancy support for the preparation of the SASARD 2023-2026 will further turn MAFRD advisory service and rural development plan into action.

The Experts will:

- Review the previous strategy to what extent is implemented and analyse the actual situation of the Department for Technical Advisory Services.
- Develop a strategy for advisory services in agriculture and rural development in cooperation with the department of advisory and technical services.
- Draft the strategic plan in accordance with the law on advisory services and other relevant documents of the sector and to carry out planned activities, in close coordination with MAFRD staff.
- Advise the Department for Technical Advisory Services on organising the work of the advisory service based on the best EU practices adapted to Kosovo's circumstances.
- Assess and evaluate the sector of technical advisory services with SWOT or other adequate analysis methods.
- Support the working group of the MAFRD on compiling the strategy and validation of the strategy.

- Closely cooperate with CACH project staff and MAFRD - Department for Technical Advisory Services to organise workshops and roundtable discussions with focus groups and main actors of the sector while compiling the SASARD.
- Identify the main issues relevant to the development of the concise and applicable strategy.
- To integrate feedback of MAFRD and other key organic stakeholders into the draft SASARD.
- Determine the best approach for the implementation of the strategic plan for the Department for Technical Advisory Services.
- To steadily inform the CACH, MAFRD staff on the carrying out of the activities.
- To perform any other additional task assigned according to the flexibility required by the project.
- The consultants will prepare a work methodology, expected deliverables, and financial offer.

Expected results and deliverables:

- To present the initial preliminary/inception report.
- Organising workshops/focus group discussions for drafting of the strategic plan for the Department for Technical Advisory Services.
- Drafting of the strategy based on the information and feedback received from the working group, stakeholders and main actors.
- Compilation of the draft strategy based on the EU standards and submitting to the advisory service for validation.
- To interpret the results and to elaborate the analysis.
- Adhere to proposed methods and work schedule or immediately inform the contact person specified in the contract, in case of needed adjustments.
- Submit the above-specified deliverables on time.

4. Expertise and Consultancy Profile

The experts should have the following profile (local or international):

- Master's degree in agriculture, Agro Economics, Public Administration, or other fields relevant to the assignment.
- At least 5 years of experience in advisory/extension service in the agriculture sector.
- At least 5 years of experience and good knowledge in developing strategic action plans for the advisory Services and rural development and other strategic development documents.
- Experience in implementation of projects and programs in the field of implementation of standards and EU's "acquis" in agriculture and rural development
- Recognition of the advisory/extension service sector framework of the country and the EU.
- Oral presentation and technical writing skills.
- Ability to solve the problems and to orient the solutions.
- Attitude to working in a team.
- Knowledge of the agricultural sector and/or Stakeholders representing other economic sectors is a priority.
- Specific professional experience related to the requirements of the position, and work experience in the public and private sector.
- Familiar with participatory approach techniques, consultation processes and stakeholders; will be considered a priority.

- Flexible in terms of schedule and activities required to achieve the position goals.
- Good knowledge of the most common software (Microsoft Office, etc.).
- Good inter-personnel communication skills.
- Excellent knowledge of spoken and written English
- Flexible in terms of schedule and activities required to achieve the position goals

5. Management and Reporting

- The external consultants will conduct the Analysis under the guidance of the CACH and MAFRD in-house experts. The consultant shall be in the lead for the implementation of the process of SASARD 2023-2026 content development i.e., in conducting the research, analysis and reporting. The CaCH and MAFRD in-house experts will oversee quality control (incl. editing/redrafting of reports), guide the analysis research, and facilitate workshops and capacity development.
- Overall responsibility is with the Country Director of CaCH in Kosovo, in close cooperation with the SIREM project manager, to whom the consultant report to.
- The work of the consultants will include fieldwork and meetings/workshops in different municipalities of Kosovo, virtual meetings as well as desk work.

6. Timeline and scope of the assignment

- The assignment will start with the kick-off meeting after the contract signature.
- The scope of the assignment is approx. 20 days for the international and 30 days for the local consultant.

Specifications for the Submission of Offers Application process]

Interested candidates/companies are requested to submit an electronic copy of their expression of interest/proposal by 14 July 2022 with the subject REF: "Strategy for Advisory Service and Rural Development" to kosovo@caritas.ch with vrruka@caritas.ch in CC.

Applicants must submit:

- Professional profile of the team/company (CVs of all individuals included in the consultancy team).
- The consultants' suitability for the assignment and match with previous work experience, qualifications etc.
- Composition and division of work between team members.
- The methodology that shall be presented.
- Draft work plan and suggested timetable.
- Financial offer including budget broken down and individual daily fees.

The offer will be evaluated by using the best value for money approach (combined scoring method). Technical proposal will be evaluated with 80% weight, whereas the financial one will be evaluated with 20%. The accommodation and transport costs need to be included in the offer.