

ASSISTANCE TO THE BENEFICIARY AND END-USERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROJECT AIMED AT THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE DISTRICTS OF RIVNE REGION CONTAMINATED FOLLOWING THE CHERNOBYL ACCIDENT

1 BACKGROUND

The radioactive fallout from the Chernobyl accident in 1986 contaminated large territories in Ukraine and has affected life in local communities since then. Rural areas, largely occupied by forests and wetlands as well as arable land and pastures were primarily affected. In Ukraine, 5% of the total territory is contaminated by ¹³⁷Cs (above 3,700 Bq/m²). About 5% of the Ukrainian population live in contaminated areas. There are currently more than 400 towns and villages in Ukraine where the average individual dose exceeds 1 mSv/a.

The agricultural sector has been mostly affected by the consequences of the Chernobyl accident. The market for foodstuff and other products from the affected areas has been reduced following the enforcement of radiological controls. This problem has been aggravated by the Chernobyl stigma, which has caused better-educated urban consumers to reject products from these areas. As a result, revenues from agricultural activities have fallen, certain types of production have declined, and some facilities have closed altogether.

This project is aimed at providing assistance in implementing a pilot project in the social and economic development of a district that has been selected in the Rivne region, the Volodymyrets district.

Entrepreneurial activities of the rural population in the Volodymyrets district must be stimulated in order to increase the production of non contaminated horticultural products. Assistance shall be provided to end-users in the field of gardening agricultural technologies, account taken of the particular conditions of the area, which is affected by radiological contamination, as a consequence of the Chernobyl accident.

The entrepreneurs who will be part of the project shall be selected among local rural families that are willing to start up the production of non contaminated horticultural products, based on results to be obtained in an early phase of the project (see Task 2 in section 2.3.3 below).

This project is closely linked with project U4.02/05A for the "Social and Economic Development of the Districts of the Rivne Region Polluted due to Chernobyl Catastrophe", which is implemented through contract TACIS/2008/154-163 making provisions for the supply of horticultural and berry crops seedlings, along with gardening tools and equipment for the establishment of a fruit and berries processing plant.

Supporting end-users in the implementation of project U4.02/05A is part of the scope of service.

1.1 Current state of affairs

The Rivne region (20,100 km² with its population about 1.2 million) is in Northwest Ukraine and is adjacent to the Belarus border. Forestland occupies 82 % of the total area of the region.

Picking forest berries and mushrooms is a traditional occupation of the population of the region. Furthermore, forest berries and mushrooms for further industrial processing are an important source of income for many local families, which forms up to 40% of their annual financial profit.

As a way to improve the current situation, it has been proposed to assist households through advice and grants in setting up income-generating activities on the basis of their domestic skills. Promoting clusters of household businesses at a village level would generate economies of scale in purchasing, transport and marketing and encourage technical and business skills at the local level. In this connection the Administration of the Rivne region, supported by the Ministry of Emergency Situations has established a pilot project to support safe food production and strengthen the commercial and technical basis of small and medium enterprises in the affected region. The Administration of the Rivne region selected the Volodymyrets district for the establishment of the pilot project.

The Volodymyrets district (1940 km² with a population of about 62,000) is located in the Northwest of the Rivne region. Forestland occupies most of the district. The radioactive contamination is typical for the Rivne region. Furthermore, many rural settlements of the district are located near forestland and collecting wild berries is a traditional job of the population. Private gardening is, as a rule, a part of the life of the population.

A fruits and berries processing enterprise is established in the district. This facility is equipped with the necessary devices to perform radiological controls on delivered forest products. However, the need for modernisation of the processing equipment has been recognised.

1.2 Related programmes and other donor activities

The Ukrainian Government allocates funds annually for the decontamination of the affected areas and the social protection and health care of the population of the Rivne Region.

The Ministry of Emergencies runs the annual program of activities for the mitigation of the consequences of the Chernobyl accident which includes the following activities

- Liming the sour soils;
- Arranging controlled pastures and hayfields;
- Fertilizing soils with increased amounts of chemical fertilizers;
- Feeding milk cows with compound feed and mineral-salt wafers with radioprotection features;
- Development of the meat cattle-raising to replace the milk cattle-raising.

In addition, radiation dose measurement campaigns in the settlements are carried out annually for determining the population dose levels. The accumulation of ¹³⁷Cs in the body is also checked. Six radiation control units, financed by the Ministry of Emergency Situations, perform continuous radiation control of the products produced in the contaminated areas.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK

2.1 Objective

The overall objective of the project is to improve the socio-economical situation of the area, along with the quality of life and health of the population.

The specific objectives of this contract are as follows.

- Assist the Beneficiary and end-users in implementing a pilot project aimed at increasing the production of radiologically clean horticultural products. The Consultant shall address the need to strengthen the commercial and technical basis of small and medium enterprises through encouragement of private investments.
- Develop and consolidate the skills of the rural population in agricultural and economic activities carried out in modern conditions.
- Assist in averting the rural population from the traditional collection of berries and mushrooms from contaminated areas through the establishment of private lots where non contaminated products are grown.
- Decrease the rate of unemployment in the district through the development of new economic activities in the rural areas.

2.2 Scope of work

The scope of work shall be focussed on the provision of assistance in implementing a pilot project in the social and economic development of the Volodymyrets district, in close connection with contract TACIS/2008/154-163 for the supply of horticultural and berry crops seedlings, gardening tools and equipment for the establishment of a fruit and berries processing plant.

It shall include the selection of villages participating in the project and the issue of recommendations concerning the techniques to be applied for the production of non contaminated crops.

The scope of work encompasses five tasks, as outlined below.

Task 1 – Preparation of the work-plan

The Work Plan shall address the working procedures for an efficient transfer of know-how during the performance of the project and shall include a detailed time schedule and an overall assessment of the project risks.

The Work Plan shall describe the lines of communication to be established between the Beneficiary and the end-users and all other organisations, including local and national authorities involved in the project.

Task 2 – Support in the selection of the participants in the project implementation

The contractor shall support the beneficiary and the local authorities in selecting villagers who are willing to participate in the project implementation and prepare a corresponding proposal to the beneficiary. The following steps shall be undertaken:

- Elaborate selection criteria, account taken of social issues, and of a selection methodology, drafting corresponding questionnaires for the Beneficiary to distribute to residents of the selected villages.
- Assist the Beneficiary in the preparation of meetings aimed at presenting the project and the above questionnaire.
- Assist the Beneficiary in the selection of the project participants, based on the proposed criteria, upon agreement with the Beneficiary. About ten households are expected to be selected in each of the eight villages already determined by the Beneficiary.
- Assist the Beneficiary in the preparation of meetings with the selected participants, aimed at presenting and discussing the project implementation plan.

Task 3 – Preparation of recommendations

This task shall include assistance in the selection and investigation of land allotments in the Rivne region, the preparation of recommendations regarding the chemical treatment of the gardens, the determination of the range and quantity of horticultural and berry crops for those allotments. Methodical recommendations in gardening agrotechnics shall also be prepared and training delivered to participants in the project.

A proposal on land allotments appropriate to garden creation shall be developed considering, account taken of the soil type definition and the relevant radiological characteristics. This proposal shall be provided to the Beneficiary for submission to participants and local authorities.

The Consultant shall eventually draft recommendations for improving the soil characteristics of identified land allotments, in view of preventing the transfer of radionuclides to fruits and berries, and account taken of the watering needs.

Garden designs for each land allotment shall be proposed, along with individual business plans for each household. The business plans shall provide an economic substantiation of each allotment for a number of years.

Systems of water supply and drip irrigation shall be designed, if watering of gardens is recommended by the above-mentioned investigations.

Furthermore, the Consultant shall draft methodical recommendations in gardening agrotechnics relevant to the radioactive contamination conditions in the area, taking into account the corresponding experience in the EU member states. The recommendations will be the basis for training of the participants in the project implementation.

Task 4 – Technical, management and legal assistance

The objective of this task is to provide technical and legal advice to the participants in the project throughout its implementation including advice regarding gardening, registration of the participants as private entrepreneurs, contracting with processing enterprises and other necessary tasks as identified with the support of the Consultant.

In the frame of this task, the Consultant shall assist the Beneficiary and end-users in the preparation of draft agreements

- Between the Volodymyrets district administration and participants, related to the tasks and responsibilities of the involved parties in project implementation, and
- Between the Volodymyrets district administration and the fruit and berries processing plants interested in guaranteeing purchase of fruits and berries produced by the project participants.

The contractor shall assist the Beneficiary in monitoring the project implementation and provide advice to participants concerning gardening and the use of equipment. Project monitoring is to be carried out on the systematic basis taking into consideration the project implementation schedule and the needs of the project.

Task 5 – Final report

In this task the Consultant is expected to prepare a final report that shall summarize the work done and recap the main recommendations.

The final report may contain, if needed, recommendations for further work in this domain and shall summarise the lessons learned, the difficulties and pitfalls encountered and the way they have been overcome.