

REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND WATER ECONOMY
IPARD Managing Authority
IPARD 2014-2020 Monitoring Committee

**Minutes
of the fourth IPARD 2014-2020 Monitoring Committee
meeting**

December 4, 2018

Members of Parliament Club

Skopje

Arch. No. 20 - 4229/10
29.05 .2019

I. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS:

Mr. Zhivko Brajkovski - Head of Department for management of EU's pre-accession funds for rural development (IPARD);

Members present at the IPARD II Monitoring Committee Meeting:

1. Mr. Nikica Bachovski - Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy;
2. Mr. Trajan Dimkovski - Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy;
3. Ms. Slavica Mihajlovska - Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy;
4. Ms. Maja Lazareska - Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy;
5. Mr. Vulnet Arifi - Ministry of Local Self - Government;
6. Ms. Nazmije Idrizi - Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning;
7. Mr. Saso Risteski - Macedonian Processing Association
8. Mr. Sasho Arsov - Food and Veterinary Agency;
9. Ms. Liljana Vukovic - Agency for Promotion of Entrepreneurship of the Republic of Macedonia;
10. Mr. Asen Dukovski - Association of farmers of Macedonia;
11. Mr. Petar Gjorgievski - Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia;
12. Ms. Gordana Lozanovska **Stefanovska** - LAG Pelagonija;
13. Mr. Vladimir Petkov - Faculty of Veterinary Medicine - Skopje;
14. Mr. Zoran Zimbakov - Association of Unit of Local Self Government;
15. Ms. Aleksandra Matic Sever - Ministry of Culture;
16. Mr. Elgafar Jusufi - Agency for Promotion of Agricultural Development;
17. Mr. Sasho Krckoski - Network of Young Farmers;

Present deputy members of the IPARD Monitoring Committee:

1. Mr. Petar Andonov - Agency for Promotion of Agricultural Development
2. Ms. Ljubica Gerasimova - Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA);
3. Mr. Aleksandar Zarkov - Macedonina Chamber of Commerce;
4. Ms. Ivana Janeska **Stamenkovska** - Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food;
5. Mr. Mladen Frchkovski - Ministry of Labour and Social Policy;
6. Mr. Daniela Cvetanoska - LAG - Agro Leader;

Representatives of the European Commission (EC) is an advisory role:

1. Mr. Liam Breslin - Directorate for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI);
2. Mr. Zigo Rutkovskis - Directorate for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI);

Representatives of the European Delegation:

1. Ms. Margarita Deleva - Delegation of European Union in the Republic of Macedonia;
2. Ms. Virve Vimpari - Delegation of European Union in the Republic of Macedonia;

Representatives of IPARD structure:

Representative from NAO and MS:

1. Ms. Tanja Zezova - Ministry of Finance;

Representatives of the IPARD Managing Authority (MA):

1. Mr. Zhivko Brajkovski - Head of MA - IPARD;
2. Mr. Viktor Mladenovski - MA - IPARD;
3. Ms. Aleksandra Dika - MA - IPARD;
4. Ms. Jasmina Hadzhbulic - MA - IPARD;
5. Mr. Isa Imishti - MA - IPARD;
6. Mr. Zlatko Kolevski - MA - IPARD;
7. Mr. Oliver Stefanovski - MA - IPARD;
8. Mr. Kiril Ristoski - MA - IPARD;
9. Ms. Saska Jovanovska Vukjelic - MA - IPARD;
10. Mr. Dusko Jakimovski - MA - IPARD;
11. Ms. Gordana Smileska - MA - IPARD;
12. Ms. Gabriela Petrova - MA - IPARD;
13. Mr. Aleksandar Anteski - MA - IPARD;
14. Mr. Igor Troshanski - MA - IPARD;
15. Mr. Muhadin Limani - MA - IPARD;

Representatives from the Agency for Financial Support to Agriculture and Rural Development (AFSARD):










1. Mr. Nikolche Babovski – Director of the AFSARD;









Results: The Chairperson of the Committee, 17 members and 6 deputy members with voting right (out of a total of 29 members with a right to vote) participated in the meeting. A quorum of 2/3 of the members with a right to vote was achieved to hold the meeting in accordance with the Rules of Procedure article 8 paragraph 3.

The checklist for presence of members from the meetings of the IPARD Monitoring Committee is shown in Appendix 1 of these minutes.

The list of observers is shown in Appendix 2 of these minutes.

II.AGENDA

No.	Topic	Presented by:	Documents
	Arrival and registration	MA Secretariat	
xx	Confirmation of presence of members/deputies at the meeting and reached quorum to hold the meeting according to the Rules of procedure	MA Secretariat	Registration
1.	Opening of the meeting Adoption of the draft Agenda for the fourth (autumn) meeting of the IPARD II Monitoring Committee (MC)	Chairperson	 Draft Agenda
2.	Adoption of the Minutes of the third (spring) IPARD II MC meeting, held on 17 May 2018	Chairperson	 Final draft minutes
3.	Information on the implementation of decisions/conclusions taken at the third (spring) IPARD II MC meeting, held on 17 May 2018	MA	 To be presented at the meeting
4.	Information regarding IPA Monitoring Committee	NIPAC	 To be presented at the meeting
5.	Status on implementation of IPARD Programme 2014-2020		
5.1	Information on the received applications, payment requests and payments made from the first Public Call of IPARD Programme 2014-2020	IPARD Agency	 AFSARD report
5.2	Information on the status with the entrustment of budget implementation tasks for measure Rural Public Infrastructure	NAO	 To be presented at the meeting
5.3	Information on the annual monitoring report (semi-annual data for monitoring the progress on implementation of IPARD Programme 2014-2020	MA	 MA report
6.	Discussion /approval of IPARD II Programme modification		
6.1	Status regarding the first modification of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020	DG-AGRI	 To be presented at the meeting
6.2	Introduction of new measures in IPARD Programme 2014-2020/ Discussion on the second modification of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020	MA	 Proposal for the second modification of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020

7. Technical Assistance activities			
7.1	Information on the progress of APTA 2018 implementation	MA	 To be presented at the meeting
7.2	Information on the progress of activities related to the Communication and Publicity of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020	MA	 To be presented at the meeting
7.3	Adoption of Action plan for publicity and communication of IPARD Programme 2014-2020 for year 2019	MA	 To be presented at the meeting
7.4	Adoption of APTA 2019	MA	 To be presented at the meeting
8.	Information on functioning of the IPARD management and control system	NAO	 NAO report
9.	Information / discussion on results of the on-going evaluation	MA	 MA report
10.	Information on Common Agriculture Policy reform post - 2020	DG AGRI	 To be presented at the meeting
11.	AOB	/	/
12.	Proposal for the Agenda of the next (fifth) IPARD II MC meeting / agreement on indicative new date	Chairperson /European Commission	 Discussion
	Closure of the meeting	Chairperson	

III. RESULTS OF THE IPARD II MONITORING COMMITTEE MEETING:

1. Item 1 of the agenda: "Adoption of the draft agenda for the fourth (autumn) meeting of the IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020".

In the absence of the Chairperson of the Monitoring Committee of IPARD 2014-2020, the meeting was opened by the Head of the Managing Authority, Mr. Zhivko Brajkovski as Chairperson's deputy who welcomed all the participants at the meeting, the representatives of the European Commission (EC) as well as the new members of the Committee.

Regarding the draft agenda for the fourth meeting of the IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020, he added that the sub-item 7.1 was amended and renamed as: Progress on activities related to the implementation of the Action Plan for Technical Assistance (APTA) 2018 and adoption of the changes/amendments of the APTA 2018. The changes are related to covering the costs of TU representatives for a workshop on implementing the measure technical assistance which will be held on December 14, 2018 in Brussels, as well as transferring all unrealized activities from APTA 2018 to APTA 2019.

The members of the IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 had no remarks regarding the agenda, thus adopted the following decision:

Decision No. 1: IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 adopted the agenda for the fourth meeting of the Monitoring Committee

2. Item 2 of the agenda: "Adoption of the minutes from the previous third (spring) meeting of the IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 held on 17 May 2018"

The Chairperson of the IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 informed that the minutes from the previous meeting of the Monitoring Committee of IPARD 2014-2020 held on May 17, 2018 were sent to the members of the IPARD Monitoring Committee on July 10, 2018 and no comments were received by the Secretariat of the IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 till July 24, 2018 from the members of the Monitoring Committee of IPARD 2014-2020.

Members of the Monitoring Committee of IPARD 2014-2020 had no remarks regarding the minutes and the following decision was adopted:

Decision No. 2: The IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 reviewed and adopted the minutes of the third meeting of the IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020, which was held on May 17, 2018 as final.

3. Item 3 of the agenda: "Information on the implementation of the decisions /conclusions adopted at the previous third (spring) meeting of the IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020"

The Head of the Managing Authority, Mr. Zhivko Brajkovski, informed on the progress made in the implementation of the decisions / conclusions adopted at the previous meeting of the IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020.

Regarding this item, the members of the Committee made the following conclusion:

Conclusion No. 1: The IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 was informed on the progress made in implementing the decisions/conclusions of the third meeting of the IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020.

4. Item 4 of the agenda: "Information regarding the IPA Monitoring Committee"

The representative of SEA, Ms. Ljubica Gerasimova informed regarding the meeting of the Committee for Competitiveness, Innovation and Agriculture, scheduled for December 12, 2018. All preparatory activities from IPA II and IPA 2015 related to the Action Plan for Agriculture and Rural Development are carried out in accordance with the schedule. According to the Action Plan for agriculture and rural development, which amounts to 3.300.000 €, the contracts are in the final phase and the deadline for concluding the contracts under this plan is until the end of 2019.

The 2019 Action Plan is also in the final stage, and under this document for the agriculture and rural development sector, 14.000.000 € are envisaged. The document will be sent to the EC for consultation by the end of 2018. The main topics that were defined as priorities under the IPA Action Plan 2019 are the water and irrigation systems and land consolidation.

During the preparation of this document, the IPA office held 4 meetings where representatives of civil societies, representatives of agricultural associations were involved.

On the basis of the above, the members of the Committee reached the following conclusion:

Conclusion No. 2: The IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 was informed regarding the IPA Monitoring Committee

5. Item 5 of the Agenda: "Status with the implementation of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020", sub-item 5.1 of the Agenda: "Information regarding the received requests for investments, payment requests and disbursements from the first Public Call for IPARD 2014-2020".

The Director of the Agency for Financial Support of Agriculture and Rural Development (AFSARD), Mr. Nikolce Babovski, informed the members on the received requests in the first public call, a total of 1.648 applications. The large number of applications, as well as the acceptance of so-called empty requests, complicated the process of processing and signing contracts. Regarding the measures, he added that Measure 1 is fully processed and the contracts are signed. Measure 3 has also been finalized and applications processed, and as to the Measure 7, 26 contracts have been processed and contracts will be concluded in the forthcoming period. A total of 936 contracts with approved funds amounting to 17.600.000 € have been signed, out of which 13.200.000 € is the EU share. As for the payment, 401 requests were received, with a requested value of 3.600.000 € out

of which 2.700.000 € is the EU share. 100 applications reached payment of 491.000 €, which is expected to increase in the upcoming period.

The representative of AFSARD, Mr. Vangel Nanevski, gave a more detailed analysis regarding the applications for measures.

As for the Measure 1, 905 contracts with a total financial amount of 11.019.543€ were concluded (8.264.657,25 € EU share). Greatest interest was shown for crop production, where 394 applications were approved, totalling 3.000.000 € (EU share). The interest for grain subsector was low (9 approved applications for industrial cereals), contrary to vegetable production where 61 applications were approved; 306 applications for fruit production and 123 for vineyards. One application was approved for livestock production (farm for bovine animals), 3 for pigs, 3 for sheep, and 2 for poultry. Regarding the processing on farm level, one application for renewable energy source was approved (6.000 €). Out of 1.404 applications, 905 were contracted and 499 rejected. The main reason for rejection is the incompleteness of the applications.

As for empty applications, he informed that a total of 56 were received, making it difficult to determine the total value of those applications. AFSARD will eliminate the submission of such applications and their processing in the future. In the public call 01/17, the applicants had the opportunity to complete the necessary documentation within 15 working days (with eventual addition of 10 working days). Modification on the procedures was made, starting from the next call (01/18 and 02/18) the applicants will be given 8 calendar days for obtaining the necessary documents. Otherwise, a refusal decision will follow. Although this change may increase the number of rejected applications, the submission of the complete documentation will speed up the process of their processing.

With the public call 01/17, the entire budget for tractors (4.300.000 €) was exhausted. Therefore, purchase of tractors will not be eligible until the end of this programming period.

One of the problems that led to the prolongation of the project approval process is collection of reference prices. For this purpose, AFSARD has concluded a contract with the Bureau for Judicial Expertise which determines the market prices and returns the information to AFSARD. The delay in submitting the required data by the Bureau for Judicial Expertise was highlighted as a problem that AFSARD will try to overcome in the upcoming period.

Concerning the Measure 3, 31 applications were approved with a total value of 4.900.000 € (EU share) and 2 more applications expected to be approved in the next month. The delay is related to acquiring the reference prices. Main reason for rejection was the size of the enterprises which is not determined only by the current status of the entity from the Central Registry issued to the applicant, where the size of the object is stated. It is also determined in accordance with the EU recommendation for the size of small and medium-sized enterprises 2000/361, where the size of the enterprise is also determined by the linked entities of the enterprise itself.

The majority of approved contracts in this measure are in fruit and vegetable processing, i.e. 10 concluded contracts with a total value of 2.074.024,77 €.

Regarding the Measure 7, 187 applications were received, requesting amount of 42.558.585,14 €, significantly exceeding the available budget of the measure (2.700.000 €). AFSARD rejected 161 applications, while 26 contracts should be signed by the end of 2018. With ongoing modification of the Programme, additional funds will be allocated to this measure, allowing to contract all eligible projects without applying the ranking. A new public call for this measure is expected in February

2019, after the approval of the modification to the Programme as well as the adjustment of the internal procedures to these changes. The main reason for the rejection of project applications under this measure was the incompleteness of the applications.

The Head of the MAFWE Rural Development Department, Mr. Trajan Dimkovski, pointed out to a problem the farmers faced under Measure 1, i.e., regarding purchase of tractors. Namely, while in the phase of project approval the application was approved and a contract signed, the project was rejected later – at the stage of the payment control. He asked for clarification whether AFSARD considered the same documents and asked responsible authorities to resolve the issue. In response to the question, the representative of AFSARD, Mr. Vladimir Hristov, explained the payment procedure. After the conclusion of the contracts, the users have the obligation, after the realization of the investment, to submit a request for payment with a set of documents proving accomplishment of certain conditions and criteria of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020, the Contract and the Sectoral Agreement. In relation to the raised issue concerning procurement of mechanization or tractors, according to the list of eligible costs approved by the EC, there is a criterion that needs to be fulfilled before payment of funds. The criterion varies depending on the type of production. In the case of mixed production, the user should have at least 1 ha available of production capacities, reported and updated in the MAFWE's Farm Register, with data not older than 15 days from the submission of the claim for payment. When the beneficiary submits the claim for payment, he/she indicates the production capacities where the investment is implemented. Prior the payment of funds, the beneficiaries are required to prove their production capacities once more. AFSARD's Sector for payment and Sector for on the spot control checks the production capacities and fulfilment of standards.

Regarding the question, asked by Mr. Trajan Dimkovski, if both sectors, the Sector for project approval and the Sector for payment, consider the same documents and whether the farmers are additionally informed about the flaws, Mr. Vladimir Hristov answered that the same documents are viewed by both Sectors. Farmers are informed what requirements they need to accomplish prior the payment of funds at the time of signing the contract. AFSARD explains to them what their rights and obligations are, as well as the rights and obligations of AFSARD. He also added that the difference in the documents from the Farm Register is normal because of the time difference between submission of application and submission of the claim for payment (more than 2 years). The documents on which AFSARD works are documents issued by the MAFWE or by its regional units, on the basis of data recorded in the Farm Register that should be updated before completing the payment claim.

The Special Advisor for Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Ms. Lence Nikolovska, added that this was a failure of the institutions because those farmers were obviously not sufficiently informed about the conditions and asked the problem to be resolved.

Regarding the role of the consultants, the MAP representative Mr. Sasho Risteski noted that those consultants who submit empty applications should be sanctioned, adding that AFSARD should cooperate more with the consultants because they provide free marketing of the Agency. As for the shortening the deadline for supplementing the documentation to 8 days, he added that such a change may cause problems, especially when purchasing equipment from abroad for which bids are waiting for a long time. None of the serious equipment manufacturers, especially from Europe,

gives a validity period of more than 3 months. When deadlines by AFSARD are prolonged, those bids become irrelevant and the same bids will need to be re-collected.

The AFSARD representative, Mr. Vangel Nanevski, responded that they cannot legally sanction the consultants. Regarding the time needed to complete the application, he added that the applicants have 30 days minimum from the prior notice of the Public Call and 45 days since the announcement of the Public Call, making it a total 75 days to collect the offers and complete the application package.

The representative of NEA, Mr. Petar Andonov informed that, despite the lack of administrative capacities and the need of new employments, the NEA consultants participate in the overall process of preparation of IPARD applications, preparation of technical project proposal, and in some cases the business plan itself. They have excellent cooperation with AFSARD, incl., on signalling identified problems.

Regarding the incomplete requests, the EC representative, Mr. Liam Breslin stressed the importance of explaining the required documentation to the beneficiaries during the information campaigns. He also proposed a list of successful IPARD projects to be published on the IPARD website.

Regarding the institutional system, the EC representative, Mr. Zigo Rutkovskis pointed out that there is a transparent and clear approach that is applied and all applicants know their rights and obligations when applying, they know exactly what they are signing and know what they should achieve by the end of the project. These rules are clearly described in IPARD II Programme and Guidelines for the Measures, which are publicly available. Regarding the incomplete applications, he emphasised that their acceptance causes significant delays in project assessment and contracting. Such practice is not tolerated in the EU Member States. In view of this, he expressed support to national IPARD authorities on their plans to eliminate submission of empty applications in 2019. .

The Head of the Managing Authority, Mr. Zhivko Brajkovski, confirmed that legislative amendments are in preparation and, in the future, empty applications will not be accepted at all.

Regarding this sub-item, the IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 adopted the following conclusion:

Conclusion No. 3: The IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 was informed regarding the received requests for investments, payment requests and disbursements from the first Public Call for IPARD 2014-2020.

5.2. Sub-item 5.2 of the agenda: "Information on the status for entrustment of budget for implementation of measure investment in rural public infrastructure"

The NAO representative, Ms. Tanja Beginova, informed that the changed procedures for implementation of the measure Rural Public Infrastructure were approved in October, 2018. The request for the entrustment of budget for the measure "Investment in rural public infrastructure" from the IPARD Programme 2014-2020, was sent to the EC on November 13, 2018. In consultation with the EC services, it was announced that an administrative check of the request on the aspect of fulfilment of accreditation criteria was made. In April, 2019, it is planed that an audit mission would

take place to assess the capacity of national authorities to implement the measure. Accreditation of this measure is expected in June 2019.

Regarding this sub-item, the IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 adopted the following conclusion:

Conclusion No.4: The IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 was informed on the status for entrustment of budget for implementation of measure investment in rural public infrastructure.

5.3. Sub-item 5.3 of the agenda: "Information on the annual monitoring report (semi-annual data for monitoring the progress of the implementation of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020)"

The MA representative, Mr. Victor Mladenovski presented the annual report for monitoring of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020. He informed that Pelagonia region has the highest number of concluded contracts. First of all, it is due to the need for mechanization because crop production dominates in this region. Also, this region has the smallest investments in terms of value, i.e. investments for mechanization.

In the absence of remarks, the IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 adopted the following conclusion:

Conclusion No. 5: The IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 was informed about the annual monitoring report (semi-annual data for monitoring the progress of the implementation of the IPARD Program 2014-2020).

6. Item 6 of the agenda: "Discussion on the modification of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020"

6.1. Sub-item 6.1: "Status regarding the first modification of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020"

The EC representative, Mr. Zigo Rutkovskis informed that the Managing Authority submitted officially the first modification on October 4, 2018, after which a consultation was launched with other Commission services. Their comments were submitted for consultation to the MA and IPARD Agency. He informed that the European Commission and the Managing Authority are close to reaching an agreement on the final version of the modification. The adoption is expected in the next few months. He indicated that this would be a very important modification considering that it would allow submission of applications for irrigation systems projects, the financial plan will be improved together with the procedures in terms of elimination of empty applications and it will also help to increase the utilization of IPARD funds both in the next and in the following years.

The Head of the IPARD Managing Authority, Zhivko Brajkovski, also emphasized the importance of this modification from the aspect of:

- Introduction of new drip irrigation systems and not just renewal of the existing ones;
- Reallocation of funds from one measure to another in order not to lose funds;
- Elimination of empty applications;

- Allocation of additional 2,000,000 € to Measure 7.

He also appealed to the EC representatives to facilitate adoption of the modification by the end of 2018 or the first half of January 2019 in order to change procedures of the IPARD Agency before upcoming calls in 2019.

Conclusion No.6: The IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 was informed on the status regarding the first modification of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020.

6.2 Sub-item 6.2: "Introduction of new measures in the IPARD Programme 2014-2020 / Discussion on the second modification of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020"

The Head of the Managing Authority, Mr. Zhivko Brajkovski, informed that the second modification of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020 is under preparation, covering both the aspect of improving the overall system and the aspect of introducing new measures. Although the priority is given to obtaining the accreditation of the Rural Public Infrastructure measure, two measures will be proposed in the next modification: LEADER and Advisory Services. After the accreditation of the measure Rural Public Infrastructure, the next modification will be initiated.

Regarding the LEADER measure, the representative of the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Petar Gorgievski, raised a question regarding the future activities related to this measure, i.e., how long the accreditation period will take in order to help the Local Action Groups (LAGs) to be prepared for this measure. The head of the MA responded on behalf of the Management Authority that, the Programme measure is already prepared. Regarding the time period required for its final accreditation, he pointed that he still cannot give the exact answer, indicating that it is a long-term process. If this measure is accredited as such within the Programme and other structures are not ready for its realization, it will result in a loss of funds.

The representative of the EC, Mr. Zigo Rutkovskis, informed that the next modification of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020 will cover this measure. As a result of the assessment currently being carried out by the auditors, some changes to the description of the measure may be necessary.

Regarding the time limit, the representative of the NAO, Ms. Tanja Zhezhova, also responded, that it depends on the completeness of the documents that will be submitted by AFSARD.

Regarding this sub-item, the following conclusion was reached:

Conclusion No.7: The IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 was informed about the introduction of new measures in the IPARD Programme 2014-2020 and the second modification of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020.

7. Point 7 of the agenda "Technical Assistance Activities"

Sub-item 7.1: "Progress on the implementation of the APTA 2018"

The MA representative, Ms. Neda Gruevska informed about implemented activities under APTA for 2018:

- Signing an agreement for upgrading and maintaining the IPARD website;
- Procurement of office materials for the IPARD Management Authority (final phase).

Following the amendment of the APTA in October 2018, an application was submitted to AFSARD and work is being done to approve the tender dossier for the implementation of the procurement of Ex-post evaluation for the IPARD Programme 2007-2013. The procurement for the translation of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020 is planned to be carried out by the end of 2018. Also, as realized activity, the signing of Contract for conducting a publicity campaign for the IPARD Programme 2014-2020 was stated.

Regarding the second modification of the APTA 2018, she informed that it covers transfer of non-implemented measures from APTA 2018 to APTA 2019. The other amendment concerns the inclusion of the expenses by the representatives of the MA at a workshop for implementation of the Technical Assistance Measure which will be held on 14 December in Brussels.

In the absence of remarks, the following conclusion and decision was made:

Conclusion No. 8: The IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 was briefed on the progress of the activities related to the implementation of the APTA 2018.

Decision No. 3: The IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 adopted the amendment of the action plan for activities envisaged in the technical assistance measure for 2018 (APTA 2018).

Sub-item 7.2: "Progress on 2018 communication and publicity activities for the IPARD Programme 2014-2020"

The MA representative, Ms. Saska Jovanovska - Vukelic presented the undertaken activities regarding the communication and publicity for the IPARD Programme 2014-2020:

- Eight INFO days conducted for the measure investments in rural public infrastructure organized in cooperation with the Centre for development of eight planning regions in the Republic of Macedonia. Info days were organised in March and April 2018;
- Delivering direct information (telephone and e-mail) to potential users;
- Broadcasts and advertisements on national and local radio and television channels as well as daily newspapers and internet websites (over 200 occurrences);
- Publishing brochures and other informative material;
- Upgrade and maintenance of the website www.ipard.gov.mk (an upgrade to the website was made and the maintenance will be implemented by August 2019).

The EC representative, Mr. Liam Breslin informed that a new IPARD logo for all countries in the Balkans is in preparation and will be sent shortly. He asked a question to the members of the MK,

asking for their opinion regarding the familiarity of the farmers with the IPARD Programme 2014-2020. The representative of the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Petar Gjorgievski and the Head of the Managing Authority, Mr. Zhivko Brajkovski, said that generally the farmers are well acquainted with the IPARD Programme 2014-2020, but still an additional work must be done on their acquaintance with the details of the Programme itself, such as the necessary documents, criteria, etc.

Regarding this sub-item, the following conclusion was reached:

Conclusion No. 9: The IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 was informed on the progress of communication and publicity activities for 2019 for the IPARD Programme 2014-2020"

Sub-item 7.3: "Adoption of an Annual Action Plan for communication and publicity for 2019 for the IPARD Programme 2014-2020"

The representative of MA, Ms. Saska Jovanovska - Vukelic informed that the Action Plan for communication and publicity for 2019 for the IPARD Programme 2014-2020 covers the following activities:

- Organization of IPARD info educational days by promoting successful examples/cases;
- IPARD Forum for more successful implementation of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020;
- IPARD workshops for preparation of IPARD requirements;
- Appearances / reports in written and electronic media;
- Annual publication of the list of beneficiaries;
- Development and distribution of Application forms and Guidelines dedicated to the IPARD Programme 2014-2020;
- Development and distribution of brochures dedicated to the promotion of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020;
- Preparation of posters dedicated to the promotion of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020;
- Making and publishing audio and video spots;
- Updating the web site www.ipard.gov.mk.

Regarding this sub-item, the following decision was adopted:

Decision No. 4: The IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 adopted the Annual Action Plan for Communication and Publicity for 2019 for the IPARD Programme 2014-2020.

Sub-item 7.4 "Adoption of APTA 2019"

The MA representative, Mr. Kiril Ristoski, presented the APTA for 2019. It provides a procurement for the organization of two IPARD Monitoring Committees 2014-2020, preparation and implementation of Programme measures, i.e. introduction of help desks that will cooperate with the centres for planning regions in support of the municipalities that plan to apply for the measure Rural Public Infrastructure. He explained that it is about engaging experts or expert assistance aimed at facilitating the communication between the municipalities and the MA, i.e. it will improve

the capacities of the municipalities themselves. Procurement of services for evaluation of the IPARD Programme 2007-2013 is also envisaged as part of APTA 2019.

The representative of the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Petar Gjorgievski, proposed to find a mechanism in the future that would allow to benefit also other national authorities, not only the MA, from the Technical Assistance Measure. The EC representative, Mr. Zigo Rutkovskis responded that currently only MA can use the financing under this measure. However, ongoing modification would allow also AFSARD to benefit from the Technical Assistance for implementation of some functions related to the IPARD Programme 2014-2020.

The ZELS representative, Ms. Natasha Vrteska, asked for an explanation regarding the help desks. The representative of the MA, Mr. Igor Troshanski, answered that the idea of establishing the help desks emerged from a serious specificity that should be taken into account in the implementation of the Rural Public Infrastructure measure. The possibilities our country possess in order to implement this measure are limited in terms of obeying the rules and procedures required by the EC, especially in the direction of conducting a public procurement in accordance with the EC Procurement Manual (PRAG) which in certain parts is different from the Law on Public Procurement of the Republic of Macedonia. The MA representative, Mr. Kiril Ristoski and the Head of MA, Mr. Zhivko Brajkovski, pointed out that the APTA for 2019 is an indicative document, which means that it is not specified in detail how this measure will be implemented. In the implementation of the measure, ToR will be prepared (project tasks), which will include all activities that should be accomplished. They clarified that a help desk actually means providing expert assistance, which will be used in the direction of the PRAG implementation by the municipalities, and the form of realization of that expert assistance will be further determined.

The EC representative, Mr. Zigo Rutkovskis responded that the EC supports the approval of the APTA 2019 as such with certain pre-conditions to be met by the MA. Namely, it was requested that EC receives more information on the so called help-desks (point 6) in order to assess whether the proposed activity is in line with the current procedures. In addition, for the purposes of transparency and clarity, he requested additional information on the points 7. Evaluation of the IPARD Programme and 10. Streamlining of specific parts of the management and control system of the APTA 2019, especially bearing in mind that activities foreseen under these points utilize significant amount of and the allocated budget.

After the conclusion of the discussion the following decision was taken:

Decision No. 5: The IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 adopted the Action Plan for activities envisaged in the technical assistance measure for 2019 (APTA 2019)" with conditions (requested by the EC).

8. Item 8 of the Agenda: "Information on the functioning of the IPARD Programme Management and Control System 2014-2020"

The representative of NAO, Ms. Tanja Zhezhova, informed the Committee members on the system for management and control of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020. In order to improve the system, several changes were made to the AFSARD internal procedures. They refer to the Sector for

Approval of Projects, Sector for Authorization of Payments, the reference prices database and the Department of Legal and General Affairs. The last amendment concerns the shortening of the deadline for completing the application for financial support by the applicants.

In accordance with the Annual Plan for verification visits for 2018, one verification visit within the program period IPARD I was carried out in the IPARD Agency and the end-users, too, in the period June-September 2018. The IPARD operational structures were subject to internal audit during 2017/2018 by the Internal Audit Departments within each institution.

Regarding the number of employees in the NAO, she informed that the NAO employs 17 (including the NAO), in AFSARD, 110 employees are engaged on IPARD related issues, and in MA - 17 (including the Head).

Regarding the risk of de-commitment due to n+3 rule, she informed that, taking into account the pre-financing paid by the EC in the amount of € 6.300.000, 2.700.000 € must be paid to beneficiaries by the end of 2018. Taking into consideration forecasted payments until 31 December 2018, amount at risk is 2.07 million €.

The Minister of MAFWE sent a letter to the EC requesting deadline extension from n+3 to n+5 and is awaiting a response from DG AGRI.

Concerning this sub-item, the following conclusion was reached:

Conclusion No.10: The IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020 was informed about the functioning of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020 management and control system.

9. Item 9 of the Agenda: "Information / discussion on results of the on-going evaluation"

The representative of IPARD MA, Mr. Aleksandar Anteski presented the results of the on-going evaluation. He emphasized that AFSARD has an important role in the evaluation activities because they have all the information regarding IPARD applications, supported projects, payments and controls. The risk of delayed data from AFSARD on the first public call was emphasized as it caused further delays in changes and improvement of legal and programme requirements and the overall upgrade of the processes for implementation of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020.

No discussion was raised within this item, so the members of the Monitoring Committee on IPARD 2014-2020 made the following conclusion:

Conclusion No.11: "IPARD Monitoring Committee was informed on the results of the on-going evaluation".

10. Item 10 of the Agenda: "Information on Common Agriculture Policy reform post - 2020"

Mr. Liam Breslin, representative of DG AGRI, gave a presentation on the reforms in the Common Agricultural Policy of the EU after 2020. The foreseen budget for implementing these reforms is about 100 billion € aimed at:

- Single market, innovations and digital;
- Cohesion and values;
- Natural resources and environment;

- Migration and border management;
- Security and defence;
- Neighbourhood and the world and
- European public administration.

Main priorities of the future CAP are:

- The modernization and simplification of the policy framework;
- Innovation and knowledge for tomorrow's agriculture;
- The sustainability of European agriculture, with a more equitable & more efficient support;
- Strengthening the environmental and climate activities;
- Growth of the rural areas including job positions and encouraging generational renewal;
- Response to citizens' concerns on sustainable agricultural production.

Regarding this item, the following conclusion was adopted:

Conclusion No. 12: IPARD Monitoring Committee was informed on Common Agriculture Policy reform post - 2020


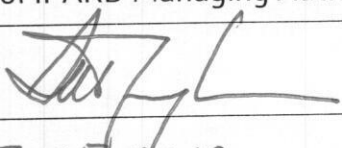
11. Item 11 of the Agenda: "AOB"

There was no discussion regarding this item.

12. Item 12 of the Agenda: "Proposal of agenda for the next fifth meeting of the IPARD Monitoring Committee and alignment of the date of the meeting"

Regarding item 12 of the Agenda, the Chairperson informed on the draft agenda for the fifth meeting of the IPARD Monitoring Committee 2014-2020. He proposed the date for the next fifth meeting of the Monitoring Committee to be agreed in accordance with the availability of the representatives of the European Commission.

The Chairperson of the Monitoring Committee closed the meeting and declared it as successful.

FOR THE IPARD MONITORING COMMITTEE:	FOR THE SECRETARIAT:
Nefrus Çeliku MSc	Zhivko Brajkovski
Title: Chairperson	Title: Head of IPARD Managing Authority
Signature: 	Signature: 
Date:	Date: 23.05.2019



No.	Name of member	Institution	Present √	Absent √	Representative √	Replacement	Number of absences
1.	Nefrus Cheliku MSc	MAFWE		√	√	Zhivko Brajkovski	0
Government Institutions							
2.	Trajan Dimkovski	MAFWE	√				0
3.	Nikica Bachovski	MAFWE	√				0
4.	Maja Lazareska Joveska	MAFWE	√				0
5.	Slavica Mihajlovska Goshikj	MAFWE	√				0
6.	Evgenija Serafimovska Kirkovski	SEA		√	√	Ljubica Gerasimova	0
7.	Marina Arsovska	Ministry of Economy	√				0
8.	Vulnet Arifi	Ministry of Local Self – Government	√				0
9.	Aleksandra Matik Sever	Ministry of Culture	√				0
10.	Nazmije Idrizi	Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning	√				1
11.	Darko Peshevski	Ministry of Transport and Communications		√			3
12.	Dusan Tomsik	Ministry of Labor and Social Policy		√	√	Mladen Frckovski	1
13.	Sashko Arsov	Food and Veterinary Agency	√				0
AGENCIES							
14.	Elgafar Jusufi	NEA		√	√	Petar Andonov	0
15.	Ljiljana Vukovik	Agency for support of entrepreneurship	√				0
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PARTNERS							
16.	Sasho Despotoski	Macedonian Chamber of Commerce		√			1

17.	Ognen Orovcanec	Agrobiz Chamber at the Association of Chambers of Commerce of RM		√	√	Aleksandar Zarkov	1
18.	Sasho Risteski	Macedonian Association of processors	√				1
19.	Asen Dukoski	Association of farmers	√				0
20.	Zoran Zimbakov	Local self-government units	√				1
21.	Ana Koteska	Faculty of agricultural sciences and food			√	Ivana Janeska Stamenkoska	0
22.	Dragan Dojcinovski	Chamber of craftsmen					2
23.	Verica Ilieva	Faculty of agricultural sciences and food – UGD Stip					2
24.	Marina toshevska	Agro - LIDER			√	Daniela Cvetanoska	0
25.	Petar Gjorgjievski	Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia	√				0
26.	Vladimir Petkov	Faculty for Veterinary Medicine	√				0
27.	Sasho Krcoski	Network of young farmers	√				0
28.	Gordana Lozanovska Stefanovska	LAG Pelagonija	√				1
29.	Robertina Brajanoska	Macedonian ecological group					2
	TOTAL		17	6	6		

Appendix 2: Checklist for presence of observers from IPARD Monitoring Committee

Representatives from government institutions:

Ms. Lidija Kastratovik- MAFWE;
Ms.Valentina Stojanovik- MAFWE;
Mr.Aleksandar Dimitroski- MAFWE;
Ms.Lence Nikolovska - Cabinet of the Prime Minister;
Ms.Stefani Arsovska - Cabinet of the Prime Minister;
Mr.Ivan Ristovski - Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister;
Ms.Dana Petreska – SEA;

Representatives of the Audit Authority (AA)

Mr.Zoran Ristovski - AA;
Ms.Vesna Mladenovska - AA;
Ms.Natasa Misovska – AA;

Representatives of Economic and Social partners

Mr.Vladimir Hristov - AFSARD;
Mr.Vangel Nanevski - AFSARD;
Mr.Avdulj Seljam Seljami - AFSARD;
Ms.Verica Pavloska - AFSARD;
Mr.Sedat Bislimi - AFSARD;
Mr.Pance Arsov - AFSARD;
Mr.Slavko Miloshevski - AFSARD;
Mr.Ljulzim Fejzulai - Public Enterprise for Pasture;
Mr.Viktor Kalajdziski - MBDP;
Mr.Vlatko Stojanovski - Employment Service Agency of the Republic of Macedonia;
Ms.Maja Arsovska - Employment Service Agency of the Republic of Macedonia;