



Republic of North Macedonia

Agency for Financial Support of the Agriculture and Rural Development

Human Resources

Staff situation in AFSARD

- 285 systematized work posts
- 234 employees in total + Director and Deputy director
 - 199 permanently employed (of these, 113 are working on IPARD and 3 working in the Sector for IT)
 - 20 employed on temporary basis (of these, 11 are working on IPARD, 3 in the Sector for IT and 6 on the National programs)
 - 15 employed on contractual basis (for the implementation of the National programs)
- 123 employees working on the IPARD Program 2014-2020
 - 113 permanently employed
 - 10 employed on temporary basis

On-going procedures for employment

- currently there are no on-going procedures for employment

Promotions

- currently there are no on-going procedures for promotion

Staff situation per organizational unit (IPARD structure) and the needs for employment according WLA 2021:

AFSARD		
Organizational unit	Needed number of employees according WLA 2021	Current number of employees
Sector for Project Approval	39.00	34
Sector for Authorization of Payments	26.00	18
Sector for on-the-spot Control	31.00	21
Sector for Financial Affairs	13.00	13
Sector for Internal Audit	9.00	7
Sector for General and Legal Affairs	14.00	14
Sector for Registers	13.00	11
Sector for Analytics	3.00	3
Unit for Human Resources Management	3.00	3
TOTAL	151.00	124.00

According to WLA 2021, there is a need for promotion of 30 existing administrative civil servants.

Financial data regarding implementation of the IPARD II Program; especially related to realization of the financial allocation of the 2015, 2016 and 2017.

Total commitments taken from the contracts signed for financial support from the public call 01/2017, 01/2018, 02/2018, 01/2019 and 02/2019 is 33.798.698,77 € (EU contribution),

Taking into consideration the financial allocations and the prefinancing requested by NAO and approved by the EC, there is no risk for any de-commitment of funds for the financial years 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017.

Status with accreditation of the rural public infrastructure measure

Regarding the accreditation of the rural public infrastructure measure, the following activities have been agreed with the National Fund and the Managing Authority:

- finalization of the necessary employments for the realization of this measure by July 2019 - the WLA for 2019 takes into account the workload for this measure and the projected number of 150 employees for IPARD in 2019 includes the new employments for this measure,
- implementation of basic trainings for this measure (PRAG, fraud/irregularities etc.) in the period until September 2019 (depending on available experts and funds through the TAIEX instrument),
- and
- harmonization of the work procedures for implementing the rural public infrastructure measure with the comments of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development by 15.09.2019.

Status with regard to implementation of the accredited measures 1, 3 and 7

During the previous period, AFSARD continued with the evaluation process for all received applications of measure 7 of the public call 01/2019 and measure 3 of the public call 02/2019.

According to the modification of the IPARD Program and amendment of the law for establishing the AFSARD, procedure for work of the relevant departments within the Agency has been modified and approved for work by NAO and EC. The modification envisages processing only the complete applications, while the incomplete applications according to the list of documents attached to the public call announcement, shall be immediately rejected.

From the above-mentioned public calls, Agency for financial support in agriculture and rural development has issued 24 decisions for allocation of funds for measure 7 and 19 for measure 3, the process is still ongoing.

Total Public Expenditure of the contracted projects for measure 7 is 1.846.251,83 (EU contribution 1.384.688,87 €). For measure 3, total amount of the public expenditure of the contracted projects is 3.909.007,08 € (EU contribution 2.931.755,31 €).

In the evaluation process, Agency has also issued 157 decisions for rejection of the application for measure 7 and 9 decisions for rejection of applications submitted under measure 3.

AFSARD has announced public call 01/2020 for submitting applications for using funds from M1 of the IPARD Program 2014-2020 on 29.02.2020 and was open till 03.08.2020.

Main reason for rejection of applications in all three measures is the incomplete applications. Huge delay in the process of contracting the applications presents the slow respond of the Burro for Court Expertise in the process of determining the reasonableness of the costs. Also, due to the pandemic of the virus Covid-19, the respond of the companies contacted in the process of market research of the prices was very low.

Large number of received applications and insufficient number of employees, still remains as one of the bottle necks in the process of assessment of the applications.

With the last three public calls (01/19, 02.19 and 01/20) announced for all the three measure separately, has been exhausted all the budget of the measures for the whole program period 2014-2020.

The breakdown of the received and processed applications per public call for the reporting period is given in the table below.

Information regarding the submitted applications per public call:

Public call 01/2019 (all the prices are in Euros)

Measure	Sector	Total number of applications	Total requested amount	No. of rejected applications	Main reason for rejection of applications	No. of contracted projects (decision for allocation of funds is issued)	Total Public Expenditure of the contracted projects	Total Public Expenditure -IPARD II contribution of the contracted projects
7	1	103	892.404,27 €	50	Incomplete applications	11	29.865,00 €	22.398,75 €
7	2	23	3.050.807,57 €	13		1	297.718,00 €	223.288,50 €
7	3	75	26.009.749,89 €	50		8	1.462.170,00 €	1.096.627,50 €
7	4	1	31.863,36 €	1		0		- €
7	5	8	64.583,08 €	6		1	10.614,00 €	7.960,50 €
7	6	10	2.887.858,04 €	8		0		- €
7	7	40	10.492.062,69 €	28		3	45.885,00 €	34.413,75 €
7	8	1	455.042,91 €	1		0		- €
Total on 09.11.2020		261	43.884.371,81 €	157			24	1.846.252,00 €

Public call 02/2019 (all the prices are in Euros)

Measure	Sector	Total number of applications	Total requested amount	No. of rejected applications	Main reason for rejection of applications	No. of contracted projects (decision for allocation of funds is issued)	Total Public Expenditure of the contracted projects	Total Public Expenditure -IPARD II contribution of the contracted projects
3	1	2	977.921,71 €		Incomplete applications	1	813.252,00 €	609.939,00 €
3	2	9	902.131,31 €	2		6	444.227,00 €	333.170,25 €
3	3	35	8.204.008,00 €	4		6	1.186.046,00 €	889.534,50 €
3	4	5	1.861.695,11 €	1		3	82.365,00 €	61.773,75 €
3	6	10	4.817.982,38 €	2		3	1.383.116,00 €	1.037.337,00 €
Total on 09.11.2020		61	16.763.738,51 €	9			19	3.909.006,00 €

In 2020 the Agency has announced one public call:

Public call 01/2020 (all the prices are in Euros)

Measure	Sector	Total number of applications	Total requested amount	No. of rejected applications	Main reason for rejection of applications	No. of contracted projects (decision for allocation of funds is issued)	Total Public Expenditure of the contracted projects	Total Public Expenditure -IPARD II contribution of the contracted projects
1	1	728	14.130.491,00 €	182	Incomplete applications	0	- €	- €
1	2	16	5.560.360,00 €	7		0	- €	- €
1	3	3	1.319.200,00 €	1		0	- €	- €
1	4	1	2.162,00 €	1		0	- €	- €
Total on 09.11.2020		748	21.012.213,00 €	191		0	- €	- €

The total requested amount is much above the available budget of the public call 01/2020 (9,2 MEUR total public expenditure), and selection criteria/ranking of the eligible applications shall be applied.

Agency has continued with contracting of the eligible application of the public call 01/2019, the forecast for contracting of all eligible applications is January/February 2021 and for measure 3 of the public call 02/2019 to contract the applications in December/January 2021. These days are very indicative and the dynamic of contracting depends a lot from the tempo of receiving reference prices as well as from the restrictive measure which might be imposed for prevention of spreading of the virus.

So far, 1419 payment requests have been received, for the measure Investments in tangible assets for agricultural holdings

Total amount requested is 11.265.225,00 €.

So far AFSARD has approved 1113 request for payments with total amount of approximately 8.751.212 €.,

The average time for processing one claim for payment counting from the moment of receiving the it from the beneficiary until the authorization of the claim is 5,5 months.

So far, 55 payment requests have been received, for the measure INVESTMENTS IN PHYSICAL ASSETS CONCERNING PROCESSING AND MARKETING OF AGRICULTURAL AND FISHERY PRODUCTS

Total amount requested is 8.754.685,00 €.

So far AFSARD has approved 55 request for payments with total amount of approximately 7.860.500 €.,

So far,114 payment requests have been received, for the measure FARM DIVERSIFICATION AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Total amount requested is 959.382,00 €.

So far AFSARD has approved 10 request for payments with total amount of approximately 804.342,00 €

On-the-spot controls(2020)

On-the-spot Controls prior approval

Sector for on-the-spot control within AFSARD in 2020 has carried out total of 166 on-the-spot controls prior approval at investments under the Call for Applications 18/01, 18-02,19/01,19/02 and 20/01 from IPARD 2 2014-2020. In addition, there is a table with carried out OTSC divided by call for applications.

In order to reduce the risk of COVID – 19 AFSARD made changes regarding the procedures for performing OTSC prior approval for applications involving only purchase of agricultural equipment and mechanization. For those investments OTSC prior approval was replaced by administrative verification of the declared data using the available data bases and registries (Farm registry, LPIS, VIS, direct payments data base etc.). This procedure was approved by NAO on 30.06.2020 an it is only applicable for a certain type of investments and only for applications received in call for applications 20/01

<i>Call for applications 18/01 (Measure 3)</i>
1 OTSC
<i>Call for applications 18/02 (Measure 1)</i>
4 OTSC

<i>Call for applications 19/01 (Measure 7)</i>	
102 OTSC	
<i>Call for applications 19/02 (Measure 3)</i>	
52 OTSC	
<i>Call for applications 20/01 (performed regular OTSC) - Measure 1</i>	
7 OTSC	
<i>Call for applications 20/01 (performed OTSC according to the changed procedure) - Measure 1</i>	
150 OTSC	
Total No of OTSC	316 OTSC

On-the-spot Controls before payment

Sector for on-the-spot control within AFSARD in 2020 has carried out total of 485 on-the-spot controls before payment at investments under the Call for Applications 17/01, 18/01 and 18/02 from IPARD 2 2014-2020. In addition there is a table with carried out OTSC divided by measures

<i>Call for applications 17/01</i>	
Measure 1 - 8 OTSC	
Measure 3 - 1 OTSC	
Measure 7 - 5 OTSC	
<i>Call for applications 18/01 (Measure 3)</i>	
22 OTSC	
<i>Call for applications 18/02 (Measure 1)</i>	

449 OTSC	
Total No of OTSC	485 OTSC

Ex-post

Sector for on-the-spot control within AFSARD in 2020 has carried out total of 374 ex-post on-the-spot controls at investments under IPARD 1 2007-2013 and IPARD 2 2014-2020. In addition there is a table with carried out OTSC divided by measures

<i>Ex-post OTSC (IPARD 1 2007-2013)</i>	
<u>Measure</u>	<u>Number of carried out OTSC before payment per measure</u>
101	317 OTSC
103	1 OTSC
302	1 OTSC
<i>Ex-post OTSC (IPARD 2 2014-2020)</i>	
1	52 OTSC
3	3 OTSC
Total No of OTSC	374 OTSC

Hidden works

Sector for on-the-spot control has carried also 8 OTSC for establishing hidden works out of which 2 OTSC at investments under Measure 1, 1 OTSC at Investments under Measure 3 and 5 OTSC at investments under Measure 7, Call for Applications 17/01 and 18/01

Difficulties with the COVID-19

There were several beneficiaries and applicants which were in self isolation due to infection with COVID 19 as well as due to strict health protocols several beneficiaries requested delay of OTSC. Also due to the curfew and the shortened working hours as a result of the Government's anti-COVID-19 measures, OTSC were reduced. At the moment we are still encountering with issues connected to COVID-19 (infected employees, preventive self-isolation etc.) which causes impossibility for certain OTSC to be carried out in time and there is a big possibility of sometimes breaching the deadline for performing OTSC.