



**Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
IPARD Managing Authority**

Minutes from the fifth meeting of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 monitoring committee



**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND WATER ECONOMY
IPARD MANAGING AUTHORITY**

IPARD Programme 2021-2027 Monitoring Committee

**Minutes of the fifth meeting of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027
monitoring committee**

**21st May 2025
Hotel Holiday Inn
Skopje**

Arh.No. 20-_____/_____
____. ____ . 2025



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ИПАРД Програма 2021-2027
IPARD Programme 2021-2027

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I. List of participants

Mr. Zhivko Brajkovski – Deputy Chairperson of the IPARD programme 2021-2027 monitoring committee

Members present at the IPARD programme 2021-2027 monitoring committee meeting:

1. Mr. Perica Ivanoski - Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water economy;
2. Ms. Violeta Mihajloska - Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water economy;
3. Ms. Maja Lazareska- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water economy;
4. Ms. Aleksandra Slavkovska - Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth;
5. Mr. Afrim Shaini - Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning;
6. Ms. Ardiana Abazi Ramadani - Ministry of Economy and Labor;
7. Ms. Evgenija Serafimova Kirkovski - Ministry for European Affairs;
8. Mr. Pece Stojkovski - National Extension Agency;
9. Mr. Vladimir Petkov - Faculty for Veterinary Medicine;
10. Mr. Ljupcho Mihajlov - Faculty of agricultural sciences and food – UGD Stip;
11. Ms. Marina Nacka - Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food;
12. Mr. Pero Mocan - Wines from Macedonia;
13. Ms. Biljana Mitrevska - National Federation of Farmers;
14. Ms. Marina Tosheski - LAG Agro- Lider;
15. Mr. Sasho Krcoski - Network of young farmers;
16. Ms. Robertina Brajanoska - Macedonian ecological group;
17. Ms. Elena Mladenovska Jelenkovikj - Economic Chamber of North Macedonia;
18. Mr. Petar Gjorgjievski - Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia;
19. Ms. Natasha Vrteska - Local self-government units.

Present deputy members of the IPARD programme 2021-2027 monitoring committee meeting:

1. Mr. Stojan Gacov - Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water economy;
2. Mr. Nuredin Ismaili - Ministry of Local Self;
3. Mr. Dejan Kotevski - Ministry of Culture and tourism;
4. Ms. Jasminka Jankulovska - Ministry of Transport and Communications;
5. Mr. Goce Serafimov - Association of farmers;
6. Ms. Sonja Gjurovska- Food and Veterinary Agency;
7. Ms. Miranda Ajdini - Chamber of Commerce of North-West Macedonia.

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

1. Mr. Frank Bollen - Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development;
2. Mr. Zigo Rutkovskis - Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development.

Representatives of the European Delegation:

- a) Mr. Rafael Nievergelt - Delegation of European Union in the Republic of North Macedonia;
- b) Ms. Margarita Deleva- Delegation of European Union in the Republic of North Macedonia

Representatives of NAO and NF:



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**Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
IPARD Managing Authority**

Minutes from the fifth meeting of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 monitoring committee

3. **Ms. Aleksandra Simjanovska** - Ministry of Finance;
4. **Mr. Vlado Karamanolevski** - Ministry of Finance;
5. **Ms. Zorica Josifoska Merdzanoska** - Ministry of Finance.

Representatives from IPARD Managing Authority (IPARD MA):

1. **Mr. Viktor Mladenovski** - Unit for monitoring of implementation of IPARD funds and reporting;
2. **Ms. Jasmina Hadzibulik** - Unit for monitoring of implementation of IPARD funds and reporting;
3. **Ms. Gordana Smileska** - Unit for monitoring of implementation of IPARD funds and reporting;
4. **Mr. Kiril Ristoski** - Unit for implementation of IPARD technical assistance;
5. **Mr. Zlatko Kolevski** - Unit for implementation of IPARD technical assistance;
6. **Mr. Oliver Stefanovski** - Unit for implementation of IPARD technical assistance;
7. **Ms. Jagoda Marinkovikj** - Unit for implementation of IPARD technical assistance;
8. **Ms. Gabriela Petrova** - Unit for implementation of IPARD technical assistance;
9. **Mr. Aleksandar Anteski** - Unit for Programming and Evaluation of IPARD funds;
10. **Mr. Dusko Jakimovski** - Unit for Programming and Evaluation of IPARD funds;
11. **Mr. Isa Imishti** - Unit for Programming and Evaluation of IPARD funds;
12. **Ms. Sadzide Demir** - Unit for Programming and Evaluation of IPARD funds;

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

1. **Mr. Mevlan Morina** – Deputy Director of the IPARD Agency;
2. **Ms. Dragana Cholkova** - IPARD Agency;
3. **Ms. Marija Blagoeva** - IPARD Agency;
4. **Mr. Panche Arsov** - IPARD Agency;
5. **Mr. Vladimir Hristov** - IPARD Agency;
6. **Ms. Sonja Bojkovska**- IPARD Agency;
7. **Ms. Tatjana Mitkovska**- IPARD Agency.

Representatives from Audit Authority:

1. **Ms. Svetlana Todorovska** - Audit Authority;
2. **Ms. Ljubica Lokvenec** - Audit Authority;
3. **Mr. Filip Filipovski** - Audit Authority.
4. **Mr. Semir Veli** – Audit Authority;
5. **Mr. Milaim Abduralimi**- Audit Authority.

Results: The Chairperson of the Committee, 19 members and 7 deputy members with voting right (out of total 33 members with a right to vote) participated at the meeting. A quorum of 2/3 of the members with a right to vote was achieved to hold the meeting in accordance with article 8 paragraph 3 of the Rules of Procedure.



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**Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
IPARD Managing Authority**

Minutes from the fifth meeting of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 monitoring committee

The checklist for presence of members from the fourth meeting of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 monitoring committee is shown in Appendix 1 of these minutes.

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

II. Agenda for the 5th IPARD Programme 2021- 2027 monitoring committee meeting

No.	Time	Proposals for Agenda Items	Presented by:	Documents
	09:00 - 09:30	Confirmation of presence of members/ deputies at the meeting and reached quorum to hold the meeting according to the Rules of procedure	IPARD MA	
	09:30 - 09:45	Opening of the meeting	Chairperson, Opening words by Unit G4 representative, DG AGRI, European Commission	
1	09:50 - 10:00	Adoption of the Agenda	Chairperson	 Draft Agenda
2	10:00 – 10:10	Adoption of the minutes of the previous IPARD III MC meeting	Chairperson	 Final minutes
3	10:10- 10:20	Information on the implementation of decisions taken at the previous IPARD III MC meeting	IPARD MA	 To be presented at the meeting
4	10:20- 10:30	IPA Monitoring Committee a) Follow-up, feedback from the IPA Monitoring Committee/ Sectoral Monitoring Committee for Competitiveness and Innovation, Agriculture and Rural Development and Energy	NIPAC	 To be presented at the meeting
5	10:30- 10:50	Information on IPARD implementation in all countries	DG AGRI	 To be presented at the meeting
6	10:50- 11:10	Discussion/approval of the Final Implementation Report of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020	IPARD MA	 IPARD MA report
7	11:10 - 11:30	State of play of implementation of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 a) General information about programme/measure implementation on the basis of monitoring indicators, tables and information on the preparation of the Annual Implementation Report of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 for 2024	IPARD MA	 To be presented at the meeting
	11:30 - 11:45	b) Report on the results of the public calls 01/2023, 01/2024, 02/2024 and 01/2025 of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 c) Forecast of activities and calls in 2025 (including entrustment of new measures)	IPARD Agency	 IPARD Agency report



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**Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
IPARD Managing Authority**

Minutes from the fifth meeting of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 monitoring committee

	11:45 – 12:00	d) Information on the status of accreditation of measures from the IPARD III Programme	NAO/IPARD Agency/ IPARD MA	 To be presented at the meeting
8	12:00 - 12:15	Information on functioning of the Management and Control System (MCS) and financial implementation of IPARD, including interest earned	NAO	 NAO report
9	12:15 - 12:25	Information on controls a) Controls and audit undertaken b) Follow-up actions taken c) Annual Audit Report	IPARD Agency/Audit Authority	 IPARD Agency report/AA report
10	12:25 – 12:35	Visibility and communication plan a) Review of activities against the annual action plan for communication and publicity for 2025	IPARD MA	 To be presented at the meeting
11	12:35 - 12:45	Overview of implementation of the Evaluation Plan for the IPARD Programme 2021-2027	IPARD MA	 To be presented at the meeting
12	12:45 - 12:55	Technical assistance activities a) Review of realized activities from APTA 2025	IPARD MA	 To be presented at the meeting
13	12:55 - 13:00	AOB	Chairperson	
14	13:00 - 13:10	Proposals for the agenda of the next meeting / agreement on new date	Chairperson	



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III. RESULTS OF THE IPARD PROGRAMME 2021- 2027 MONITORING COMMITTEE MEETING

Opening of the meeting

The Deputy Chairperson of the Committee, Mr. Zhivko Brajkovski, opened the fifth meeting of the Committee by welcoming all attendees.

Mr. Frank Bollen, Head of Unit G4 at DG AGRI, welcomed the members of the IPARD III MC. He noted the achieved results of the implementation of IPARD II Programme and encouraged participants of the meeting to use the momentum ensuring good implementation of IPARD III. The large number of applications from the public calls under the IPARD 3 Programme proves the great interest of the applicants. He called the authorities to step up the efforts improving the IPARD implementation including the time required for contracting and payments made to recipients. Mr. Bollen emphasised the need to show ability and capacity to evolve by introducing new measures and broadening the scope of IPARD. Regarding human capacities, he stressed that it is crucial to make sure that there is sufficient number of qualified and trained staff in IPARD authorities, especially in IPARD Agency. He reminded about the fundamental principle that should be followed during the recruitment process - the staff should be recruited taking into consideration professional qualifications and skills, and any promotion should be merit based.

With reference to item 1 of the Agenda: "Adoption of the draft agenda for the fifth meeting of the IPARD III Monitoring Committee":

None of the members of the Committee had any remarks regarding the agenda, and the following decision was adopted:

Decision No. 1: IPARD III Monitoring Committee adopted the agenda for the fifth meeting of the Monitoring Committee.

With reference to item 2 of the Agenda: "Adoption of the Minutes of the previous (fourth) IPARD III MC meeting":

The Head of the IPARD MA and deputy Chairperson of the IPARD III MC, Mr. Brajkovski informed that the minutes from the previous meeting of the Monitoring Committee held on 03rd of December 2024 were sent to the members of the Committee on 23rd of December 2024 and by 8th of January 2025 no comments were submitted from the members to the Secretariat.

On 15th of April 2025, an updated version of the minutes was submitted to the members in accordance with the guidance and comments provided by the EC representatives.

The members of the IPARD III MC had no remarks on the minutes and adopted the following decision:

Decision No. 2: The IPARD III Monitoring Committee adopted the minutes of the fourth IPARD III Monitoring Committee meeting as final.

With reference to item 3 of the Agenda: "Information on the implementation of the decisions /conclusions adopted at the previous meeting of the IPARD III MC".



**Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
IPARD Managing Authority**

Minutes from the fifth meeting of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 monitoring committee

IPARD MA representative, Mr. Viktor Mladenovski, informed about the decision regarding modification of the Action Plan for the Implementation of Activities financed by the Technical Assistance Measure (APTA) for 2025 from the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 adopted by written procedure.

The representative of the Chamber of Commerce of the Republic of Macedonia, Ms. Elena Mladenovska Jelenkovic, pointed out that despite the amendments to the Law on Agricultural Land where lease agreements are extended within 15 days, the situation on the ground was not like that. The representative of the MAFWE, Ms. Violeta Mihajloska, responded that the procedure has been greatly facilitated, i.e. the agreements are no longer sent to the Government to be passed at a session of the Government and all Government bodies. According to the amendments to the Law, the procedure is much shorter. Mr. Zhivko Brajkovski, added that amendments were made to the Law in that direction, i.e. to speed up the procedure and if the representative of the Chamber of Commerce has specific information or analysis, to submit it to the IPARD MA.

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

Conclusion No. 1: The IPARD III Monitoring Committee was informed on the progress made in implementing the decisions/conclusions of the fourth meeting of the IPARD III Monitoring Committee.

With reference to item 4 of the Agenda: "Information regarding the IPA monitoring committee".

Sub item 4 (a) of the Agenda: "Follow-up, feedback from the IPA monitoring committee":

Regarding the IPA Monitoring Committee, held on 2nd of April 2025, the representative of the National IPA Coordinator, Ms. Evgenija S. Kirkovski, informed on the lack of employees, ensuring the optimal capacity for IPA implementation. Of great interest is the adoption of the Laws on Administration and the Laws on Public Sector Employees, which, according to the reform agenda, are on the agenda for adoption by the end of this year. Regarding the meeting of the Sector Monitoring Committee for Competitiveness and Innovation, Agriculture and Rural Development and Energy, held on 21st of May 2025, she informed that strengthening the IT sector in MAFWE was highlighted so that all those software solutions that have been received as grant financial assistance from the EU can be put into operation and maintained. Many projects have been announced and are in the procurement phase.

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

Conclusion No. 2: The IPARD III Monitoring Committee was informed regarding IPA Monitoring Committee.

With reference to item 5 of the Agenda: "Information on IPARD implementation in all countries".

The DG AGRI representative, Mr. Rutkovskis presented the results of the implementation of IPARD 2 and IPARD 3 in the Western Balkan countries and Türkiye. He praised the results





**Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
IPARD Managing Authority**

Minutes from the fifth meeting of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 monitoring committee

achieved in the implementation of IPARD 2, which are much better in comparison to IPARD 1. Although the Republic of North Macedonia is the first country which launched a call for IPARD 3, better results were expected. In order to avoid loss of funds, he stressed that 6 million € should be disbursed by the end of 2025. DG AGRI informed all IPARD countries that no transfer of funds from measures that are not entrusted (measures 4, 5, 6 and 10) to already entrusted measures (measures 1, 3, 7 and 9) will be allowed. If these measures are not entrusted, the funds allocated to them will be lost. In order not to lose these funds, the representative of DG AGRI invited Macedonian IPARD authorities to speed up the process of approving requests (including those for payment), strengthening human capacities and retaining existing staff, as well as to speed up the process of accreditation and implementation of new measures.

Mr. Zhivko Brajkovski, asked the EC representatives whether reallocation of funds between already accredited measures would be allowed in the future. Mr. Frank Bollen, replied that such reallocation will be possible, but if it does not significantly affect the share of the measure in the total budget of the Programme. It is also important to avoid disbalanced distribution of the budget among the measures.

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

Conclusion No. 3: The IPARD III Monitoring Committee was informed regarding IPARD implementation in all countries.

With reference to item 6 of the Agenda: "Discussion/approval of the Final Implementation Report of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020".

Mr. Viktor Mladenovski, briefly presented its content of the report. This report is the second last activity regarding the implementation of IPARD 2, and as the last activity is the ex post evaluation of the Programme where the independent evaluators will provide a more detailed assessment regarding the implementation of the IPARD 2 Programme. The following conclusions regarding the implementation of the Programme were stated:

- A large number of requests and interest in investments within the framework of IPARD 2;
- Good knowledge and awareness of the opportunities offered by the IPARD Programme among potential beneficiaries contributed to a large number of requests;
- Coordination between IPARD structures could be better, especially regarding the exchange of data between the IPARD Agency and the IPARD MA, necessary for monitoring and evaluation;
- Relatively slow process of approving requests;
- To deal with the problem of obtaining reference prices, the IPARD Agency introduced a "committee for evaluation of reference prices".

Regarding the greater interest and success of the types of investments for the purchase of equipment compared to investments in construction and reconstruction, the analyses of the IPARD MA show that the changes in the Law on Agricultural Land (which allow the construction of agricultural facilities on agricultural land without land transformation) and the preparation of



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**Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
IPARD Managing Authority**

Minutes from the fifth meeting of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 monitoring committee

the Guidelines for the Procedure for the Construction of Facilities on Agricultural Land, have had a positive impact, but additional activities will need to be undertaken to improve the situation.

The trend of cancellation of already concluded contracts has continued. According to the analysis, this cancellation of contracts is a result of the global trend of inflation and the increase in the prices of raw materials, equipment and services. The long period of time required for the implementation of investments only further worsens the situation, allowing for a greater negative impact on the implementation.

Regarding the question of the representative of MES, Ms. Robertina Brajanoska, about the reasons for unrealized investments, the representative of the IPARD Agency, Mr. Vladimir Hristov, listed several reasons:

- Covid pandemic,
- provision of adequate financial support by beneficiaries,
- inability to procure equipment by end beneficiaries (equipment that is made to order),
- increase in the prices of the equipment subject to procurement
- failure to submit a request for payment.

In accordance with the Sector Agreement that the RNM has signed with the EC, the final report on the implementation of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020 will be submitted to the EC representatives no later than 30th June 2025.

Regarding this item, the members of the Committee adopted the following decision:

Decision No. 3: The IPARD III Monitoring Committee reviewed and adopted the Final Implementation Report of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020.

With reference to item 7 of the Agenda: "State of play of implementation of the IPARD Programme 2014-2020 and 2021-2027".

Sub item 7 (a) of the Agenda: "General information about programme/measure implementation on the basis of monitoring indicators, tables and information on the preparation of the Annual Implementation Report of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 for 2024".

Mr. Viktor Mladenovski, informed that the annual report on the implementation of the IPARD 3 Programme for 2024 is still in the preparation phase and will be submitted to the members of the Committee for adoption by a written procedure. According to the Sectoral Agreement, the report should be submitted to the EC no later than 30th June 2025.

Taking into account that this report is in preparation phase, Mr. Mladenovski presented general information on the implementation of the IPARD 3 Programme based on indicators or monitoring data. What was emphasized by him is that a strong interest has been noted in the agricultural sector and rural areas. A large number of applications have been submitted, which strongly affects the process of approving applications in the IPARD Agency and it has not yet been completed. The process of approving applications takes a long time due to the great interest, and due to the good quality of the applications and the exceeded budget of the public call, a procedure for ranking applications has begun to be applied.





**Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
IPARD Managing Authority**

Minutes from the fifth meeting of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 monitoring committee

Ms. Elena Mladenovska Jelenkovic, had a remark regarding the long period (in some cases more than 18 months) from application to signing of the contract. This situation causes applicants to cancel, which in turn negatively affects the absorption capacity of the country.

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

Conclusion No. 4: The IPARD III Monitoring Committee was informed on programme/measure implementation on the basis of monitoring indicators, tables and information on the preparation of the Annual Implementation Report of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 for 2024.

Sub item 7 (b) of the Agenda: "Report on the results of the public calls 01/2023, 01/2024, 02/2024 and 01/2025 of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027".

The representative of the IPARD Agency, Ms. Dragana Čolkova, presented in detail the results of the public calls 01/2023, 01/2024, 02/2024 and 01/2025 of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027. The long process of processing applications is due to the large number of applications, the insufficient number of employees in the Project Approval Sector of the IPARD Agency, as well as the collection or obtaining of reference prices. Although there are new employments in the IPARD Agency, they still need training to be able to be included in the process of reviewing documentation and making decisions on it. She added that the reference price database can be updated with data from the public call 01/2023, which in the future will greatly reduce the time required for processing applications and concluding contracts. Regarding the plan for announcing public calls, she informed about a new public call for Measure 3 in September 2025, for Measure 7 in December 2025, and for Measure 1 next year.

The representative of MAFWE, Mr. Perica Ivanovski, requested that in future the IPARD Agency presents its data through a power point presentation in order to better perceive them. Regarding the risk of losing funds, he asked a question regarding the further steps that will be taken in order to reduce this risk. Ms. Dragana Čolkova, replied that the entire IPARD structure is included in that process. Discussions were also held in the IPARD Agency and other institutions, emphasizing that the Agency is taking all steps to prevent the loss of funds. The representative of the IPARD Agency, Mr. Vladimir Hristov, emphasized that this risk also depends on external factors, i.e. requests for payment, informing that they have payment requests that have arrived in the last two weeks and are in the processing phase. In order to avoid losing funds, he emphasized that at this moment, they need payment requests. He appealed to presents at the meeting, if anyone has a connection with the final beneficiaries, to indicate that they should not wait for deadlines for implementation. Mr. Ivanovski suggested finding a way to contact those beneficiaries, i.e. to remind them to submit the necessary documentation regarding the payment request as soon as possible. Mr. Hristov replied that an analysis would be made regarding when a payment request could be expected from a certain number of final beneficiaries so that the Agency could also make a plan for payments by the end of 2025/2026. The sooner the process of concluding contracts is started, the sooner the implementation of investments and submission of payment requests and disbursement of funds would begin. Mr. Ivanovski indicated that the problems should be defined as soon as possible and that work should be done to overcome them. He suggested that an analysis should be made by IPARD MA and the IPARD





**Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
IPARD Managing Authority**

Minutes from the fifth meeting of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 monitoring committee

Agency regarding what the problems are (some of them were already raised at the meeting) and to see which institution or operational structure should take over. The representative of MAFWE, Ms. Violeta Mihajloska, called on the representatives of the IPARD Agency, IPARD MA and NAO to organize a meeting in near future to discuss the problems as well as activities to overcome them.

Regarding the long period of processing the requests from the call 01/2023, the representative of NAO, Ms. Aleksandra Simjanoska, gave a brief explanation on the situation with obtaining reference prices. Namely, when the IPARD Agency concludes a contract, reference prices are required. The last call for Measure 1 was 4 years ago. Those reference prices are already outdated and after two years they must be renewed. As a result, for the first call it was necessary to approach the collection of new offers, i.e. new reference prices. Now, the database is complete and it will not take more than a year for the conclusion of a contract. The ranking list as well as the cancellation of contracts were other factors that were mentioned. The IPARD Agency reached a certain point where the list was frozen so that a new call could be announced and 20 contracts were suddenly canceled. Among other things, this was one of the reasons for the loss of funds in the amount of about 8 million euros of EU part in IPARD 2. She informed that they proposed to the IPARD Agency to prepare an analysis of lessons learned that would be published and that it would be a facilitating circumstance for the Sector for Project Approval, Payment Approval and Control to have a complete understanding of where those problems are and then to act on them.

Ms. Elena Mladenovska Jelenkovic, proposed to review experiences from other IPARD countries that faced similar problems and to implement them in our country.

The representative of Wines from Macedonia, Mr. Pero Mocan, asked when the contracts with the wineries for measure 3 of the call 01/2024 would be signed. He also made a remark regarding wineries equipment planned for the 2025 harvest. With the delay in signing contracts, the beneficiaries would not be able to invest and use the equipment as planned. The representative of the IPARD Agency, Ms. Dragana Čolkova, replied that the ranking had been done and, as soon as the Agency would receive the reference prices, they would conclude the contracts. Regarding the delay, she added that the applicants have the right to an annex to the contract regarding the extension of the implementation deadline. Mr. Mocan also made a remark regarding the manner of conducting the ranking of applications. He asked how it was possible to do a ranking of projects, to pass on the spot control before signing a contract with the ranked projects and then to have a re-ranking in which the applicants who had already passed the on the spot control were excluded from the new ranking list.

The representative of DG AGRI, Mr. Zigo Rutkovskis, highlighted and praised the success achieved under the IPARD 2 Programme. In his presentation, he referred to several aspects/problems that need to be addressed and worked on overcoming or improving them. Regarding the organization of public calls, it was pointed out that the calls should be carefully planned, since €97,000,000 is available and should be used by 2030 and there will be no additional funds. In opposite case, the situation during the implementation of the IPARD 2 Programme may be repeated, where there was no public call for some measures for 3 years, which may result in a loss of interest among stakeholders. He suggested the possibility of publishing a





**Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
IPARD Managing Authority**

Minutes from the fifth meeting of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 monitoring committee

forecast of public calls in order for interested applicants to have sufficient time to prepare. He added that it is necessary to re-consider the option of extending the deadline for public calls, believing that in this way a certain number of beneficiaries are more privileged compared to those who prepared and submitted the necessary documentation on time. Mr. Rutkovskis emphasized the importance of the e-application system which implies that the applicant prepares and submits the application electronically, reducing number of mistakes and facilitating more efficient assessment of the application at the IPARD Agency. In terms of human capacities, he emphasized that the IPARD structures are faced with an insufficient number of employees, which greatly affects its efficiency. Qualified and trained staff are needed, as well as their retention through a clear promotion policy. He called on the IPARD structures and stakeholders to jointly discuss the problems and work to overcome them.

The representative of the European Delegation to the Republic of Macedonia, Ms. Margarita Deleva, informed that through IPA funds, quite successful projects have been completed and implemented to accelerate IPARD implementation and the management and control system. A proposal from a twinning project that was implemented in the IPARD Agency was specifically mentioned. According to the proposal, a reserve list should be made during ranking, which will allow for notifying applicants who have received a contract, and those who are not ranked are asked to continue their interest because there is a possibility that one of the first ranked applicants may cancel. She also informed that an IPA 2 project was implemented and closed for the development of IPARD software that allows electronic application and submission of a payment request, and also generates automatic reports based on the interest and budget that will be entered into the system through the application and payment. The system is not perfect from a technical point of view, but it is a good basis for the IPARD Agency to further upgrade and implement it.

The DG AGRI representative, Mr. Frank Bollen, in order to increase absorption, referred to advanced payments and suggested that the IPARD authorities, in consultation with the banking sector, should make advanced payments more attractive to the recipients. He informed that the advanced payments were one of the factors that contributed to Montenegro achieving good results at the end of IPARD II implementation. He suggested considering the possibility of "over-contracting"/overcommitments (approval of requests above the amount announced in the public call), which would reduce both - impact of the project cancellations and risk of the de-commitment.

Mr. Brajkovski informed that a third modification of the IPARD 3 Programme is being prepared where special attention will be put to the entire concept of ranking.

Regarding the electronic application, Ms. Margarita Deleva, proposed to conclude that the IPARD structure should prepare an action plan where the IPARD Agency should state which aspects of the process are missing and need to be improved. In that regard, the possibility of using funds from the Technical Assistance measure could be considered. She added that there is a screening done by the IT audit of DG AGRI and those findings could be included in the action plan. Ms. Dragana Čolkova, replied that the IPARD Agency, after receiving a final report that will also contain the remarks regarding the electronic application, will submit the necessary information.





**Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
IPARD Managing Authority**

Minutes from the fifth meeting of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 monitoring committee

Regarding this sub-item, the following conclusions were adopted:

Conclusion No. 5: IPARD structures to prepare an action plan that will define the problems in the implementation of the IPARD 3 Programme and appropriate measures and activities to overcome them.

Conclusion No. 6: The IPARD Agency and the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of North Macedonia to resolve the differences and disagreements regarding the implementation of the project "Customized Software for Integrated Administrative and Control System (IACS)" - (EuropeAid/139016/DH/SER/MK) which envisages the introduction of an e-application system and, after ensuring all prerequisites for the establishment of the system, to examine the possibility of its possible upgrade/finalization through the Technical Assistance Measure from the IPARD 3 Programme.

Sub item 7 (c) of the Agenda: "Forecast of activities and calls in 2025 (including entrustment of new measures)".

Ms. Dragana Cholkova, informed that a public call for measure 3 is planned for September 2025, for measure 7 in December, and for measure 1 during the first quarter of 2026. Measure 6 is in accreditation phase, i.e. removal of deficiencies that were an obstacle to the previous accreditation.

The representative of the NAO, Mr. Vlado Karamanolevski, informed about the status of the accreditation of measure 6 "Rural Public Infrastructure"

Mr. Rutkovskis once again emphasized the importance of the accreditation of new measures, adding that each new measure would reduce the risk of de-commitment.

Mr. Ivanovski proposed to make an action plan regarding the accreditation of new measures and to review it at each meeting of the IPARD Monitoring Committee. Mr. Brajkovski replied that the accreditation of new measures would be a separate point on the agenda of the next meetings of the Committee, and the action plan that would be prepared by each institution individually would be an integral part of that item.

Mr. Karamanolevski and Mr. Brajkovski indicated that the main problem regarding this issue is the lack of staff.

Regarding this sub-item, the following conclusions were adopted:

Conclusion No. 7: The IPARD III Monitoring Committee was informed on forecast of activities and calls in 2025 (including entrustment of new measures)

Conclusion No. 8: IPARD structures to prepare an action plan regarding the status of accreditation of new measures and to review it at each meeting of the IPARD 3 Programme Monitoring Committee.



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IPARD Programme 2021-2027

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With reference to item 8 of the Agenda: "Information on functioning of the Management and Control System (MCS) and financial implementation of IPARD, including interest earned".

The representative of the NAO, Mr. Vlado Karamanolevski, informed about the administrative capacities in the institutions of the IPARD structure. Regarding WLA for 2025, the required number of employees in the IPARD structure is 194 employees, and the employment rate is 88% compared to the needs for 2025. The lack of staff was once again cited as the reason for the delay in the accreditation of the new measures. A comprehensive substantive solution is needed to maintain the IPARD structures.

Regarding the risk of losing funds, he added that the use of advanced payments would greatly reduce that risk, but unfortunately this tool is still poorly used. He appealed to those present and all those who can influence applicants to become more informed and use advanced payments.

Regarding this item, the following conclusion was adopted:

Conclusion No. 9: The IPARD III Monitoring Committee was informed on functioning of the management and control system and financial implementation of IPARD, including interest earned.

With reference to item 9 of the Agenda: "Information on controls".

Sub-item 9 (a) of the Agenda: "Controls and audit undertaken".

The representative of the IPARD Agency, Ms. Sonja Bojkovska, informed about on the spot controls as well as the identified non-compliances during the controls themselves. Mr. Hristov added that the IPARD Agency will prepare a manual with the most common errors identified during on the spot controls, which would greatly help the beneficiaries to avoid the return of financial support.

1. Sub-item 9 (b) of the Agenda: "Follow-up actions taken".

The representative of the IPARD Agency, Ms. Marija Blagoeva, informed about the audits carried out in 2025.

Sub-item 9 (c) of the Agenda: "Annual Audit Report".

The representative of the Audit Authority, Ms. Ljubica Lokvenec, informed on the undertaken activities in 2025. An Annual Audit Activity Report for 2024 is issued, as well as Annual Audit Opinions for the IPARD 2 and IPARD 3 Programmes. She noted impact of insufficient human resource capacity in the IPARD authorities (particularly, the IPARD Agency) and issues with SAP system on the IPARD implementation.

Regarding this item, the following conclusion was adopted:

Conclusion No. 10: The IPARD III Monitoring Committee was informed on controls, follow-up actions taken and Annual Audit Report.



With reference to item 10 of the Agenda: "Visibility and communication plan"

Sub-item 10 (a) of the Agenda: "Review of activities against the annual action plan for communication and publicity for 2025".

IPARD MA representative, Mr. Kiril Ristoski, informed about the activities within the publicity campaign for the IPARD III Programme, foreseen in the annual action plan for communication and publicity of the IPARD III Programme for 2025.

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

Conclusion No. 11: The IPARD III Monitoring Committee was informed on the progress of activities related to the communication and publicity of the IPARD.

With reference to item 11 of the Agenda: "Overview of implementation of the Evaluation Plan for the IPARD Programme 2021-2027".

IPARD MA representative, Mr. Dushko Jakimovski presented the details regarding the evaluation of the IPARD II and IPARD III Programme, as well as planned activities. For realization of these activities, it is planned to engage external experts through Technical Assistance measure. Final report for ex-post evaluation of IPARD II Programme will be submitted to DG AGRI by December 2025. A workshop for strengthening of capacities for evaluation and determination of expected results is planned under measure 9 of IPARD III Programme.

Regarding this item, the following conclusion was adopted:

Conclusion No. 12: The IPARD III Monitoring Committee was informed on the Evaluation Plan for the IPARD Programme 2021-2027

With reference to item 12 of the Agenda: "Technical Assistance activities".

Sub-item 12 (a) of the agenda: "Review of realized activities from APTA 2025"

IPARD MA representative, Mr. Kiril Ristoski, informed about the realized activities of APTA for 2025.

The representative of the Rural Development Network, Mr. Petar Gjorgievski, had a remark regarding the latest amendment to the APTA for 2025, i.e. the removal of the activity "Acquisition of skills for representatives of potential LAG initiatives for the implementation of the LEADER approach measure", which he considers to be particularly important in the process of introducing the LEADER measure. This activity would accelerate the process of strengthening the capacities and skills of representatives of potential LAGs, as a prerequisite for the successful activation of rural communities and effective absorption of funds. The LEADER measure contributes to greater prosperity of rural areas, contributes to European integration, but also social cohesion. By removing this activity, the process of establishing and strengthening the capacities of potential LAGs will slow down and regress, jeopardizing the successful implementation of the LEADER measure and appealed for this activity to be returned to the APTA. Ms. Violeta Mihajloska proposed this activity to be prolonged until the start of the accreditation process of the LEADER measure, when it would be included in the APTA and



**Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
IPARD Managing Authority**

Minutes from the fifth meeting of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 monitoring committee

implemented. Mr. Rutkovskis invited to reinstate the activity as its exclusion from the APTA was not justified. He stressed that removing this activity from the APTA sends the wrong message to stakeholders and to EC representatives due to the commitment taken by national authorities to implement measure on the LEADER approach. Although it is not known when the accreditation package for the new measures will be submitted, it is important to prepare stakeholders, municipalities, potential beneficiaries, farmers, to strengthen their capacities and knowledge regarding how these measures will be implemented and what their responsibilities will actually be. In this way, it would be ensured that the measure will be implemented efficiently right from the very beginning. He also invited national authorities to provide justification for any amendments to APTA in the future.

Ms. Maja Lazareska, proposed that the funds from the Technical Assistance Measure to be used to upgrade the system for integrated administrative work and make it operational. Mr. Brajkovski and Ms. Margarita Deleva, responded that it is necessary to resolve certain prerequisites for the implementation of the e-application. Mr. Rutkovskis invited the IPARD structures to organize a meeting together with the representatives of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Macedonia where the problems with the functioning of this system would be discussed and resolved.

Regarding the procurement for the organization of meetings of the Committee, Mr. Rutkovskis emphasized that the priority of the IPARD Programme is to support rural areas, expressing hope that the next procurement for the organization of 4 meetings outside of Skopje will be successful.

Mr. Rutkovskis suggested that it would be useful to think about capacity building on implementation of Technical Assistance Measure for all IPARD authorities, since this measure is not being used in full. It can provide very big possibilities for capacity building, study trips, workshops et. He invited to organize workshops and/or the expert visits to resolve cases where interpretation of some procedures for implementation of the Technical Assistance measure differs among the IPAR authorities.

Regarding this item, the following decisions were adopted:

Conclusion No. 13:. The IPARD III Monitoring Committee was informed on the progress of APTA 2025 implementation.

Conclusion No. 14: The IPARD III Monitoring Committee compelled the IPARD Managing Authority to modify the APTA for 2025 and to include the activity "Acquisition of skills for representatives of potential LAG initiatives for the implementation of the LEADER approach measure", and to revise the procurement "Organization of the IPARD Monitoring Committee - 4 meetings" in relation to the venue.

With reference to item 13 of the Agenda: "AOB"

No discussion was raised regarding this point.



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IPARD Programme 2021-2027

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**Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
IPARD Managing Authority**

Minutes from the fifth meeting of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 monitoring committee

With reference to item 14 of the agenda: "Proposal for the Agenda of the next sixth IPARD MC meeting/agreement on indicative date":

The Chairperson informed that the date for the next 6th meeting will 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:
Borche Serafimovski	Zhivko Brajkovski
Title: Chairperson	Title: Head of IPARD Managing Authority
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:



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IPARD Programme 2021-2027

Ко-финансирано од
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**Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
IPARD Managing Authority**

Minutes from the fifth meeting of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 monitoring committee

Appendix 1: List of members (or their deputies) present at the meeting of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 monitoring committee meeting

No.	Name of member	Institution	Present		Name of deputy	Number of absences
			member	deputy		
1	Mr. Borche Serafimovski Chairperson	MAFWE		√	Mr.Zhivko Brajkovski	
MINISTRIES						
2	Mr. Perica Ivanoski	MAFWE	√			0
3	Ms. Biljana Damcheska	MAFWE	/	√	Mr.Stojan Gacov	0
4	Ms. Maja Lazareska Joveska	MAFWE	√			0
5	Ms. Violeta Mihajloska	MAFWE	√			0
6	Ms. Evgenija Serafimovska Kirkovski	Ministry for European Affairs	√			0
7	Ms. Ardiana Abazi Ramadani	Ministry of Economy	√			0
8	Ms. Elizabeta Stojkoska	MLS	/	√	Mr. Nuredin Ismaili	0
9	Mr. Refet Ameti	Ministry of Culture and tourism	/	√	Mr.Dejan Kotevski	0
10	Mr. Afrim Shaini	Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning	√			0
11	Mr. Igor Mojanoski	Ministry of Transport and Communications	/	√	Ms.Jasminka Jankulovska	0
12	Ms. Aleksandra Slavkovska	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy	√			0
13	Mr. Gjoko Gjorchevski	FVA	/	√	Ms. Sonja Gjurovska	0
AGENCIES						
14	Mr. Pece Stojkovski	NEA	√			0
15	Ms. Maja Taseva	Agency for support of entrepreneurship	/	/		1
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PARTNERS						
16	Ms. Elena Mladenovska Jelenkovikj	Economic Chamber of North Macedonia	√			0
17	Mr. Goran Gjorgjievski	Macedonian Chambers of Commerce	/	/		2
18	Ms. Biljana Petrovska	National Federation of farmers	√	/		0
19	Mr. Sasho Risteski	Macedonian Association of processors	/	/		1
20	Ms. Natasha Vrteska	Local self-government units	√			0
21	Ms. Marina Nacka	Faculty of agricultural sciences and food	√			0



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IPARD Programme 2021-2027

Ко-финансирано од
Северна Македонија





Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
IPARD Managing Authority

Minutes from the fifth meeting of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 monitoring committee

22	Mr. Agron Fazliji	Faculty of agricultural sciences and food	/	/		2
23	Mr. Ljupcho Mihajlov	Faculty of agricultural sciences and food – UGD Stip	√	/		0
24	Ms. Marina Tosheska	LAG Agro-Lider	√			0
25	Mr. Petar Gjorgjievski	Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia	√			0
26	Mr. Vladimir Petkov	Faculty for Veterinary Medicine	√			0
27	Mr. Sasho Krcoski	Network of young farmers	√			0
28	Ms. Robertina Brajanoska	Macedonian ecological group	√			0
29	Ms. Liljana Jonoski	Rural coalition	/	/		2
30	Mr. Goran Mitev	Association of farmers	/	√	Mr.Goce Serafimov	0
31	Mr. Pero Mocan	Wines from Macedonia	√			0
32	Mr. Arben Halili	Economic Chamber of North West Macedonia	/	√	Ms.Miranda Ajdini	0
33	Mr. Bardilj Dauti	University of Tetovo	/	/		0
TOTAL:			27			



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IPARD Programme 2021-2027

Ко-финансирано од
Северна Македонија





**Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
IPARD Managing Authority**

Minutes from the fifth meeting of the IPARD Programme 2021-2027 monitoring committee

Appendix 2: List of observers

Representatives of governmental institutions:

- Mr. Petar Andonov- NEA;
- Mr. Aleksandar Dimitrovski- MAFWE;
- Mr. Ljubo Penov- MAFWE;
- Ms. Elena Novachka- Prime Minister's Office.



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IPARD Programme 2021-2027

Ко-финансирано од
Северна Македонија

