



MONTENEGRO
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and
Water Management

DIRECTION FOR COORDINATION AND PR RELATIONS

IPARD MANAGING AUTHORITY

Version: 2.0

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MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF IPARD III MONITORING COMMITTEE

Minutes number 1

Minutes from the FIRST meeting of the IPARD III monitoring committee
1st of June 2023/ Hotel Voco, Oktoih br 2, Podgorica 81000 Podgorica

I. List of participants (attached to Minutes):

Meeting was attended by the IPARD III monitoring committee members, as well as the representatives of the European Commission and EU Delegation in Montenegro. Meeting was not attended by the representative of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, the Chamber Engineering of Montenegro, the Union of Municipalities of Montenegro, the National Association of Beekeepers of Montenegro, the NGO Green home, the National Association of viticulturist and wine producers of Montenegro, the Association of Private Forest Owners, the Association of Agricultural Fruit and Vegetable Producers "Ratar" and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management - Directorate for Fisheries.

Result:


Quorum was fulfilled, so the meeting could be held and decisions can be taken (30 members or their substitutes with voting rights was present from 39 members with voting rights).

Attachment: Apart from the short list of the participants explained in Minutes, attached is the list of participants divided as:


1. Voting members (concluding with number 39.)
2. Non-voting members (from number 1 to 6 second table)
3. Representatives of the European Commission with advisory role and observers (from number 1 to 3 third table)

This is necessary to show that sufficient number of members is present and the meeting can be organized.


II. Agenda

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No. items	Provisional time	Content	Informative /Need agreement /Need approval /Need opinion of the IMC members	Responsibility
1.	11:30 – 11:35	Opening of the meeting; Approval of the Agenda	Need approval	Stevan Gajević, State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Chairperson
2.	11:35 – 11:40	Information on appointments of the members and role of the IPARD III monitoring committee (only the first MC)	Informative	Stevan Gajević, State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Chairperson
3.	11:40 – 11:50	Presence and role of the European Commission representatives in the IPARD III monitoring committee meeting	Informative	Frank Bollen, Head of Unit G4 - Neighbourhood, enlargement and pre-accession assistance of DG AGRI/European Commission
4.	11:50 – 12:00	Presentation and approval of the Rules of procedure of the Monitoring committee for the IPARD III programme of Montenegro (IPARD III monitoring committee)	Need approval	Andrijana Rakočević, Head of the IPARD Managing Authority/General director of Directorate for Rural Development
5.	12:00 – 12:15	Presentation of the NIPAC, IPARD MA and IA role and impact in the implementation of the IPARD III programme	Informative	Representatives of the NIPAC, IPARD MA and IA

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6.	12:15 – 12:20	Presentation of the NAO, including explanation of the state-of-play of the 'entrustment of budget implementation tasks' from the European Commission to Montenegro	Informative	Representative of the NAO
7.	12:20-12:25	Presentation of Audit Authority	Informative	Representative of the AA
8.	12:25 – 12:35	Presentation of the IPARD III programme	Informative	Andrijana Rakočević, Head of the IPARD Managing Authority/General director of Directorate for Rural Development
9.	12:35 – 12:45	Presentation and approval of the Evaluation plan for the IPARD III programme	Need approval	Enis Gjokaj, advisor for monitoring, evaluation and reporting
10.	12:45 – 12:55	Approval of the Plan of visibility and communication activities for the IPARD III programme	Need approval	Ana Mitrović, Advisor for coordination and public relations of rural development
11.	12:55 – 13:15	Discussion		

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12.	13:15 – 13:20	Proposals for a date and the agenda of the next meeting	Informative	
13.	13:20 – 13:30	Signing the Statement of impartiality and code of conduct by the IMC members		
14.	13:30 – 14:30	Lunch		

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III. Result of the IPARD III meeting

In accordance with point 1 of the Agenda: Opening of the meeting, Adoption of the Agenda

- **Stevan Gajević**, State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Chairperson of the IPARD III monitoring committee opened the meeting and reminded that the Program for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas of Montenegro within the IPARD III 2021-2027 (IPARD III programme) was adopted by the European Commission on June 29, 2022, and by the Government of Montenegro on July 28 in 2022. Through the implementation of the IPARD III programme, a total of EUR 81,975,947 in grants will be available to Montenegrin agricultural producers, of which EU funds make up EUR 63,000,000 (62% more compared to the previous IPARD II program). He pointed out that in order to conduct IPARD III with higher success, and to use the available financial funds as good as possible by Montenegrin farmers, the IPARD III MC have been established. Its main role will be to follow the process of implementing the IPARD III programme, to give its contribution in overcoming eventual bottlenecks during the implementation of the programme, but also to enable visibility of the programme in whole Montenegro. He expressed the hope and expectation that thank to active role and constructive contribution of IPARD III monitoring committee members, the utilization of the available financial funds to Montenegrin agricultural producers will be as much as possible and, in that way, together will enhance the agricultural production in Montenegro. After that, he presented the Agenda, to which there were no objections.

Decision number 1

- Agenda was adopted.
- All 30 members with voting rights voted YES for the adoption.

In accordance with point 2 of the Agenda: Information about the nomination of the members of the IPARD II MC and role of the IPARD III MC.


- **Stevan Gajević**, State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Chairperson of the IPARD III monitoring committee asked all participants to present themselves. All participants (members and observers of the 1st IPARD III MC) presented themselves.

In accordance with point 3 of the Agenda: Presentation of the role of representative of the European Commission in work of the IPARD III MC.

The overview of the main conclusion of the discussion:

- **Frank Bollen, Head of Unit G4 - Neighbourhood, enlargement and pre-accession assistance of DG AGRI/European Commission:**

He greeted the present members of the IPARD III monitoring committee, underlining that the active role and constructive contribution of the IPARD III monitoring committee members is extremely important and such meetings would bring productive conclusions in the future. He recalled the 10th meeting of IPARD II MC which

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took place just before the current one, where many issues had been discussed, and he expressed satisfaction that a large number of members of the IPARD III monitoring committee were present. Mr. Bollen reminded that Montenegro has about 63 million EUR available in the new programme period, and that all procedures and preparations have been completed in order for Montenegro to begin the implementation of this programme. We understood, Mr. Bollen pointed out, from several presentations from the previous meeting that the accreditation of new measures is planned, which will require greater commitment and institutional cooperation in order to successfully implement the IPARD III programme, because this programme offers many opportunities, but also responsibilities and we all need to work together to use these opportunities in the best possible way.

In accordance with point 4 of the Agenda: Presentation and approval of the Rules of procedure of the Monitoring committee for the IPARD III programme of Montenegro

The overview of the main conclusion of the discussion:


- **Andrijana Rakočević**, Head of the IPARD Managing Authority/General director of Directorate for Rural Development presented the procedures based on the Decision on the establishment of the IPARD III monitoring committee, which at its first, i.e. today's, meeting has the obligation to adopt the Rules of Procedure of the IPARD III monitoring committee in Montenegro, which were sent to all members by e-mail in within the stipulated period. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management established the IPARD III monitoring committee on April 13, 2023 based on the Law on Confirmation of the Framework Financial Partnership Agreement between the European Commission and Montenegro. As explained by Mrs. Rakočević, the IPARD III monitoring committee established in this way will be responsible for reporting, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the IPARD III programme in accordance with the provisions of Section VI of the Sectoral Agreement, and it is made up of national and territorial (local) authorities and bodies, representatives from the fields of economy, social, environmental, civil society, but also representatives of academic institutions and network for rural development. In the end, she pointed out that the IPARD Managing Authority helps in the work of the IPARD III monitoring committee and at the same time has the function of the permanent secretariat of the IPARD III monitoring committee. The IPARD III MC meets at least twice a year. She stressed that every member of the IPARD III MC and their representatives should sign a declaration of impartiality and a code of conduct, which are in the folders received by the participants.

Decision number 2

- Rules of procedure of IPARD II MC were approved.
- All 30 members with voting rights voted YES for the adoption.

In accordance with point 5 of the Agenda: Presentation of the role of NIPAC, IPARD MA and IPARD Agency in conducting the IPARD III programme


The overview of the main conclusion of the discussion:

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- **Milica Abramović**, head of the Division for Coordination of EU Funds/Ministry of European Affairs, presented the role of NIPAC, which, in accordance with the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement (FFPA), has responsibility for the overall coherence and coordination of programmes supported under IPA III, where the tasks are execution of the budget entrusted to the IPA III recipients. Also, as she pointed out, NIPAC has the role of coordinating the development of the evaluation plan in consultation with the European Commission, presenting the evaluation activities that will be carried out in different stages of implementation. The role of NIPAC in the part of reporting, that is, connecting the IPARD structure of Montenegro with the European Commission, is very important, pointed out Mrs. Abramović at the end of the presentation.
- **Vladislav Bojović**, the acting General Director of the Directorate for Payments, the head of the IPARD Agency, reminded that in accordance with the current Rulebook on Internal Organization and Systematization of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, the Directorate for Payments is the IPARD Agency. All MA and IA functions are in accordance with the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement and the Sectoral Agreement. The relations between the IPARD Managing Authority and the IPARD Agency are defined also by the Operational Agreement signed by the Head of the IPARD Managing Authority/Directorate for Rural Development and the Head of the IPARD Agency/Directorate for Payments. In his further presentation, Mr. Bojović presented the tasks of all Divisions in accordance with the structure of how the IPARD Agency is organized.
- **Andrijana Rakočević**, Head of the IPARD Managing Authority/General director of Directorate for Rural Development, in her presentation spoke about the responsibilities of the IPARD MA of the IPARD programme, which is responsible for the preparation and implementation of the IPARD III programme, as well as all its amendments and changes, including those requested by the Commission, but also and preparation of the list of eligible expenditures for each of the measures of the programme. Also, as she reminded, IPARD MA performs control and verifiability of measures, which will be defined in the IPARD III programme in cooperation with the IPARD agency; selection of measures within each call for submission of applications within the IPARD III programme and their timeliness, eligibility conditions and financial distribution by measure, per call. Decisions are made in agreement with the IPARD agency. Also, at the end, she reminded that the IPARD Managing Authority is responsible for ensuring the establishment and updating of the appropriate national legal basis for the implementation of the IPARD III programme when it proves necessary.

In accordance with point 6 of the Agenda: Presentation of NAO, including explanation of the state-of-play of the 'entrustment of budget implementation tasks' from the European Commission to Montenegro

- **Anja Amidžić**, general director of the Directorate for Management Structure and deputy National authorising officer for EU funds (NAO)/Ministry of Finance, presented the functions and responsibilities of the NAO, which are in accordance with the provisions of the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement and Sectoral Agreement. As Ms. Amidžić explained, the NAO bears the overall responsibility for the financial management of IPA III assistance in Montenegro and for ensuring the legality and regularity of expenses. By decision of the Government of Montenegro, the secretary of the Ministry of Finance was appointed as the National Authorising Officer (NAO) of Montenegro. She reminded that the Rulebook on exemption from VAT for natural persons was

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amended, so in the previous week certain funds were paid to IPARD recipients and she reminded that there are clearly defined procedures established by the EC for realizing the opportunity for recipients to participate in IPA projects, having in mind that the entire IPA/IPARD structure is subject to audit and control, both by national bodies and by the EC. Also, at the end, Mrs. Amidžić clarified the accreditation procedure in general and stated that Montenegro was the first among the IPARD countries in the WB region to send accreditation package for roll over entrustment for the measures from IPARD II to the IPARD III programme.

In accordance with point 7 of Agenda: Presentation of Audit Authority

- **Rina Mučaj Demirović**, the head of the department for auditing the Agriculture and Rural Development Program presented the role of the Audit Authority, i.e. activities and responsibilities. As Mrs. Mučaj explained, in accordance with the Law on the Audit of Funds from European Union Funds, and according to the requirements defined in the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement on Financial Support, Sectoral and Financing Agreement, the Audit Authority of Montenegro is responsible for the audit of EU funds, including IPA funds, but also and structural funds after EU accession, as well as the funds of Montenegro used for joint financing. The Audit Authority is a functionally and organizationally independent institution in relation to all participants in the system of management and control of programs financed by EU funds. The AA organization was established by the Rulebook on internal organization and systematization within five organizational units, one of which is the Department for auditing the agriculture and rural development program. The Audit Authority is managed by the chief auditor, and in November 2022, the Government of Montenegro appointed Ksenija Barjaktarović as the chief auditor of the Audit Authority. Regarding the reporting criteria, in accordance with Article 63 of the FPPA, the Audit Authority is obliged to submit to the European Commission and the Government, with a copy to NIPAC and NAO, an annual audit opinion on the completeness, accuracy and truthfulness of the annual financial statements, which is the result audit of accounts, on the efficiency and effectiveness of the functioning of the management, control and supervision system as a result of the audit of the system, as well as on the legality and regularity of transactions as a result of the conducted audit of operations. As an accompanying document to the annual audit opinion, the Audit Authority submits an annual report on audit activities, the deadline for submission of which remains the same as in the IPA II perspective, i.e. March 15 of the current year for the previous year.

The overview of the main conclusion of the discussion:

- **Dick Van Dijk**, „desk officer“ for Montenegro in Pre-Accession Unit of DG AGRI.G4 /European Commission, addressed with a suggestion, considering that in March 2023, Montenegro sent a request for the rollover entrustment of the measures of the IPARD II programme, and that in the meantime on the national level certain legal frameworks, rules, etc. should be completed.
- **Andrijana Rakočević**, Head of the IPARD Managing Authority/General director of Directorate for Rural Development, explained that we are in the process of drafting the Regulation for the IPARD III program, for measures 1, 3 and 7, LEE is coordinated with colleagues from the IPARD Agency. The

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rest of the procedures will be harmonized by the middle of July, by then the Regulations should be prepared.

In accordance with point 8 of Agenda: Presentation of the IPARD III programme

The overview of the main conclusion of the discussion:

- **Andrijana Rakočević**, Head of the IPARD Managing Authority/General director of Directorate for Rural Development, introduced the participants to the Measures of the IPARD III programme. In addition to the presentation of all eight measures individually, where special emphasis was given to novelties and differences in relation to the IPARD II programme, Mrs. Rakočević reminded about the full accreditation of Measure 7 and is the state of play regarding the accreditation for Measure 9. She also reminded about the "roll-over" for Measure 1, 3, 7 and 9. Also, she especially pointed out that a pilot project for Measure 4 will be implemented this year and by the end of this year, an accreditation package for Measure 6 is planned to be prepared. Certain activities with local governments have already been realized, and additional workshops and meetings are planned. As Ms. Rakočević stated in her further presentation, the accreditation of Measure 9 is very important, thanks to which will be able to technically support the activities of all measures, which is its main purpose.


In accordance with point 9 of Agenda: Presentation and approval of the Evaluation plan for the IPARD III programme

The overview of the main conclusion of the discussion:

- **Enis Gjokaj**, advisor for monitoring evaluation and reporting presented the obligation to adopt the Evaluation Plan drawn up by the IPARD Managing Authority of the IPARD programme. It has to be submitted to the IPARD III monitoring committee no later than one year after the Commission approved the IPARD III programme. The IPARD Managing Authority reports to the Monitoring Committee of the IPARD III programme and the Commission on the progress achieved in the implementation of this plan. As Mr. Gjokaj emphasized, this plan contained the goals and purpose of the evaluation plan, management and coordination, interested parties, time frame, description of data, i.e. types of indicators, which would be used for the evaluation of the IPARD III programme, evaluation topics, communication, resources, as well as training for evaluation, which aimed at creating or strengthening administrative capacities for fulfilling assessment tasks and activities for efficient use of evaluation results.

Decision number 3

- Evaluation plan for IPARD III programme was approved.
- All 30 members with voting rights voted YES for the adoption.

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In accordance with Article 10 of the Agenda: Approval of the Plan of visibility and communication activities for the IPARD III programme

The overview of the main conclusion of the discussion:


- **Ana Mitrović**, Advisor for coordination and PR of rural development, reminded that all IPARD III monitoring committee members received the Plan via e-mail. Presenting this plan, Mrs. Mitrović highlighted certain details contained in the Plan for the new program period itself. In addition to the usual activities related to the visibility and presentation of the program itself, she reminded about certain communication tools that will be novelties in the IPARD III program; quarterly edition of the newsletter "IPARD ZA TEBE", closer cooperation with the Europe House (project financed by the EU Delegation to Montenegro), viber community where information is shared directly and in the fastest way to potential recipients, recording of a video about IPARD, promotion of success stories of IPARD recipients and more. Also, in her presentation, she made a special review on the occasion of Europe Day, when a reception was organized at the Music Center of Montenegro in Podgorica. Recipients of IPARD support had their place at this important event. They had secured stands with their products, and stories about all of them were recorded by the European House, which will be published in the coming period. During the meeting of the IPARD III monitoring committee, with a short explanation, Mrs. Mitrović presented a video about the recipients of IPARD support.
- **Dick Van Dijk**, „desk officer“ for Montenegro in Pre-Accession Unit of DG AGRI/European Commission
Stressed out the importance of the IPARD website as a tool for visibility and communication activities. What is written in the Plan of visibility and communication activities for the IPARD II programme concerning the use of the IPARD website should be realized before the next monitoring committee meeting including a Q&A section on the IPARD website.

Decision number 4

- Plan of visibility and communication activities for the IPARD III programme was approved.
- All 30 members with voting rights voted YES for the adoption.


In accordance with point 11 of Agenda: Discussion

- **Marko Kise**, president of the fishermen's association, asked the audience whether it is necessary for the recipient to provide the entire funds in this Programme, reminding them of the difficult situation of the fishing sector. Also, he asked if the number of the livestock of IPARD recipients is known, as well as if you know the number of new employees in agriculture?
- **Andrijana Rakočević**, Head of the IPARD Managing Authority/General director of Directorate for Rural Development answered part of Mr. Kise's question and explained that regarding the results of IPARD, in the last three years the first export product is no longer wine, but products of the meat industry, where had a large number of recipients of support through Measure 3, so it is clear that the benefits of the IPARD programme's support was reflected in the market. Mrs. Rakočević also

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answered part of the question about employees in agriculture, saying that this information is contained in the reports that they receive or will receive as members of this Committee, and that one of the indicators is certainly the number of employees based on IPARD projects.

- **Vladislav Bojović**, the acting General Director of the Directorate for Payments, the head of the IPARD Agency referred to the idea of establishing a guarantee fund, saying that this is the goal and priority of this Government, but that there are also mechanisms such as advance and interim payments that allow potential recipients to use certain funds on more favourable terms.
- **Nataša Vojinović**, MONSTAT, wanted to inform the members of IPARD III monitoring committee that at the moment they are working on the preparation of the agricultural census, which will be organized immediately after the population census. What is currently being prepared is the Law on the Census, which will receive an opinion on, where IMC members will have the opportunity to give their opinion. Also, she informed that the Directorate of Statistics adopted the Criteria for defining "official statistics" and "other producers of official statistics" and in order to determine which body produces "official statistics" and which has the possibility to qualify as another producer of official statistics, it is necessary to submit a request that is published on the website.
- **Vladimir Đaković**, Director of the Administration for Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Affairs, referred to some measurable results, through which everyone can see what IPARD managed to do, which is that the IPARD recipients or subjects registered in the Administration, i.e. now have facilities with much better standards and have achieved the right to obtain export numbers, so that these goods can be exported to the EU market.
- **Željko Macanović**, President of the Association "Healthy grain" stated that IPARD funds are used very little and that this Programme should be focused as much as possible on young people and how to keep these young people in the countryside.
- **Milun Anđić**, President of the Montenegrin Fishermen's Association - Trio Mare, pointed out that there are many problems in the fishing sector, the biggest of which is the impossibility of obtaining loans, given that banks do not accept ships/boats as mortgages. Also, he mentioned that he is familiar with illegal import of fish in Montenegro from Angola, which allegedly is sold in the best and most expensive restaurants.
- **Vladimir Đaković**, Director of the Administration for Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary said that they are going to investigate 'the case'.
- **Vučko Pešić**, president of the Rural tourism association "Tourism in villages", asked a question related to the problem of obtaining a building permit, which is necessary for beneficiaries of Measure 7 (sub measure Rural tourism).
- **Gordana Drinčić**, Head of the Division for Evaluation and Approval of the Project in the Directorate for Payments/the IPARD Agency, explained that the Spatial Plan of Montenegro is being developed, and that they held two meetings with Mrs. Svetlana Jovanović, who is the manager of the development of this Plan. The initiative that objects of importance for rural tourism be recognized by this Plan through all municipalities was sent to the Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism, and a positive response was received that they will be recognized and that representatives of the IPARD structure will be involved in the development of spatial plans for municipalities. She emphasized that in those areas where the DUP has not passed, based on the guidelines of the municipalities, they are already issuing permits.

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- **Stevan Gajević**, State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Chairperson of the IPARD III MC noted that in addition to these questions, most of which were unrelated to the implementation of the IPARD III program, this point was also discussed in previous presentations and that everything that was foreseen had already been said.

In accordance with point 12 of Agenda: Proposals for date and agenda for the next meeting

The overview of the main conclusion of the discussion:

- **Stevan Gajević**, State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Chairperson of the IPARD III MC suggested that the appointment for the next meeting be organized after the consultation of the representative of the European Commission with the IPARD Managing Authority, about which the members of the IPARD III monitoring committee will be informed in a timely manner.

Signatures

CHAIRPERSON OF IPARD II MC	FOR SECRETARIAT:
Mr. Stevan Gajević	Mrs. Andrijana Rakočević
<i>Position: State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Chairperson</i>	<i>Position: Head of Managing Authority, General Director directorate for rural development,</i>
Signature: 	Signature: 
Date: June 30 th 2023	Date: June 30 th 2023

Attachment: List of participants