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MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF IPARD III MONITORING COMMITTEE Minutes number 2 Minutes from the SECOND meeting of the IPARD III Monitoring Committee 7 th of December 2023/ Hotel Hilton, Bulevar Svetog Petra Cetinjskog 2, 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 Ministry of Public Administration, the Ministry of Transport and Maritime Affairs, the Community of Municipalities of Montenegro, NGO Green home, the Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management - University of Montenegro, the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering - University of Montenegro, the National Association of Winemakers and Vinegrowers of Montenegro, the Centre for Agro development - Bijelo Polje, the Control and Certification Body "Monteorganica" doo, the Association of Private Forest Owners, the Association of Agricultural Fruit and Vegetable Producers "Ratar", the Association of Producers "Domaće voće Pobraće", the "Association of Trout Producers of Montenegro" and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water management - Fisheries Directorate and Authority for food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary affairs).

Result:

Quorum was fulfilled, so the meeting could be held and decisions can be taken (29 members or their substitutes with voting rights were present out of 44 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 44.);
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

Agenda of the meeting

AGENDA

Second IPARD III Monitoring Committee meeting

Date: Thursday, 7th December 2023


Time: 10:00 a.m.

Place: Hotel Hilton, Bulevar Svetog Petra Cetinjskog 2, Podgorica

No. items	Provisional time	Content	Informative /Need agreement /Need approval /Need opinion of the IMC members	Responsibility
1.	10:00-10:10	Opening of the meeting; Approval of the Agenda	Need approval	Andrijana Rakočević, Head of the IPARD Managing Authority/Director General of Directorate for Rural Development, Chairperson
2.	10:10-10:25	Short introduction by European Commission (DG AGR)	Informative	Frank Bollen, Head of Unit G4 - Neighbourhood, enlargement and pre-accession assistance of DG AGRI/European Commission
3.	10:25-10:30	Adoption of the minutes of the previous IPARD monitoring committee (IMC) meeting (attached to the Agenda) and information on the implementation of decisions taken at the previous IPARD III monitoring committee meeting	Need approval	Andrijana Rakočević, Head of the IPARD Managing Authority/Director General of Directorate for Rural Development, Chairperson
4.	10:30-10:35	Adoptions of the amendments of the Rules of procedures of the monitoring committee for the IPARD III programme for Montenegro (IPARD III Monitoring Committee meeting), article 3 "Appointment and structure of the committee" because of the institutional changes in Montenegro	Need approval	Andrijana Rakočević, Head of the IPARD Managing Authority/Director General of Directorate for Rural Development, Chairperson

5.	10:35-10:50	State of play of the implementation of the IPARD III programme	Informative	Andrijana Rakočević, Head of the IPARD Managing Authority/Director General of Directorate for Rural Development
6.	10:50-11:05	State of play of the implementation of the IPARD II programme	Informative	Marko Radonjić, Head of the IPARD Agency/Director General of Directorate for payments
7.	11:05-11:20	Coffee break		
8.	11:20-11:30	IPARD II and IPARD III programme modification	Need approval	Miloš Kusovac, Head of Division for programming
9.	11:30-11:45	Information about the communication activities linked to the 'plan of visibility and communication activities for IPARD II and IPARD III programme' for the period from previous IMC meeting (1 st June 2023.) 'Plan of visibility and communication activities – Annual List of Actions – 2024'	Need approval	Nina Jakić, Advisor for Coordination and Public Relations of Rural development
10.	11:45-11:50	Annual Action Plan for Technical assistance for 2024	Need approval	Nina Jakić, Advisor for Coordination and Public Relations of Rural development
11.	11:50-12:00	Challenges of the monitoring system with a proposal for improving the system	Informative	Zoran Irić, Head of Division for Monitoring and evaluation of IPARD, Coordination and public relations

12.	12:00-12:10	Presentation of some of the members of the IPARD III monitoring committee	Informative	1. Lidija Radović, independent advisor I in the Directorate for transformation and development of crafts in the Ministry of Economic Development 2. Luka Milošević, President of the Association „Marikultura
13.	12:10-12:30	Discussion		
14.	12:30	Proposals for a date and the Agenda of the next meeting	Informative	
15.	12.45h	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

- **Andrijana Rakočević**, Director General of the Directorate for Rural Development, Head of the IPARD Managing Authority, Chairperson of the IPARD III monitoring committee, opened the meeting and presented the Agenda.

Decision no.1


- Agenda was adopted.
- All 29 members with voting rights voted YES for adoption.

In accordance with point 2 of the Agenda: Short introduction by European Commission (DG AGRI)

- **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, and informed those present about the morning meeting, where he officially informed Minister Joković that the submitted initiative related to the possibility of spending funds from the IPARD II programme until the end of 2024 was approved, and provided additional time for Montenegro for the realization of the contracted investments and those that are yet to be contracted. This initiative was officially submitted in March of this year at the meeting of Minister Joković with the Commissioner of the European Union Mr. Janusz Wojciechowski in Brussels. Mr. Bollen expressed his belief that Montenegro will use this additional condition for the spending of funds in the amount of 15 million euros in the next year in the right way, but also reminded of the responsibility and obligations that should be undertaken in order to start the implementation of the IPARD III programme in a timely manner. Also, given that there is interest in the field for IPARD support, additional efforts need to be made in order to use the funds in the right way, and on this occasion, he expressed his wish to hear from them personally about their experiences in using EU funds during direct meetings with the recipients of the IPARD programme.

In accordance with point 3 of the Agenda: Adoption of the Minutes from the previous meeting of the IPARD III Monitoring Committee (annex to the Agenda) and the report on the follow-up of the decisions made at the previous meeting of the IPARD III Monitoring Committee

- **Andrijana Rakočević**, Director General of the Directorate for Rural Development, Head of the IPARD Managing Authority, and Chairperson of the IPARD III Monitoring Committee stated that the Minutes were sent to all members of the IPARD III Monitoring Committee within the stipulated period and that there were no comments on the Minutes in question.

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Decision no.2

- Minutes from the previous meeting of IPARD III MC were approved.
- All 29 members with voting rights voted YES for adoption.

In accordance with the point 4 of the Agenda: Adoptions of the amendments of the Rules of procedures of the Monitoring Committee for the IPARD III programme for Montenegro (IPARD III Monitoring Committee meeting), article 3 "Appointment and structure of the committee" because of the institutional changes in Montenegro


- **Andrijana Rakočević**, Director General of the Directorate for Rural Development, Head of the IPARD Managing Authority, and Chairperson of the IPARD III Monitoring Committee, explained that due to the recent institutional and personnel changes in Montenegro, it was necessary to make changes to the Rules of procedure. It was emphasized that the aforementioned Rules of Procedure were forwarded to all members of the Monitoring Committee, to which no remarks were given, and the amendment of the Rules of Procedure was adopted.

The overview of the main conclusion of the discussion:

- **Lidija Rmuš**, secretary of the Committee for Agriculture and Food Industry - Chamber of Commerce addressed a question to those present and proposed to examine the possibility of representatives of Montenegrin companies attending these meetings so that they could direct questions to the members of the EU Commission, referring to paragraph 6 of the Rules of Procedure.
- **Dick Van Dijk**, "Programme manager" for Montenegro in the pre-accession unit of DG AGRI, replied to Ms. Rmuš that the members of the IPARD III Monitoring Committee are supposed to be members of the institutions that are involved in the process of implementing the IPARD III programme, as well as representatives of agricultural producers, that is, associations from different sectors of agricultural production, but also representatives of the non-governmental sector, and that the inclusion of the private sector, that is, some of the companies, would also mean favourisation of that entity, and that this proposal is not in accordance with the basic principles of the work of this Committee and as such cannot be adopted.

Decision no.3

- The amendments of the Rules of procedures of the Monitoring Committee for the IPARD III programme for Montenegro were approved.
- All 29 members with voting rights voted YES for adoption.

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In accordance with point 5 of the Agenda: Presentation of the IPARD III programme

- Andrijana Rakočević**, Head of the IPARD Managing Authority/General director of Directorate for Rural Development presented the activities undertaken in order to implement the IPARD III programme. In addition to the measures that Montenegro is already implementing through the IPARD II programme, such as M1 - support for primary agricultural production, M3 - support for the processing sector, M7 - diversification of economic activities and M9 - Technical assistance, for which a request for accreditation/roll-over has been sent, this programme includes four new measures; Measure 4 - Agro-ecological-climatic and organic measure, Measure 5 - Implementation of local development strategies - LEADER, Measure 6 - Investments in public rural infrastructure and Measure 11 - Establishment and protection of forests.

Mrs. Rakočević pointed out that the new programme intends to expand the range of potential recipients. For this reason, beginners in agriculture were introduced as acceptable recipients, and through Measure 6, which refers to rural infrastructure, eligible recipients can be local governments. In measure 5- LEADER, the recipient are local action groups (LAGs), which will consist of representatives of the civil sector, local self-governments and representatives of the economy in the area covered by the local development strategy. In the further presentation, she presented the initiated activities for the preparation of the accreditation package for Measure 4, while for Measure 5, the preparation of a feasibility study for the introduction of the LEADER measure, a potential pilot project with the support of FAO, is in progress for the implementation of M5. Further, there was talk about Measure 6, for which the accreditation package is in the preparation phase, the expert mission has been completed, and at the same time, in cooperation with the Union of Municipalities, work is already being done on educating potential recipients through the organization of workshops on PRAG procedures.

In accordance with point 6 of the Agenda: State of play of the implementation of the IPARD II programme

- Marko Radonjić**, Director General of the Directorate for Payments, Head of the IPARD Agency, in his presentation pointed out that apart from the Fifth Public Call for Measure 1, the contracting of all other calls has been completed. So far, 622 projects have been contracted, with a total investment of almost EUR 120 million and almost EUR 42 million from EU support. As he informed those present, 378 projects have been paid so far, that is, almost EUR 50 million has been invested in the agricultural sector, and almost EUR 20 million is a donation from the EU. Mr. Radonjić said that EUR 1.27 million of EU support was currently paid out in the IV quarter, and by the end of the year it is planned to pay another EUR 3.25 million of EU support, which means that this year, counting on the n+4 rule for the IPARD budget in 2029 year, we will not have a de-commitment, that is, we will not return to the Union budget the funds that Montenegro had available. In his further presentation, he presented a cross-section of the situation for the year 2023, not counting V Public call M1, where it is necessary to pay almost EUR 8 million of EU support. Therefore, this amount will be even higher, when we define the conditions under which we will contract V Public call M1. What Mr. Radonjić pointed out is that there was a surprising number of potential recipients, which is significantly higher in relation

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to the available funds; according to the current situation, there are 315 requests for potential contracts with the required amount of investment (including VAT) of EUR 22.14 million, so the required amount of support is EUR 12.49 million, of which the EU part is EUR 9.37 million. In the end, he reminded, and as colleagues have already presented, with changes to the IPARD II programme, we would solve the issue of missing funds for tractors, and with the guarantee that the Government of Montenegro would issue us, we would provide funds for other types of investments, in case the realization of all investments actually came to be. So, as everyone announced, Montenegro expects the end of the IPARD II programme and the start of the IPARD III programme, along with the employment of people in the positions that were advertised in the current year.


In accordance with item 8 of the Agenda: Amendments to the IPARD II and IPARD III programmes

- **Miloš Kusovac**, head of the Directorate for Programming, presented the current changes related to the IPARD II and IPARD III programme during the presentation. In accordance with the procedure, changes to the IPARD II programme were initiated, which mainly refer to the redistribution of available funds within the budget years 2019 and 2020, all with the aim of smooth implementation of already announced public calls.

When it comes to the IPARD III programme, the proposed changes refer to the entire set of measures included in this programme. In the first place, the criteria related to the maximum amount of support that users can obtain in the programming period, the possibility of advance and interim payments are more closely defined. In Measure 1, the main focus was given to beginning farmers, in Measure 4 the obligations regarding pastures and organic production were more closely defined, while in Measure 7 the main change was made in the ranking criteria.


The overview of the main conclusion of the discussion:

- **Milko Živković**, president of the Union of Cattle Breeders of the North of Montenegro - pointed out that he wanted to draw attention and convey the dissatisfaction of producers from the livestock sector, especially to the increasing outflow of young people from the north and pointed out that Montenegrin villages are devastated. Also, at the end, he added that he will convey today's news to the Montenegrin livestock farmers about the extension of the deadline for the realization of investments in 2024.
- **Vučko Pešić**, president of the Rural tourism association "Turizam na Selu", shared his knowledge about the difficulties in procuring equipment and machines, particularly expressing the problem of procuring tractors from western markets, which are not significantly represented in our country. He also referred to the period of realization of loan funds at the IDF, recognizing this institution as a bottleneck in the use of IPARD funds. Regarding the matrix of changes that was submitted, he proposed to include an additional criterion when scoring for agricultural producers whose only

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activity is agriculture. Mr. Pešić also raised the issue of small-scale processing on the farm, specifically why meat processing was not supported in sub-measure 7.2.


- **Miloš Kusovac**, Head of the Directorate for Programming, emphasized that all proposed changes must be based on valid national legislation, and that for all the criteria it is necessary to provide evidence that can be easily checked by the Directorate for Payments, and that this issue will be further considered with competent institution, i.e. UBHVFP.
- **Spasoje Vujošević**, coordinator of the Department for Loans and Guarantees at the Investment and Development Fund at the IDF, during the discussion pointed out that the IDF is the only institution that lends credit to users of the IPARD programme and pointed out that he believes that this institution is a partner of the Ministry and that cooperation systems are sufficiently developed.
- **Ratko Bataković**, president of the Network for Rural Development of Montenegro, expressed his satisfaction that the activities for the preparation of a feasibility study for the introduction of the LEADER measure had been initiated and informed those present that the Agricultural cluster of Montenegro had become a member of the largest European organization of farmers and agro-industrial companies "Copa Cogeca", which brings together farmers from the European Union (EU).
- **Čazim Alković**, president of the Association of olive and olive oil producers Bar, praised the fact that the new IPARD III programme foresees the sector of olive growing and viticulture through Measure 7, and raised a question about solving the issue of obtaining construction permits.
- **Vladimir Dabanović**, president of the Agricultural Cluster of Montenegro, asked a question regarding Measure 7; is it possible to support investments in temporary buildings, given that they do not require building permits, and are such investments supported through this measure?
- **Ivan Nedović**, Head of the Planning Documentation Department at the Ministry of Spatial Planning, Urban Planning and State Property, answering to Mr. Dabanović that the installation of such facilities should be foreseen through the Programs of temporary facilities which are adopted for 5 years, and that the types of temporary facilities are according to the manner in which are attached to the ground and according to the purpose determined in accordance with the Rulebook on detailed conditions for the installation or construction of temporary facilities, devices and equipment and expressed readiness to organize a meeting in the near future regarding all doubts that are within the competence of this Ministry.
- **Milena Kotlića**, adviser for programming - informed those present that the Ministry had previously organized a series of meetings regarding this issue with representatives of the Ministry of Economic Development and Tourism. She emphasized that the Guide for users of Measure 7 "Farm diversification and business development" is in the final stage, in which potential users will have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with all the steps that need to be taken in order to fulfill the conditions when applying for this measure. Also, as she pointed out, a series of meetings were held with the Ministry responsible for spatial planning as well as with representatives of local self-governments in order to find a common solution, primarily regarding obtaining urban planning technical conditions in rural areas. In addition, the Ministry sent comments on the draft of the Spatial Plan, with the intention of addressing and recognizing the bottlenecks that we previously saw during the implementation of Measure 7.

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- **Biljana Pejović**, Head of the Department for Gender Equality Affairs in the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, commented that the attached document was not updated by gender equality, and asked if the IPARD programme is like that, if women agricultural producers are recognized with some form of support.
- **Miloš Kusovac**, head of the Directorate for Programming, explained in his reply to Mrs. Pejović that both IPARD programmes are gendered and have special chapters when it comes to gender equality, not only gender equality, but also young farmers receive 10% support, and women recipient have additional points in the ranking part.
- **Igor Pajović**, assistant professor at the Faculty of Biotechnology - University of Montenegro, suggested that in the attached matrices of Amendments to the IPARD III programme version 1.1. in point 3 related to environmental protection, food safety, animal welfare and safety at work, add public health and restore food safety.
- **Lidija Rmuš**, secretary of the Committee for Agriculture and Food Industry - Chamber of Commerce, asked a question about the change that now allows 3 mil. EUR of the total consumption of IPARD funds, while in some of the first presentations there was talk of 5 million EUR.
- **Luka Milošević**, president of the "Marikultura" Association, proposed that in the new IPARD III programme, the criterion for the aquaculture sector be reduced, where it is foreseen that the recipient has production where the minimum annual capacity is 10 tons of fish or shellfish, considering climate change where global warming affects to the reduced flow of water in the bays and the problem of warming, and therefore the production was also reduced. Also, the proposal is to shorten the lease period for the aquaculture sector, where it is 10 years, which does not coincide with the lease period approved by Morsko dobro, which is usually one or two years, so potential recipient are not able to fulfill this condition.
- **Andrijana Rakočević**, General Director of the Directorate for Rural Development, head of the IPARD Management Authority, to the question of Mrs. Rmuš, clarified that the change regarding the total spending of funds was made at the proposal of the EU Commission, but that this amount is quite correct considering that in the previous period it was so much consumption by all major companies, and we also have to take into account that some potential recipient enter the "death weight" zone, that is, they are not acceptable recipient who can finance investments from their own funds. Regarding the other proposals, Mrs. Rakočević expressed satisfaction that constructive ideas were initiated, but reminded those present that each of these additional proposals requires additional checks, that is, it is necessary to consider how such changes will be controlled by the IPARD payment agency. Finally, in consultation with Mr. Van Dijk, she proposed to adopt the IPARD III programme version 1.1. with the amendment proposed by Mr. Pajović, and that the other proposals be considered until the next meeting with additional analyzes and meetings with departmental structures from these areas, that is, until the next changes to the IPARD III programme.

Decision number 4

- Amendments to the IPARD III program were adopted with the amendment in point 3 of the Matrix of modification of the IPARD III programme.

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- All 29 members with voting rights voted YES for adoption.

U accordance with Article 9 of the Agenda: Approval of the Plan of visibility and communication activities for the IPARD III programme

- **Nina Jakić**, Advisor for coordination and PR of Rural Development, at the beginning, she referred to the promotional activities that were carried out this year on the occasion of the publication public calls for measures 1 and 3, such as official conferences before the public call was announced, workshops in all municipalities, where informative leaflets were distributed. Mrs. Jakić recalled the publication of the first newsletter about IPARD in Montenegro, IPARD ZA TEBE, which is published quarterly, and the attendees were given Issue No. 2 and No. 3, as well as a brochure on the IPARD III programme that will be distributed during promotional activities next year, which are contained and described in detail in the Plan of visibility and communication activities - Annual list of actions - 2024, which was delivered to all members via email. She invited all those present to find successful stories of IPARD recipients, which were MADE in cooperation with the European House, as well as other information related to the IPARD III programme, on the official IPARD website/instagram/facebook. As far as media promotion is concerned, it is important to note that numerous guest appearances by employees of the Ministry on state and local TV and radio stations are contained in 491 announcements (64 newspaper announcements, 78 TV reports and 349 announcements on portals).

Decision number 5


- Plan of visibility and communication activities - Annual list of actions - 2024 was adopted
- All 29 members with voting rights voted YES for the adoption.

In accordance with item 10 of the Agenda: Presentation and approval of the Technical Assistance Action Plan for 2024

- **Nina Jakić**, Advisor for coordination and public relations of Rural Development, in her introductory presentation emphasized that the Annual Action Plan was sent to all members by e-mail and that there were no additional comments. As she pointed out, this plan contains a list of activities whose implementation is planned in the current calendar year, with an indicative budget for all types of activities. The assessment of the value of purchases and services in APP is based on market research or on the basis of previous experience, so this plan foresees spending in the amount of 189,375.60 euros of EU funds and 28,406.34 euros of national funding. Also, in accordance with the changes in the IPARD II programme and the allocation of budget funds, the use of 50 thousand euros of EU funds intended for 2023 is foreseen.

Decision number 6

Annual Action plan for Technical Assistance for 2024 was adopted

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All 29 members with voting rights voted YES for the adoption.

In accordance with point 11 of the Agenda: Challenges of the monitoring system with a proposal for improving the system

- **Zoran Irić**, Head of the Directorate for Monitoring and Evaluation of IPARD, Coordination and Public Relations (PR) of Rural Development, points out that the implementation of the IPARD II programme, as is known, is in the final phase and the monitoring of the implementation of open Public calls will continue and until the closing of the programme, after which the comprehensive preparation of quality information necessary for the obligation of ex-post evaluation will be started. Also, Mr. Irić mentioned that in meeting the start of the implementation of the IPARD III programme, the continuity of monitoring the implementation of the programme will maintain the planned dynamics. At the very end of the presentation, he pointed out that in order to improve the monitoring system, he expects access to the software that will contain the widest range of information necessary for quality programme monitoring.


In accordance with item 12 of the Agenda: Presentation of two members of the IPARD III Monitoring Committee

- **Lidija Radović**, independent advisor I in the Directorate for transformation and development of crafts in the Ministry of Economic Development, stated that there is evident progress in the field of craft policy and the further development of craft activities and that she believes that in cooperation with representatives of the ministry, a joint meeting should be organized in order to exchange experiences and good practices in relation to craft policy. As she pointed out, on this occasion they would propose changing the criteria for supporting sub-measure 7.3. which is intended for craftsmen. In her further presentation, Mrs. Radović spoke about the List of Craftsmen and the support programmes of the Ministry of Economic Development that are implemented for artisans.
- **Luka Milošević**, president of the "Marikultura" Association, in his introduction, said that this association brings together about 20 shellfish and fish growers, and that he believes that this production is threatened, as he previously pointed out, and thanked for the proposal to intensify cooperation, all with the goal of having more potential recipients of IPARD funds from this sector.

In accordance with point 13 of Agenda: Discussion

- **Andrijana Rakočević**, Director General of the Directorate for Rural Development, head of the IPARD Managing Authority and chairperson, praised today's discussion, which took place in accordance with the points of the Agenda and expressed her satisfaction with the constructive proposals, pointing out that the work of this Committee is justified.

In accordance with point 14 of Agenda: Proposals for date and agenda for the next meeting

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- **Andrijana Rakočević**, Director General of the Directorate for Rural Development, head of the IPARD Managing Authority, chairperson, proposed that the date for the next meeting be in the first half of June 2024, about which the members of the IPARD III Monitoring Committee will be informed in a timely manner.

Signatures

CHAIRPERSON OF IPARD III MC	FOR SECRETARIAT:
<i>Mrs. Andrijana Rakočević</i>	<i>Mrs. Andrijana Rakočević</i>
<i>Position: Head of the IPARD Managing Authority, General Director directorate for rural development, Chairperson</i>	<i>Position: Head of the IPARD Managing Authority, General Director directorate for rural development,</i>
Signature: 	Signature: 
Date: 16.01.2024.	Date: 16.01.2024.

Attachment: List of participants