



Subject: Guidelines for communication, publicity, and visibility for projects funded under IPARD III programmes

1. OBJECTIVE

The objective of these guidelines is to provide information concerning the obligations, at the side of the beneficiary countries' IPARD Managing Authority and IPARD Agency and recipients, **to ensure an adequate communication, publicity and visibility of the EU support** provided under IPARD III programmes.

The objective of the communication, publicity and visibility activities is **to inform the general public about the EU-financed assistance under the IPARD III programmes** through various means and measures identified by the beneficiary countries in their plans of visibility and communication activities.

2. LEGAL BASIS

These guidelines summarise and elaborate on the **legal obligations on communication**, publicity and visibility provided for in the IPA III and IPARD III legal framework:

- Articles 23 and 24 of the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement¹
- Articles 31 and 32 and Annex 8 of the Sectoral Agreement²
- IPARD III programme³.

According to Article 24 of the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement (FFPA), **the IPA III beneficiary shall raise public awareness about the opportunities stemming from closer EU integration and reforms implemented with the EU support**. This includes the obligation to establish visibility and communication measures to inform about the EU support by providing a clear and visible statement on the origin of the support on all related documents and communication material, on an official website and social media.

Such visibility and communication measures should also embrace the identification of supported actions and their results in a form of coherent, effective and targeted information to multiple audiences, including the media.

¹ Commission Decision of 31.3.2022 establishing a model for a financial framework partnership agreement between the Commission and the government of an IPA III beneficiary, C(2022) 1857 final

² Commission Decision of 27.7.2022 establishing a model of a Sectoral Agreement between the Commission and the government of an IPA III beneficiary in the field of agriculture and rural development, C(2022) 5232 final.

³ Commission Implementing Decision adopting the IPA III Rural Development Programme (IPARD III) of an IPA III beneficiary for the years 2021-2027 (respective for each beneficiary country)

The Sectoral Agreement, in its Article 31, requires that **the beneficiary country establishes a plan of visibility and communication activities**. Article 32 of the Sectoral Agreement further spells out the content of the plan of visibility and communication activities.

Annex 8 of the Sectoral Agreement provides for **the specific responsibilities of the IPA III beneficiary country and of the recipients of the support** (Sections 2.1 and 2.2 respectively) in terms of information and communication about the IPARD III programme. These responsibilities, among other measures, include the obligation to display the Union emblem, in accordance with the rules on EU visual identity, as well as the use of the IPARD visual element. In case of the recipients of the EU support, Annex 8 also provides for detailed rules on how to ensure visual information to the public about the EU support received.

Furthermore, as specified in section 3 of Annex 8, the IPARD Managing Authority and IPARD Agency have obligations to inform the potential recipients about the opportunities provided for in the programme as well as about the conditions and procedures to apply for the support. They are also responsible for publishing the list of projects and recipients supported by IPARD programme.

Finally, section 4 of Annex 8 enumerates elements, which must make part of the plan of visibility and communication activities: approach taken to inform and communicate about the IPARD programme, materials to be used, allocated budget, and organisational and administrative structure implementing the information and communication policy.

3. OBLIGATIONS OF IPARD MANAGING AUTHORITY AND IPARD AGENCY CONCERNING COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICITY

The obligations of the IPARD Managing Authority and IPARD Agency in the field of communication and publicity are:

- to inform and publicise the IPARD III programme and the Union contribution aimed at the general public,
- to inform about the IPARD III programme aimed at potential recipients, and
- to inform about the Union contribution received by recipients of the IPARD III assistance.

3.1. Information, publicity and visibility targeting the general public

To promote the IPARD III programme and the Union contribution, **the IPARD Managing Authority is obliged to:**

- draft and implement a plan of visibility and communication activities,
- ensure functioning of a single website or a single website portal providing information on and access to the IPARD III programme,
- inform about funding opportunities under the IPARD III programme.

To ensure transparency concerning support under the IPARD III programme, **the IPARD Agency is obliged to:**

- publish the list of the projects and recipients of IPA III assistance, to be updated at least every six months, which should be accessible through the single website or the single website portal.

More specifically, based on Section 2.1 of Annex 8 of the Sectoral Agreement, **the IPARD Managing Authority and IPARD Agency tasks and responsibilities** concerning communication, publicity and visibility are:

1. To ensure that the information and communication measures, implemented in accordance with the plan of visibility and communication activities, aim for the widest possible media coverage,
2. To organise a major information activity publicising the launch of the programme,
3. To organise one major information activity a year promoting the funding opportunities and presenting the achievements of the programme, including project examples,
4. To display the Union emblem, in accordance with the rules on EU visual identity, and the IPARD visual element, at the premises of each entity of the operating structure,
5. To publish electronically the list of operations,
6. To provide examples of operations on the single website or on the programme's website; the examples should be in English and in the national language,
7. To update information about the programme's implementation and its main achievements on the single website or on the programme's website that is accessible through the single website portal.

3.1.1. Plan of visibility and communication activities

The beneficiary countries' obligation to provide information about assistance under the IPARD III programme has to be **based on a plan of visibility and communication activities**. Such plan is to be agreed between the IPARD Managing Authority and the Commission and approved by the IPARD III Monitoring Committee, no later than one year after the adoption of the IPARD III programme by the Commission.

Although the plan of visibility and communication activities covers the whole period of the IPARD III programme, **it is implemented by an annual list of actions**.

According to Article 32(2) of the Sectoral Agreement "the amount allocated for information and publicity may be part of the technical assistance measure of the IPARD III programme". Under Annex I, Clause 6a(6) of FFPA, the IPARD Managing Authority shall each year draw up an action plan for operations envisaged under the technical assistance measure, which will be submitted to the IPARD III monitoring committee for agreement.

The Sectoral Agreement, in Article 32, defines **the main features of such plan** as follows:

1. the aims and target groups,
2. the content and strategy of the communication and information measures, stating the measures to be taken,
3. the plan's indicative budget,
4. the administrative departments or bodies responsible for implementation,
5. the indicators to be used to evaluate the impact of the information and publicity measures in terms of transparency, awareness of the IPARD III programmes and the role played by the Union.

Section 4 of Annex 8 provides for **more specific elements to be included in the plan of visibility and communication activities**:

1. a description of the approach taken, including the main information and communication measures to be taken by the beneficiary country or IPARD Managing Authority/IPARD Agency and aimed at potential recipients, recipients, multipliers and the wider public, having regard to the aims described in Article 31 of this Agreement,
2. a description of materials that will be made available in formats accessible for people with disabilities,
3. a description of how recipients will be supported in their communication activities,
4. the indicative budget for implementation of the plan of visibility and communication activities,
5. a description of the administrative bodies, including the staff resources, responsible for implementing the information and communication measures,
6. the arrangements for the information and communication measures referred to in point 2, including the website or website portal at which such data may be found,
7. an indication of how the information and communication measures shall be assessed in terms of visibility and awareness of policy, programmes and operations, and of the role played by the Funds and the Union,
8. where appropriate, a description of the use of the main results of the previous IPARD programme,
9. an annual update setting out the information and communication activities to be carried out in the following year.

3.2. Information, publicity and visibility targeting potential recipients

The IPARD Managing Authority and the IPARD Agency shall be responsible for providing **the information to potential recipients** as follows (Section 3.1 of Annex 8):

1. To ensure that information on the programme's objectives and funding opportunities is disseminated widely to potential recipients and all interested parties.

2. To ensure that potential recipients have access to the relevant information concerning:
 - funding opportunities and the launching of application calls;
 - eligibility of expenditure conditions;
 - a description of the procedures for examining applications for funding and of the time periods involved;
 - criteria for selecting the operations;
 - contacts at national, regional or local level able to provide information on the programmes;
 - responsibility of potential recipients to inform the public about the aim of and the support from the Funds.

4. RECIPIENTS OBLIGATIONS CONCERNING COMMUNICATION, PUBLICITY AND VISIBILITY

The IPARD Managing Authority and IPARD Agency are not the only parties of the IPARD implementing entities having a task to inform, communicate and publicise about the EU support for IPARD. **The recipients of IPARD support also are obliged to ensure visual information to the public about the EU support** which they receive.

Following the rules provided for in Section 2.2 of Annex 8, during project implementation, **the recipient shall inform the public about the IPARD support** received through providing on the recipients' website, where such a website exists, a short description of the operation and highlighting the financial support from the Union.

Any communication material has **to display the Union emblem, a reference to the Fund supporting the project, and the IPARD visual element**, as provided by the European Commission.

In addition, the recipient has to inform the public about the IPARD-funded project at the site of the investment in the following manner:

1. For projects with public support < EUR 20.000: placing **a poster** of a minimum size A3, with the information on the financial support from the Union, at a location readily visible to the public;
2. For projects with public support > EUR 20.000: an explanatory **plaque** of a minimum size of A3, with the information on the financial support from the Union, located readily visible to the public;
3. For projects with public support > EUR 100.000: a **temporary billboard** of a significant size at a location readily visible to the public until the moment of the final payment.

For projects referred to in points 1, 2 and 3, posters, plaques and billboards shall include a description of the project/operation, the Union emblem, and shall indicate that the project has been supported by the EU, including the IPARD visual element. This information shall take up at least 25 % of the billboard or plaque. The

obligation to publicise the project as funded by the Union is to start from the moment the recipient begins the physical work related to that project.

For the **small** (< EUR 20.000) and **middle-size** (> EUR 20.000) projects, **the obligation** to inform the public about the source of funding **ends at the moment of the final payment**.

For **big projects** (> EUR 100.000), consisting of financing of infrastructure or construction operations, the recipient is obliged to place a **permanent plaque or billboard** of a significant size **after the final payment**, including the name and the main objective of the operation and highlighting the financial support provided from the Union, at a location readily visible to the public.

In the specific **case of area- and animal-related operations** (commitments) under measure agri-environment-climate and organic farming, there is **no obligation to display visible communication** as referred to in Section 2.2(2c) of Annex 8. Nevertheless, the IPARD Managing Authority/IPARD Agency are expected to **establish rules for recipients' obligations to ensure visibility of EU support** also in cases of this measure, where possible (e.g. at the entrance area of the farm).

NB: In addition, equipment/assets for all categories of IPARD projects co-financed by the EU, should be clearly marked, during the ex-post period of 5 years, by 'stickers' indicating that they are co-financed by the European Union. This should include the EU emblem and the relevant funding statement, and the IPARD visual element.

5. USE OF THE EU EMBLEM AND THE IPARD VISUAL ELEMENT

Displaying **the Union emblem**, in accordance with the technical characteristics regarding the EU visual identity is a **feature** which is to be applied **in communicating about the IPARD programme**. This is the well-established feature communicating in an easy and straightforward manner about the EU support provided under IPARD instrument.

In applying any visual entity, the beneficiary country is expected to take account of the Commission's guidelines "Communicating and raising EU visibility: Guidance for external actions" accessible at the following link: https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/knowledge-hub/communicating-and-raising-eu-visibility-guidance-external-actions_en .

Also the new operational guidelines provide information on the visual identification and use of the EU emblem: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/eu-emblem-rules_en.pdf

The European Union emblem needs to be used always **together with the statement** "Funded by the European Union" or "Co-funded by the European Union" (for technical specifications, please look into the above-mentioned guidelines):



**Funded by
the European Union**



**Co-funded by
the European Union**



**Funded by
the European Union**



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

To acknowledge the EU contribution, provided through the IPARD III programme, and ensure its good visibility and publicity, the IPARD visual element should also be included in the visibility and publicity materials:

IPARD

To respect the EU visual identity rules which do not allow to add any other graphic elements to that visual identity (the EU flag together with the statement “Funded (or Co-funded) by the European Union”), a reference to the IPARD visual element **has to be placed in a distance from the main EU visual identity**, i.e. the EU emblem cannot be linked or merged with the IPARD visual element and must be treated and displayed as **two distinct features**:

Do not add other graphic elements.



Two distinctive features e.g. placed on the opposite sides of a page:

IPARD



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Furthermore, in case of displaying both the EU emblem and the IPARD visual element, the EU emblem must be displayed at least as prominently and visibly as the IPARD visual element and be at least of the same size.

This new approach of using the EU emblem and the IPARD visual element as two separate visual identities is to apply to all communication materials, measures and projects supported under IPARD III programme.

For more general IPARD promotion measures, such as publicity events, promotional materials, websites, social media channels, audio-visual productions, printed or online publications (whether co-financed from the EU or not), where more visual identifications or logos are used, a reference to the IPARD programme is to be given an appropriate prominence.

6. INSTRUMENTS FOR PUBLICITY AND INFORMATION

In accordance with Article 32(2) of the Sectoral Agreement, the plan of visibility and communication activities may be implemented and financed under the measure technical assistance. An indicative budget should be specified by the beneficiary country.

For the publicity and information of the IPARD III programme, the following activities shall be carried out as detailed in the table on 'Distribution of tasks, Budget and Schedule':

- the preparation of the printed and visual material,
- the preparation of radio and television programmes and participation to the information programmes on the radio and television,
- the preparation and publication of press releases and notices,
- the organisation of seminars and information meetings for the public.

6.1. Website

The single IPARD website or the single IPARD website portal and/or the websites of the IPARD Managing Authority and the IPARD Agency are important information tools.

The latest approved version of the IPARD III programme, general information on the programme, including concise information on its objectives, legal framework, content in terms of measures programmed as well as detailed information on the procedures of application, approval, payments and control for each measure should be provided on these websites.

It is important that at least the general information, as referred above, is provided in both national language and English to enable the communication and publicity about the IPARD III implementation, its relevance, and successes, also among the EU general public.

6.2. Information materials

The information material, to be prepared and distributed to regions/provinces (if any), may take the form of posters, leaflets/guidebooks, brochures, handbooks, short video materials.

The printed publicity and information material should be distributed to the Regional Agencies (if any), advisory bodies and to entities, such as the

producer organisations, chambers of agriculture, industry and trade, product councils, organisations and associations of civil society active in the field of agriculture and rural development (with its economic, social and environmental aspects), including NGOs, and existing Local Action Groups under LEADER.

It is expected that the potential recipients obtain the information and publicity material in question from these organisations on request.

The number of copies to be printed is decided by the IPARD Managing Authority and the IPARD Agency in a number sufficient for the potential recipients and with the view to respond to the interests expressed in IPARD III opportunities. The necessary material shall be given to the potential recipients free of charge.

6.3. Intermediary organizations and media

Communication through intermediary organizations as well as media, including social media, is an important and indispensable means to communicate about the IPARD III programme and the possibilities it offers to various stakeholders. Various ways of communicating should be used to reach various target groups in society. This may include:

- traditional media (visual and print media) and radio, including that specialising in agriculture and rural development,
- social media,
- unions, associations, chambers of commerce, NGO's, universities, relevant research institutes etc. with their means of communication.

6.4. Information and publicity meetings

It is recommended that seminars and workshops are organized for the public and potential recipients through the cooperation between the IPARD Managing Authority and the IPARD Agency to strengthen and optimise the effectiveness of such activities.

6.5. Training

Trainings should be organised for trainers and advisors to ensure a multiplier effect and to increase gradually the IPARD III programme-related knowledge transfer capacity at all levels (county/provincial/regional).