



IPARD II underway in the Western Balkans – what is it achieving?

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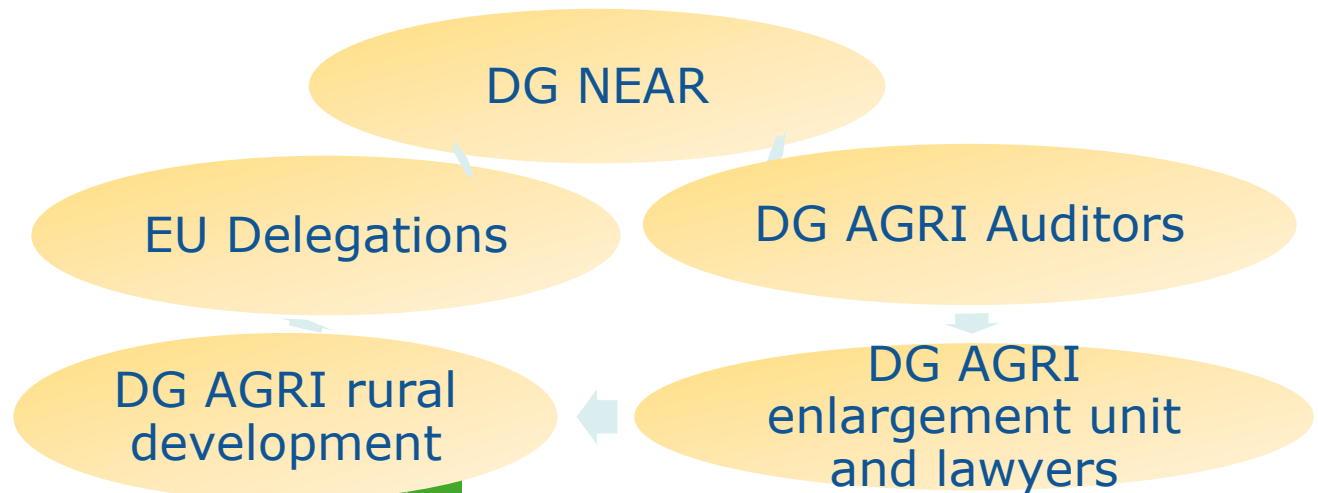


With whom are we working?



Albania, Montenegro, North
Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey

Kosovo, Bosnia &
Herzegovina



Funds and most commonly used measures

Albania	Montenegro	N. Maced.	Serbia	Turkey	Total
70	39	68	175	~615	<1 billion

- Investments in physical assets of agricultural holdings
- Investments in processing and marketing of agricultural products
- Farm diversification and business development
- Technical assistance

IPARD programme cycle



European
Commission

2013-2014

Programming
(**IPARD Managing
Authority** + EU
Commission)

2013 - 2018

Institution building +
entrustment per
measure
(**IPARD Agency**)

From 2018

Launch of calls for
projects
Information to
potential recipients
Project applications
by recipients
Contracting

From 2019 to 2023

Project
implementation by
recipients

Payments

**Visible physical
results emerge:
investments in
place**

Status of IPARD II entrustment and calls

Entrustment of budget implementation tasks
Upcoming entrustment request

Number indicates the number of calls				
1	3	3	5	7

No	Measures
1	Investments in physical assets of agricultural holdings
3	Investments in physical assets concerning processing and marketing of agricultural and fishery products
4	Agri-environment- climate and organic farming measure
5	Implementation of local development strategies – LEADER approach
6	Investments in Rural Public Infrastructure
7	Farm diversification and business development
9	Technical assistance

AL	ME	MK	RS	TR
		rejected		
	received			



Contracts being signed in all countries

31/8/2019

Albania

8 contracts, 1.8 million EUR EU contribution

Montenegro

244 contracts, 9,3 million EUR EU contribution

North Macedonia

1008 contracts, 19.1 million EUR EU contribution

Serbia

222 contracts, 9.5 million EUR EU contribution







Will all funds be spent?

- “N+3 rule” – to spend the financial allocation
- North Macedonia and Turkey – seems OK, others – risk of loosing funds
- Reasons?
 - Delay in launching calls
 - Slow evaluation of applications
 - Delays in signing contracts
 - Slow implementation of projects and submitting claims
 - Entrustments of further measures is slow



Quick fixes?

- Underlying reasons?
 - Short of staff, low capacities, poor information and document management systems
- Improvements needed
 - Retention and increase of staff
 - Keep application process simple
 - Streamline checks of reasonableness of costs
 - Improve document management and agricultural information systems (registers)

Bečiči workshop April 2019

Main bottlenecks were identified:

- Low quality of the applications / incomplete
- Insufficient capacity to assess the applications
- Many more applications than expected
- Inefficient evaluation system for checking reasonableness of the costs proposed

Next to many demanding 'solutions' also several 'easy wins' were identified

Low quality of the applications/incomplete

- Provide near perfect examples
- Spot frequent errors and share them online
- Use Technical Assistance measure for better communication about the IPARD II programme
- Communicate with agricultural chambers, advisory services, producer organisations, cooperatives to keep them informed and improve their knowledge
- Planning calls in advance and making this information public

Insufficient capacity to assess the applications

- Work over-time hours, but over-time hours are not a solution for the longer term
- Use temporarily staff from other units, for assessing the applications (while respecting the initial division of tasks)
- Use other incentives to retain staff (better office infrastructure, working environment/ work trips/per diems/new experiences/ better inspection vehicles)
- Recruit more staff, the political support is there in most countries

Many more applications than expected

- Pre-announce the public call and limit then the time the call is open
- Limit the scope of a call to have better quality of applications
- Use stricter criteria in order to deal only with experienced and genuine farmers/ recipients
-reject all applications that are not (100%) complete (North Macedonia)

Inefficient evaluation system for checking reasonableness of the costs proposed

- Build up a good 'track record' and then use only one method for checking the reasonableness of the project costs, as prescribed in the Sectoral Agreement and not two methods
- Dare to think out of the box for finding solutions for this important stage in the process: e.g. electronic applications, publishing invitations for offers to suppliers on the website of the agency, etc.



IPA(RD?) III

- IPA III Regulation being discussed
- COM working on Programming Framework
- IPARD
 - Start thinking about sector analyses, then
 - Update national agricultural strategies, then
 - Start drafting IPARD Programmes – if all goes well, to be adopted by the end of 2021
- Possibly few new measures, some adjusting to the new CAP (e.g., indicators)



Summary - what has IPARD II achieved so far?

- Now operational in all IPARD countries
- Successfully funding M1 & M3 projects - in all countries
- Calls launched, applications process & contracts being signed
- IPARD calls - cleanly executed
- Good awareness on IPARD
- Significant investments now underway – varies by country
- IPARD MA's & Agencies – have set up good systems, IT, staffing
- TA becoming operational
- Diversification - M7 – beginning to be used
- LAGs now being set up
- Extension services have become involved
- Countries learn how to use EU FUNDS and adopt “project culture”

Summary – Further improvements

- Applications are slow to be processed and signed
- Payments & claims are slow
- De-committment risks
- Entrustment of further measures is slow
- Check on reasonableness of costs can cause delays
- Keep the application process relatively simple
- Lack of sufficient staff // retention of staff
- Will all projects be financially viable?
- More human capacity training needed

Big changes in the EU institutions

- New European Parliament
- President-elect Ursula von der Leyen
- New Commissioners (starting 1.11.19)
- Agreement on the Multi-annual Financial Framework (when ?)



“...I want to reaffirm the European perspective of the Western Balkans and I see an important role in the continued reform process across the region. We share the same continent, the same history, the same culture and the same challenges. We will build the same future together..”