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Европско движење Северна Македонија
European Movement North Macedonia

RECOMMENDATIONS

NATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA (www.nkeu.mk)

Ninth session

Working Group 1 - Agriculture and Rural Development: Online session (Zoom webinar), 29 September 2021

“Challenges in the programming and implementation of the IPARD 3 program (2021-2027)”

1. Structural conditions, property rights' aspects and technical documentation (municipalities and government)

- 1.1. Speed up the process of adopting detailed town plans in the municipalities, with specific deadlines and process faster the documentation for projects that include construction activities and requests for legalization that are intended for the use of IPARD.
- 1.2. Complete and link all relevant registers in the institutions relating to IPARD.
- 1.3. Consider options to facilitate requests for bids and documents from abroad (for example, to accept proforma invoices from foreign companies sent by e-mail (without electronic signature) and to facilitate the requirement for proof of ownership structure of the bidder and references from construction contracts.
- 1.4. Introduce a guarantee fund for securing IPARD applicants in taking and using loans, as well as for protection of commercial banks and savings houses from credit risk.

2. Organization of public calls and regulation of contractual relations between AFSARD and beneficiaries (AFSARD)

- 2.1. Determine and respect the time frame with certain deadlines for all stages of the process (from call to implementation).
- 2.2. Enable pre-financing and implementation of the investment after it is approved by AFSARD.
- 2.3. Create a state fund to cover the administrative omissions made in the process of approval and implementation of investments co-financed through IPARD, with appropriate mechanisms (e.g., commission) to assess the reasons for the omissions by the applicant and/or AFSARD (based on the experiences of other countries, for example, the Fund in Turkey).
- 2.4. Introduce an electronic application system for the use of IPARD support and inform applicants of the final decision of the AFSARD. The application system should provide information to all applicants on all phases of the application administration process. This will provide transparency in the approval process.



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3. New measures and conditions in IPARD3 (MAFWE)

- 3.1. Accelerate the accreditation process of the new measures from IPARD3 that will contribute to better and more successful use of the program (Investments in rural public infrastructure, Agri-environmental measures, Advisory services, Local Development Strategies - LEADER approach).
- 3.2. In the next programming period, introduce the measures Promotion of training and Innovation and knowledge transfer. Prior to the introduction of the stated measures to organize the training needs assessment.
- 3.3. Limit the support through IPARD only for capital investments over 10,000.00 euros.

4. The Government should strengthen the capacity of the institutions related to the implementation of IPARD, in particular the Governing Body, AFSARD, and ASDA:

- 4.1. Increase the number of employees, with expert and professional staff (especially urgent and important for AFSARD due to the accreditation of the measures);
- 4.2. Improve the knowledge and skills of employees through training and technical assistance;
- 4.3. Regularly provide financial incentives for employees who have increased responsibility, engagement, and workload related to IPARD;
- 4.4. Improve working conditions (office conditions, basic materials, digitalization, etc.).

5. Information and communication

- 5.1. Continue the activities of IPARD Governing Body (MAFWE) for raising awareness, informing the beneficiaries about the opportunities offered by IPARD3, especially in context of undertaking new development investments, innovations, added value.
- 5.2. Promote best practice and already implemented IPARD projects with good results among the potential beneficiaries.
- 5.3. Regularly inform and train advisors and private consultants regarding the program, application preparation and business plan.
- 5.4. Regular media information about the program, as well as specialized trainings for journalists (also use the public service MRTV as an information channel with the highest coverage and the opportunity for free promotion of the program).
- 5.5. Develop ASDA and AFSARD websites for better information of those interested in the IPARD program with interactive questioning tools.
- 5.6. Improve the communication among the institutions in the area of continuous exchange of information (for example, between ASDA and AFSARD, the non-governmental sector with the institutions, etc.), and include the economic - social partners of MAFWE in the Committee for monitoring IPARD at MAFWE.