



MONTENEGRO

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

Directorate for Rural Development

Managing Authority

**PLAN OF VISIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION
ACTIVITIES FOR IPARD II PROGRAMME**

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1. LEGAL BASIS

Article 24 of the Framework Agreement;
Article 29 (2) of the Sectoral Agreement.

2. BACKGROUND

The Plan of visibility and communication activities (hereafter – Plan) is a strategic document, covering the whole period of the IPARD II programme implementation.

The objective of the Plan is to ensure that public is informed about assistance under the IPARD II programme, to identify the information and publicity measures, to carry out information and publicity campaigns regarding the IPARD assistance, and to plan the implementation of visibility and to emphasize the contribution of the European Union. Visibility and communication activities shall demonstrate how the particular action contributes to the agreed programme objectives and the accession process and shall be aimed at strengthening general public awareness as well as support of actions financed and of the objectives pursued. The visibility and communication activities shall aim at highlighting to the relevant target audiences the added value and impact of the Union programmes and actions. Visibility activities shall also promote transparency and accountability on the use of the funds.

One of the prerequisites for a quality implementation of the IPARD II programme is informing all of the stakeholders – from state administration bodies (who will be in contact with final recipients) to the recipients themselves.

After it is drafted, the members of the IPARD II Monitoring Committee (IMC) will approve the Plan. Any modifications to the Plan will be approved by the IMC at their first subsequent session. On the basis of this Plan, Annual List of Actions will be prepared every year. Draft of the detailed Annual List of Actions will be submitted to the European Commission every year before autumn session of the IMC. The IMC shall each year approve the Annual List of Actions for next year. If modifications of the Annual List of Actions are necessary, the Managing Authority (hereinafter referred to as: MA) should notify EC, and present modifications to members of the IMC at spring session, or any time in written procedure.

3. THE AIMS OF THE INFORMATION CAMPAIGN FOR THE IPARD II PROGRAMME MEASURES

In general the aims of the information and publicity measures shall be:

- To inform recipients about the opportunities offered by joint assistance from the European Union and the Montenegro to ensure the transparency of such assistance; and,
- To inform the general public about the role played by the European Union in co-operation with the Montenegro in the assistance concerned and its results;
- Promoting greater public understanding of the objectives and achievements of the IPARD II programme in Montenegro.

In order to reach these objectives, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has appointed the Managing Authority, which will be responsible for the quality of implementation of the aforementioned steps and for keeping to time schedule, as well as for planning the indicative budget for information and publicity measures.

In providing information, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development with their Extension services will have a main role, but other bodies (Municipalities, NGOs, etc.) will be in charge of disseminating the information and raising the awareness on the programme amongst rural population, too. The Ministry must ensure transparency of the objectives.

Target groups, communication channels, communication tools and the IPARD Monitoring system have to be defined in order to achieve all the objectives of the information system for IPARD II programme.

4. TARGET GROUPS

Five main target groups have been identified as essential in communication campaign on IPARD II programme:

- Potential recipients and recipients
- Economic and social partners
- Local and public authorities
- Media
- The general public

4.1. *Potential recipients and recipients*

Potential recipients and recipients are the target group which needs a detailed information related to the IPARD II programme. The approach and activities of this target group will have an essential impact on the success of the entire Programme. Later, the recipients will become the “ambassadors” of the Programme – based on their experience; other target groups will make their own decisions about the quality of the Programme implementation and benefits. This target group will be provided with clear and detailed information about the calls for applications for support, administrative procedures, the progress in the assessment and selection of applications, as well as obligations of the recipients. This will be a motivation for being active in using the support.

This target group must be detailed by each of the IPARD II measures. The definitions of recipients for each measure are provided in the descriptions of IPARD II programme.

The broadest range of communication tools will be used aiming to access this target group. Communication tools will include information in mass media (national and local press, specialized press, national and regional TV channels), direct and face-to-face communication tools such as events, workshops, promotional tools (leaflets, brochures), etc.

4.2. *Economic and social partners*

This target group will play an important intermediary role between the institutions implementing the programme and potential applicants. Representing potential applicants and recipients, the partners

are important opinion leaders and potential promoters of the whole process. Aiming to ensure their inclusion in the public awareness campaign, special meetings and events, round table discussions will be organised. There are about 200 NGOs dealing with agriculture in Montenegro, some of them being very active and others less, but their role will be significant.

4.3. *Local and public authorities*

Local authorities are an important source of information about the support for the potential applicants, so it is important to ensure that this group should obtain detailed and clear information on time. Special training will be organized improving their knowledge of IPARD, the rules and the procedures for gaining the support. There are 23 municipalities in the country (all of them having a secretariat for agriculture), 7 regional extension services for livestock selection and 6 regional extension services in plant production, what is sufficient for Montenegro.

4.4. *Media*

Considering the fact that this target group will have a huge impact on all other target groups, the efforts will be put from the very beginning of the Programme implementation aiming to develop a positive attitude of media towards support. Special tools of direct communication, such as press conferences, meetings, will be applied. There are possibilities to provide information using 21 television channels (3 of them are local televisions, while others broadcasting on the whole territory of Montenegro); radio – there are possibilities to provide information using 55 radio stations (43 of them are local radio stations); newspapers – there are possibilities to provide information using 16 newspapers (6 daily newspapers, 3 weekly newspapers, 1 biweekly newspapers, 6 monthly and periodical magazines), Internet portals.

4.5. *The general public*

All target groups are part of the general public. In Montenegro, 38.6% of total population live in rural areas (in Coastal region – 41.7%; in Central region – 20.4%; in Northern region – 59.7%). The public will be informed about the benefits of the support, transparent administration, effective implementation and achieved results. The public awareness campaign will aim to convince the general public about the benefits of the support which has an influence not only in rural but also in urban areas. Additionally, the success stories will be promoted. Mainly the national media will be used aiming to access this target group.

The MA has published the IPARD II programme after its adoption by the Commission on the IPARD website (portal): http://www.minpolj.gov.me//rubrike/IPARD_program/. The MA will publish regularly the IPARD II programme updates, main achievements in the implementation process and results, using all media at appropriate national and local level. A special emphasis will be placed on the information about the contribution of the EU to the IPARD II programme. The MA shall highlight the role of the European Union and ensure the transparency of EU assistance and more specifically the IPARD II programme. This information is significant to increase the visibility of the Programme and raise awareness amongst population. The MA will plan and implement Annual list of actions. A range of publicity measures will be applied using different tools – press conferences, media, information seminars, regular publications on the MARD website.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENTS OR BODIES RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The information and promotional activities will be jointly prepared and implemented by the MA, the PR office of the MARD and IPARD Agency. Within the MA, Department for coordination and public relations is responsible for communication activities. It is composed of the Head of the Department, one senior adviser and two junior advisers. Within the IA, Department for Publicity and Authorization of Projects is responsible for communication activities. It is composed of the Head of the Department and 9 senior advisers. The PR office of the MARD is composed of 3 people.

Managing Authority is responsible for implementing the Plan of visibility and communication activities.

Secondary source of information about the Programme will be municipalities and extension services, media, social and economic partners.

- Managing Authority shall inform all target groups in cooperation with the IPARD Agency and the PR office of the MARD. Additionally, following consultations with the IPARD II Monitoring Committee on the activities of informing the general public on the IPARD II programme, it shall draft annual reports on the achieved results of the Plan and information campaign.
- Managing Authority and IPARD Agency will work together on documentation (manuals, flyers, leaflets, websites, printed media, clear messages on TV and radio, but also information that can be found in application forms or annexed to them), which will connect all the involved entities in the information process and other entities working for the target groups in question.
- A Help-desk in the form of on-line Q&A service will be established on the ministerial web site, supported by the Managing Authority and IPARD Agency to provide timely answers and relevant information to all interested parties (http://www.minpolj.gov.me//rubrike/IPARD_program/).
- Municipalities and extension services will organise seminars and trainings in municipalities in cooperation with the Managing Authority.
- Extension services will be well informed and will need to have all the documentation (informational publications, manuals, flyers, leaflets, etc.) that will be available for recipients of all the measures and non-recipients.
- NGO members will attend the meetings, conferences, seminars and trainings, and then they will be able to provide further dissemination of information, through their own websites, meetings, etc.

MA will regularly send all information about IPARD II programme related to public and media to the municipalities, extension services and NGOs.

For the distinction of the tasks with regard to publicity and information, the Operational agreement for the implementation of IPARD II programme on the basis of indirect management by the Commission has been signed between the MA and IA. Article 13 (Publicity of the IPARD II programme) Article 14 (Distribution of publicity activities), Article 15 (Implementing arrangements of publicity actions), Article 16 (Visibility) explains the roles of both bodies.

6. COMMUNICATION TOOLS/MEASURES

Various types of communication tools will be used during the public awareness campaign on implementing IPARD II programme.

The *Annual action list of actions* will define in which period each of the communication channels and communication tools will be used.

When the Government of Montenegro adopted the IPARD II programme, press conference was held in the Government press centre. Information on its adoption all media in Montenegro have reported. While the IPARD II programme was in preparation, a number of workshops were organised in all of three regions of Montenegro (northern, central and south), in order to consult the interested parties, but to inform them also.

All material regarding the next communication tools will be available in electronic version on the websites and on the social media of the MARD. Also, material in electronic version will be sent to the interested parties and to the media.

6.1. Leaflets, brochures

Leaflets and brochures represent a simple method of providing information to potential recipients of the IPARD II programme as well to the general public about the role and contribution of the European Union. They provide basic information about the IPARD II programme (what is IPARD, timeframe, envisaged measures, final recipients, amount of support, contact details of the institution in charge of its implementation – the IA, and all other relevant information).

Leaflets and brochures are printed and distributed as soon as all the details about the programme are known.

The MA in cooperation with the IA is in charge of preparing the leaflets and brochures, and their distribution (e.g. fairs, events) is conducted through the MA, IA, municipalities, extension services, etc.

6.2. Press releases

The press release is the most important form of written communication that needs to be sent to journalists in written media, radio and TV. It is used for sharing regular information (e.g. issuing a call for applications, announcing the results, etc.), but also in the situations when final recipients need to be urgently informed about a piece of information (e.g. extending the deadline for the call for proposals), when there is no time for sharing this information through other channels.

Press releases are used to inform potential recipients and the general public about the IPARD II programme, and the role of the European Union.

The MA (Department for coordination and public relations), in cooperation with the IA, and the PR Office of the MARD is in charge of preparation of the press releases related to IPARD II programme. Head of the MA will approve press releases and the PR Office of the MARD will do the technical things (put in on the IPARD website/portal and send it to the media and interested parties).

6.3. Press conferences

Press conferences are designed for the representatives of printed media, radio and TV. Their main function is to provide information to journalists on important information in regard to the IPARD II Programme (what is IPARD, timeframe, foreseen measures, final recipients, publishing of acquiring national accreditation for implementation of the IPARD II Programme, reaching decisions on conferral of management, launching of tenders, results of tenders etc.). Apart from the regular ones (related to important dates and events), it is also possible to organize extraordinary press conferences.

The objective of press conferences is to inform potential recipients, but also the general public about the role and contributions of the European Union, particularly from the point of the IPARD II Programme.

The preparation and organization of press conferences is in charge of the MA (Department for coordination and public relations), in cooperation with the PR Office of the MARD and the IA.

6.4. TV and radio

The promotion of IPARD II on TV will be conducted through advertisements and reports. Reports could be issued before or after specialized broadcasts for farmers. Apart from the examples from the field, reports would be assembled from the interviews with recipients and employees of the MA and IA. The reports would also provide information on places (e.g. offices, web pages etc.) where all detailed information about Programme, application procedures and others can be obtained. In addition to reports, calls for applications for IPARD II programme measures, could be announced in paid advertisements on television channel. The radio spot would provide detailed information on the Programme itself, its timeframe and the deadlines of the call for applications, as well as the information on contact details and addresses where more information about the Programme can be obtained.

The purpose of radio and TV promotion is to inform the general public, but also potential recipients about the IPARD II programme.

The MA (Department for coordination and public relations) is in charge of implementation of this activity in cooperation with the PR Office of the MARD and the IA.

6.5. Articles in newspapers (daily, weekly, regional and specialised for farmers)

Information on IPARD II (final recipients, measures, eligible investments) will be published regular in Montenegrin daily newspapers, and depending on the need in specialized publications for farmers. Pre-paid pages will be used for publishing examples of successful project funded by EU pre-accession programs, interviews with the employers responsible for implementing IPARD II programme (the MA and IA), calls for applications for particular measures of IPARD II programme, etc. The newspaper ads will thoroughly explain all the measures and all eligible investments that are available for potential recipients through IPARD II programme. Daily newspapers represent a good media for reaching a wide audience. Furthermore, unlike the specialized publications for farmers, these newspapers are distributed to all places in Montenegro and have a large circulation.

Each of the announcements will provide information on contact details (addresses, phones, fax, e-mail and other), where additional information on the IPARD II programme, calls for application, etc. will be available.

The MA (Department for coordination and public relations) is responsible for implementation of this activity in cooperation with the PR Office of the MARD and the IA.

6.6. Website(s)

Website can be taken as the most efficient communication tool for achieving the aims of the Programme. They are designed to provide general information on the IPARD II programme in the Montenegro and include detailed information on the legal basis for the implementation of the IPARD II programme, as well as the information on all measures foreseen ([http://www.minpolj.gov.me//rubrike/IPARD program/](http://www.minpolj.gov.me//rubrike/IPARD_program/)). They will also contain detailed information on allowed investments, necessary documentation, application procedure, approvals, payments and control for all measures, which are accredited in that moment. They will also include information on the approved projects from IPARD. Apart from being useful to final recipients, they will also be valuable source of information to individuals and institutions included in the implementation of the IPARD II programme (e.g. NGOs, Extension services, Chamber of Economy). The website will also contain questions and answers posed by the recipients by email, phone, in writing, as well as the responses to those.

The website will be regularly updated and include the latest information. It will be part of the website of the MARD, and will be accessible through the link posed on the web sites of the Extension services, (and other institutions/organisations).

The MA (Department for coordination and public relations) is responsible for implementation of this activity in cooperation with the PR Office of the MARD and the IA.

6.7. Social media

MARD already has its own Facebook page and blog. It will be used also to promote the IPARD II programme. There is a possibility to open Twitter and other social media account if it turns out the use of these.

6.8. Direct “face-to-face” communication

On the basis of the previous experience (through implementation of the Agrobudget measures, MIDAS project - Montenegro Institutional Development and Agriculture Strengthening and IPARD *like* project) this type of communication tool has proved to be best one. Recipients and potential recipients could come to the offices of the MARD, Extension services and/or Municipalities services and could get all information and advice about IPARD II programme.

6.9. Seminars and workshops for the employees of the extension services and municipalities services for agriculture

Employees of the extension services and municipalities (Secretariat for agriculture) are in everyday contact with farmers – potential recipients of the IPARD II programme. The goal of these seminars is to prepare all of these employees in all segments of the pre-accession IPARD II programme (measures, recipients, types of eligible investments, etc.), after which they will be trained to provide potential recipients with more detailed information, and inform them about further procedure. Furthermore, in all the extension and municipality offices potential recipients will have available all promotional material, application forms, etc. Employees of the extension services and municipalities will gather information from potential recipients (extent to which they are informed about the programme etc.) all for purpose of enhancing of promotion campaign.

The MA (Department for coordination and public relations) is in charge of implementing this activity, in cooperation with the IA.

6.10. Presentations at fairs, events, etc.

The presentation of the IPARD II programme and its measures at national and regional fairs, events and conferences also represents an important element of the public campaign. It is destined for target groups – potential recipients (farmers attending agricultural fair, processing industry, fishery and similar), but also the general public. Topic of presentation as well as its form (general or detailed information) is determinate depending on the type of event, participants, etc. Presentations are held at the invitation of interested parties (financial institutions, various interest groups such as farmers association, etc.), and at the events that are under the auspices of the MARD. In such a way, by means of questionnaires and surveys it is possible to get an insight into the awareness of potential recipients of possible co-financing from the IPARD II programme. The presentations would also be held at the request of other institutions – Chamber of Economy, Employers Association, commercial banks that operate in the Montenegro, etc., and would be used to inform the employees of these institutions about the implementation of the IPARD II programme in Montenegro.

Employees of the MA and IA, are responsible for implementing this activity.

6.11. Organising one major information activity a year which promotes the funding opportunities and the strategies pursued and presents the achievements of the programme or programmes, including project examples

Every year, one major information activity, which promotes the funding opportunities and the strategies pursued and presents the achievements of the programme or programmes, including project examples will be organised. It could be organised also on the holding of some of the recipients of the EU support.

Employees of the MA and IA, are responsible for implementing this activity in cooperation with the PR Office of the MARD.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF RECIPIENTS

In accordance with Article 29 and Annex 8 of the Sectoral Agreement the recipients are responsible for implementing measures to ensure the 'visibility' of their projects, as a major contribution to informing the general public about the role played by the Union in the IPARD II programme and its results.

The billboards, posters, (explanatory) plaques and websites shall carry a description of the project/operation and indicating that the project has been supported by IPARD II and including the Union emblem. That information shall take up at least 25 % of the billboard, plaque or webpage. It shall be prepared in accordance with technical characteristics laid down in the relevant implementing act adopted by the Commission (Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 821/2014).

Recipients will be supported in their communication activities through the separate part of the Contract of support (part of the procedures of the IA), through which they will get detailed information about their responsibilities regarding the visibility and communication. This part of their responsibilities will be presented and explained on the workshops, which will be organised in order to promote the EU support (promoting public calls, different measures for support). Also, when the recipients will sign the contract, all of them will get all information that they need.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE PLAN OF VISIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

The MA will regularly perform the monitoring and evaluation of the publicity activities in close cooperation with IPARD Agency. The implementation of the Plan will be monitored by input, output and result indicators.

- Input indicators of the publicity activities are identified in the Annual list of actions, taking into account the planned aims for the exact period. The input indicators could be: number of press realises, number of articles, number of printed material, number of workshops/seminars/conferences, number of TV/radio spots.
- Output indicators are measured every year, and they are: number of the participants in the events (workshops/seminars/conferences), number of visitors of the website (part of website for IPARD II), number of received applications for public calls.
- Result indicators measure the level of recipients satisfaction with information gained (such aspects as awareness on the IPARD II programme, availability and sufficiency of information, effectiveness of used communication tools will be estimated) and its relevance and effect on the number and quality of applications. The measurement could be performed during the special survey (disseminating special question).

The MA will prepare a questionnaire, which will contain questions about the level of awareness of the general public and potential recipients about the IPARD II programme. Employers of the MA, IA (presenters/lecturers), extension and municipality services will be involved in the distribution of questionnaires.

9. FUNDING OF PLAN OF VISIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

The budget for the implementation of the Plan will be provided by measure “Technical assistance” resources, but also by National budget of Montenegro or different EU financing sources.

Provisional budget for the period of Programme implementation

Activity	Responsible	Budget*		Funds
Training of the personnel related with PR activities	MA/IA	15%	36,000€	TA/national budget
Printing of the information and publicity materials	MA	15%	36,000€	TA/national budget
Preparation of information for the printed and visual media activities	MA	5%	12,000 €	TA/national budget
Publication and broadcasting of printed and visual media (TV, radio)	MA	35%	84,000€	TA/national budget
Announcement of the IPARD programme and its implementations on the website	MARD/MA/IA	5%	12,000€	TA/national budget
Organisation of seminars and workshops for information and publicity	MA	20%	48,000 €	TA/national budget
Preparation and printing/publishing of the application forms, guidelines, calls for application and necessary documents to be given to the potential beneficiaries within the scope of the measures of the IPARD II programme	IA	5%	12,000 €	National budget
TOTAL		100%	240,000 €	

The publicity of individual projects funded in the framework of IPARD II programme shall be carried out by recipients with the funds of the project allocated specifically for that purpose.