

Minutes No. 6

Minutes from the Sixth session of the IPARD III Monitoring Committee
26th November 2025, Belgrade

I List of participants

The session was attended by the following voting members of the IPARD III Monitoring Committee:

1. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management – Minister;
2. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management – Sector for Agricultural Policy;
3. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management: Directorate for Agricultural Land;
4. Ministry of Environmental Protection;
5. Ministry of Tourism and Youth;
6. Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation;
7. Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia;
8. Environmental Protection Agency;
9. Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia;
10. Fund for the Development of the Republic of Serbia;
11. Republic Geodetic Institute;
12. Development Agency of Serbia;
13. Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia;
14. Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities;
15. Provincial Secretariat for Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry;
16. National Society for Fruit Production “Our Fruits of Serbia”;
17. Farmers Association;
18. Association of Agricultural Producers “Club 100P plus”;
19. “Vojvodina Agrar” Association of Primary Agricultural Producers LLC Bečej;
20. Network for Rural Development of Serbia;
21. Serbian Milk Producers Association;
22. Serbian Dairies’ Association “SEDA”;
23. Association “Network of Local Action Groups of Serbia”;
24. National Association for Development of Organic Production “SERBIA ORGANICA”;
25. Serbian Young Farmers Association “SYFA”;
26. Association “Independent Association of Farmers of Serbia”;
27. Association “Natura Balkanika” and
28. Union of Agrarian Associations of Vojvodina.

Representatives without voting rights:

1. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Directorate for Agrarian Payments (IPARD Agency);
2. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Department for Management of IPARD Programme (IPARD Managing Authority);
3. Ministry of Finance;
4. Governmental Audit Office of EU Funds (Audit Authority).

Representatives without voting rights as observers:

1. Institute for Science Application in Agriculture;
2. Association of Serbian Banks;
3. Tourism Organisation of Serbia;
4. Agricultural Machinery Importers and Exporters.

The session was not attended by members of the IPARD III Monitoring Committee (with and without voting right), representatives of:

1. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management: Sector for International Cooperation and European Integration;
2. Ministry of Economy;
3. Ministry of European Integration;
4. Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure;
5. Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government;
6. Ministry of Mining and Energy;
7. Ministry of Rural Welfare;
8. Provincial Secretariat for Regional Development, Interregional Cooperation and Local Self-Government;
9. Faculty of Agriculture, University of Belgrade;
10. Serbian Cooperative Union;
11. National Association "Rural Tourism in Serbia";
12. Association of Serbian Winemakers and Winegrowers and
13. Poultry Business Association "Poultry Community".

The Sixth session of the IPARD III Monitoring Committee (hereinafter: IPARD III MC) was also attended by representatives of the Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission (hereinafter: DG AGRI) and Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia (hereinafter: DEU) in an advisory role.

The result:

The session was attended by 28 member/deputy members out of a total of 39 members/deputy members with the voting right. A quorum was reached and decisions could be made.

Annex 1 of the Minutes: List of participants;

Annex 2 of the Minutes: Agenda.

II Outcome of the IPARD III Monitoring Committee session

Item 1 of the Agenda: Introductory speeches

The Sixth session of the IPARD III MC began with an address by **Mrs. Jasmina Miljković**, *Head of the IPARD Managing Authority, Head of the Department for Management of IPARD Programme, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (hereinafter: MAFWM)*, who welcomed the representatives of the European Commission, the IPARD III MC members and the Minister, Prof. Dragan Glamočić, PhD, who addressed the participants in the introductory part of the session. She thanked the Chamber of Commerce Belgrade for support provided in organisation of the session.

Item 1.1 of the Agenda

Prof. Dragan Glamočić, PhD, *Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management*, at the beginning of his introductory speech, welcomed the participants on behalf of the MAFWM and thanked the DG AGRI representatives for their continued cooperation, support and commitment to improving the agricultural and rural sector of Serbia. He stated that in the continuation of the session will be discussed the achieved results, the activities undertaken, as well as further progress in implementation. He emphasized that the achieved results show that, despite the challenges, visible progress is being made. He pointed out that although achieved results are unsatisfactory, the interest of recipients, the improvement of administrative procedures and the strengthening of the system's capacity show that we are moving in the right direction. He stated that a total of 1,887

applications were received in the current cycle (so far in IPARD III), while the total requested support amounts to almost EUR 403 million, which is clear evidence of strong investment activity in agriculture. He pointed out that joint work in this programming period will bring improvement of information and education of potential recipients, as well as that experience gained during the previous period should be used in order to increase the efficiency of the Programme implementation. He emphasized that Serbia remains firmly committed to the IPARD III Programme implementation and to meeting the requirements that will lead to the European standards. At the end of his address, he thanked the participants for their work and contribution so far and wished them success in the continuation of the session.

Item 1.2 of the Agenda

Mr. Marko Jovanović, *National Authorising Officer (hereinafter: NAO), State Secretary in the Ministry of Finance* welcomed all participants and added that this was his first participation in the IPARD III MC session since he was appointed as NAO. In his address, he emphasized that the Republic of Serbia is on the European path and that in this sense the agricultural sector is one of the most important sectors. He then pointed out the importance of the IPARD Programme as a tool for improving the aforementioned sector. He referred to the challenges in the Programme implementation and indicated that it is necessary to improve and accelerate the processes in the coming period in order to achieve better results in the implementation of all measures. He stressed out that personnel changes in the MAFWM are leading to the Programme implementation delays. In the previous period, the Ministry of Finance held meetings with representatives of all institutions of the IPARD system in order to remove administrative and legal obstacles, which will contribute to better results. This practice will be continued in the coming period until the set goals are achieved, which is the increased absorption of EU funds. He stated that in his capacity as NAO he sent a request for an extension of the deadline for the absorption of IPARD funds. In the coming period, it is of utmost importance to work on strengthening the capacity of the IPARD structure, as well as on the good preparation of all participants in the process. Furthermore, special attention will be given to irregularities in the Programme implementation in close cooperation with the AFCOS, OLAF and the EC. He concluded his address by emphasizing that the Ministry of Finance will provide full support to the MAFWM in the IPARD Programme implementation.

Item 1.3 of the Agenda

Mr. Frank Bollen, *Head of the Unit G.4 – Neighbourhood, Enlargement and Pre-Accession Assistance, Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission*, greeted all participants of the session. At the beginning of his address, he referred to the IPARD II Programme and expressed dissatisfaction with the achieved results, taking into account that out of the EUR 175 million of allocated EU funds, slightly more than half of the allocated funds had been used. He expressed the hope that the lessons learned would be applied in the IPARD III programming period and thus better results would be achieved. When it comes to the IPARD III Programme, he reminded that the allocated funds for this programming period had been significantly increased and amounted to EUR 288 million. He stressed that the requested funds under the published calls exceeded the allocated funds, which indicated a great interest of recipients in IPARD support. Also, he emphasized that more balanced regional distribution of support is expected in the coming period. In this regard, he stated that he expects the IPARD Managing Authority to conduct information campaigns, especially in regions with a lower number of recipients. In continuation of his address, he pointed out the very long duration of the IPARD projects' approval process, considering that the first public call was published in February 2024, while the first decisions on approval were only made in October 2025. He also recalled that the IPARD III Programme was adopted in March 2022. The delays in the Programme implementation led to a high risk of de-commitment, and in order to avoid this risk of de-commitment, it is

necessary to spend EUR 27 million by the end of 2025. Considering the current situation, it is certain that not all funds will be spent by the end of the year, therefore, urgent measures must be taken. He then expressed concern regarding payments by the end of 2026, given that by the end of next year it is necessary to pay support in the amount of at least EUR 31 million to avoid further de-commitments. In addition, in his address, he also expressed concern regarding the entrustment of budget implementation tasks for the new IPARD III measures, namely Measure 4: Agri-environment-climate and organic farming measure, Measure 5: Implementation of local development strategies – LEADER approach and Measure 6: Investments in rural public infrastructure. He stated that an Action Plan for the entrustment of new measures 4 and 5 has been prepared, that there are delays compared to the initial plan, and that the mentioned Action Plan does not include plans for the entrustment of Measure 6. He emphasized that the funds allocated for these measures make up 28% of the total budget allocated for the IPARD III Programme and called for activities to be undertaken to accelerate the process of entrusting new measures.

Item 2 of the Agenda: Adoption of the Draft Agenda for the Sixth session of the IPARD III Monitoring Committee

Mrs. Jasmina Miljković noted the existence of a quorum, after which voting procedure began for the adoption of the Agenda for the Sixth session of the IPARD III MC.

Decision No. 1

The Agenda for the Sixth session of the IPARD III MC was adopted unanimously.

Item 3 of the Agenda: Adoption of the draft Minutes from the Fifth session of the IPARD III Monitoring Committee

After the voting procedure, **Mrs. Miljković** noted that the Minutes from the Fifth session of the IPARD III Monitoring Committee was adopted unanimously.

Decision No. 2

The Minutes from the Fifth session of the IPARD III MC were adopted unanimously.

Item 4 of the Agenda: IPARD Programmes – Brief overview and update

Mrs. Anna Nowak-Wood, Unit G.4 - Neighbourhood, Enlargement and Pre-Accession Assistance, Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission, began her presentation by providing an overview of the results achieved in terms of the IPARD II Programme implementation in the candidate countries for EU membership, with an emphasis on the execution rate of IPARD II funds. When it comes to the IPARD III Programme, she informed the participants that the legal basis had been adopted almost immediately in all countries. She stressed that Serbia was the last to sign the Financing Agreement, which implied conditional entrustment of measures, however, the conditions were lifted in 2025, which created the opportunity to start contracting and paying funds. She then referred to the financial distribution of allocated funds per measure. She noted that out of the 11 measures offered, Serbia has entrusted budget implementation tasks for four measures, with published calls only for two measures, and that a package for entrustment of budget implementation tasks for three additional measures is expected to be submitted. She pointed out the risk of losing allocated funds if the entrustment of new measures is not implemented on time. Furthermore, she addressed the current state of implementation of measures, the dynamics for calls publishing and the duration of the process of application processing. She concluded her address by presenting the execution rates of IPARD III funds in the EU candidate countries.

Item 5 of the Agenda: Discussion

Mrs. Snežana Oljača, *National Association for Development of Organic Production "SERBIA ORGANICA"*, joined the discussion and expressed dissatisfaction with the results achieved in the Programme implementation. She also asked why Measure 4 had not yet been entrusted and added that recipients were waiting for support through this Measure. **Mrs. Miljković** stated in her response that more detailed information regarding the plans for entrustment would be presented through presentations later in the session.

Mr. Vasa Džigurski, *Serbian Milk Producers Association*, stated that the key factor affecting the Programme implementation is fluctuation of employees. He stated that it is necessary to establish a stable employee structure.

Mr. Božo Joković, *National Society for Fruit Production "Our Fruits of Serbia"*, expressed dissatisfaction with the Programme implementation and pointed out issues in the fruit sector. **Mrs. Miljković** replied that a public call will be published specifically for the fruit sector.

Mr. Jovica Jakšić, *Association "Independent Association of Farmers of Serbia"*, stated that recipients expressed interest in IPARD support, given that the requested funds exceed the funds allocated for the public call, but also that it is necessary to take steps to accelerate the implementation of projects and absorption of funds.

Mr. Frank Bollen, emphasized that he agreed with the previous statements and added that these issues have been discussed on several occasions. He stated that it is necessary to take steps to ensure that the available support is used.

Item 6 of the Agenda: Information on the implementation of decisions taken at the Fifth IPARD III MC session and information on changes of the MC members

Mrs. Jasmina Miljković informed the participants about the changes in the structure of the IPARD III MC in the period between the two sessions, regarding activities that were implemented between the two Committee sessions and announced future activities. On this occasion, she presented the subject of the amendment to the Rulebook for the implementation of Measure 1 - Investments in physical assets of agricultural holdings and announced that it is expected to publish call in December 2025, which will be directed at the Fruit Sector. She presented the activities related to the entrustment of new measures within the IPARD III Programme. In addition, she informed the participants that the European Commission had approved the Final Implementation Report on IPARD II Programme.

Mr. Žarko Kobilarov, *Association of Agricultural Producers "Club 100P plus"*, suggested to include representatives of the Association of Consultants in the IPARD III MC. He also added that there is a long period of time between two MC sessions, taking into account all the identified problems in the Programme implementation. **Mrs. Miljković** stated in her response that in accordance with the Sectoral Agreement, the MC sessions are held twice in 12 months. She then reported that the Association of Consultants had submitted an initiative for inclusion in the work of the MC, and that this initiative had been delivered to the EC for approval. **Mrs. Nowak-Wood** joined the discussion and emphasized that the initiative had been submitted to the DEU and added that the EC has the right to reject such an initiative if it considers that there is a conflict of interest.

Mrs. Slađana Grujić, *Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities*, referred to the activities related to the entrustment of Measure 6 and raised a question regarding the deadline for the entrustment of this Measure so that it could be implemented in this programming cycle. **Mrs. Miljković**, in her response, emphasized that in the coming period, work on the preparation of the entrustment package for new measures will be intensified. She added that the first step concerns the preparation of the legal basis and the development of procedures of the IPARD Operating

Structure. She also stated that Measure 6 is being implemented similarly to Measure 9, i.e. according to the PRAG rules.

Mrs. Nowak-Wood pointed out that the entrustment process involves multiple actors but also indicated that the first step is related to the development of procedures, which is a prerequisite for other bodies involved in the entrustment process to be able to carry out their activities.

Item 7 of the Agenda: Achieved results under the IPARD III Programme implementation

Mr. Nemanja Lečić, Acting Director of the Directorate for Agricultural Payments, IPARD Agency, provided an insight into the key results, the status of the measures and the progress made during 2025, and presented plans for future activities. He informed the participants that the final ranking lists for the first two calls under Measure 1 have been published, as well as the scoring list for the Third Call for Measure 1, while the publication of the final ranking list for this Call is expected in the coming period. The scoring list for the First Call under Measure 3 is under preparation. He pointed out that recipients have started submitting applications for advance payments. Furthermore, he presented the status of application processing per measures and calls and pointed out some of the challenges identified during the Programme implementation. Also, he announced the launch of a new call for Measure 1 in December 2025. In addition, in his address, he referred to human capacities and staff retention policy.

Mrs. Snežana Oljača, National Association for Development of Organic Production "SERBIA ORGANICA", initiated a discussion regarding human capacities in the IPARD Agency and stated that it is necessary to engage skilled staff to a great extent. At the same time, she indicated the need to reduce the number of persons engaged based on contract. **Mr. Nemanja Lečić**, in his response, stated that the retention policy is being implemented and that in the previous period the number of persons engaged based on contract had been reduced, given that due to the digitalization of national measures, the need for their engagement had ceased. He also pointed out that there were no persons engaged based on contract for implementation of tasks related to IPARD.

Mr. Miroslav Kiš, Farmers Association, noted that within the Third Public Call for Measure 1 there is a great interest, but that a small number of recipients will actually be supported. He also raised a question regarding future calls for the procurement of equipment and mechanization. In the continuation the eligibility criteria set within the Milk Sector were discussed. He pointed out that a small number of recipients from this sector have been supported through the IPARD Programme, and that recipients cannot apply for other support programmes due to the demarcation of the IPARD Programme with other support programmes. **Mrs. Miljković** stated that an Indicative Plan of Public Calls will be published in January 2026. Regarding the number of recipients to be supported under the Third Public Call, she explained that a significant amount of funds was allocated under this Public Call, however, the value of individual projects is large, which affects the scope of supported recipients. She added that a reduction in the upper limit of support that recipient can receive will be considered. **Mr. Lečić** continued and stated that in the coming period, the support limit and eligibility criteria will be taken into consideration.

Mr. Stevan Beljanski, "Vojvodina Agrar" Association of Primary Agricultural Producers LLC Bečej, proposed that the rulebook define that the criteria related to the plant production capacity be met at the end of the investment, and not at the time of submitting the application for project approval.

Mrs. Nowak-Wood raised a question regarding the forecast of payments of EU support by the end of 2025. **Mr. Lečić** stated in his response that it is expected to pay over than EUR 2 million by the end of the year.

Item 8 of the Agenda: Action plan for entrustment of Measure 4 and Measure 5 under the IPARD III Programme – progress update

Due to the inability of Mrs. Zdravković, Assistant Minister of the Department for management of EU funds, the Ministry of Finance to attend the Sixth IPARD III MC session, the progress made in relation to the Action Plan for the entrustment of budget implementation tasks for Measure 4 and Measure 5 of the IPARD III Programme was not presented.

Mrs. Anna Nowak-Wood added that monitoring of progress in the implementation of the Action Plan for the entrustment of new measures should be introduced as a regular agenda item at each subsequent session of the IPARD III MC.

Item 9 of the Agenda: Presentation of the Draft Rulebook for Measure 7 – Farm Diversification and Business Development

Mrs Lidija Aćimović, Head of the Group for Programming IPARD Measures for Improvement Quality of Life in Rural Areas, IPARD Managing Authority presented the draft Rulebook for the Implementation of Measure 7 – Farm Diversification and Business Development. She informed the participants regarding the general eligibility conditions, support intensity, eligible sectors, recipients and investments, as well as the scoring and ranking procedure. She provided a brief overview of the procedure and conditions related to the process of approval and payment of IPARD funds. Also, she presented an example of the List of Eligible Investments and Expenditures under Measure 7. She concluded her address by reviewing the promotional activities carried out in relation to Measure 7, with the aim of informing and preparing potential recipients for submitting applications for this Measure.

Item 10 of the Agenda: Discussion

Mrs. Anna Nowak-Wood raised a question when the First Call under Measure 7 could be expected. **Mrs. Miljković**, replied that the publishing of Call under this Measure is expected in the first quarter of 2026.

Item 11 of the Agenda: Proposal of the Action Plan for Technical Assistance for 2026

Mr. Nikola Milošević, Group for Technical Assistance and IPARD Programme Promotion, IPARD Managing Authority, presented the activities envisaged by the Action Plan which will be financed through Measure 9 - Technical Assistance in 2026. Furthermore, he informed the participants regarding activities whose realization through Measure 9 is ongoing.

Item 12 of the Agenda: Discussion and voting procedure

In this segment of the session, plans for the preparation of terms of references in cooperation with the Europe House in Belgrade were discussed. It was also noted that it is necessary to use the opportunities through Measure 9 to their full capacity. **Mrs. Anna Nowak-Wood** reminded that IPARD III Monitoring Committee meetings should be financed through Technical Assistance funds and not from a national budget as it has been so far.

After the voting procedure, it was noted that the Proposal of the Action Plan for Technical Assistance for 2026 was unanimously adopted.

<u>Decision No. 3</u>	The Proposal of the Action Plan for Technical Assistance for 2026 was adopted unanimously.
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Item 13 of the Agenda: Realisation of the Plan of Visibility and Communication Activities

Mr. Nikola Milošević, Group for Technical Assistance and IPARD Programme Promotion, IPARD Managing Authority informed the attendees regarding the implementation of activities in

accordance with the Plan of Visibility and Communication Activities under the IPARD III Programme.

Item 14 of the Agenda: Discussion

There were no questions and/or comments in this segment intended for discussion, as the discussions took place after each of the previous items.

Item 15 of the Agenda: Proposals of the Agenda and date of the next session

Within this point, it was agreed that the next IPARD III MC session would be held in June 2026.

Item 16 of the Agenda: Closure of the Sixth session of the IPARD III MC

The Sixth session of IPARD III MC was concluded with an address by *Mrs. Miljković*. She thanked the participants for their attendance and contribution. Furthermore, she once again thanked the Chamber of Commerce Belgrade for support in organising the session.

III Summary

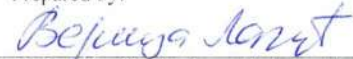
Conclusion	IPARD III Monitoring Committee	Activities that follow
Adoption of the draft Agenda for the Sixth session of the IPARD III MC	The draft Agenda for the Sixth session of the IPARD III MC was adopted unanimously	
Adoption of the draft Minutes from the Fifth session of IPARD III MC	The draft Minutes from the Fifth session of the IPARD III MC was adopted unanimously	
Appointment of members/deputy members of IPARD III MC	Information	Adoption of the new Decision on establishment of the IPARD III Monitoring Committee
Adoption of the Proposal of Action Plan for Technical Assistance for 2026	The Proposal of the Action Plan for Technical Assistance for 2026 was adopted unanimously	Implementation of activities from the Action Plan for 2026
Implementation of the IPARD III Programme	Information	Adoption of Rulebook for Measure 7 and announcement of the First Public Call
Preparation of the entrustment package for new IPARD III measure	Information	Implementation of activities envisaged by the Action Plan for entrustment of budget implementation tasks for new measures under the IPARD III Programme

CHAIRPERSON


Željko Radošević
State Secretary
Authorised to sign

Secretariat of the IPARD III MC

Prepared by:

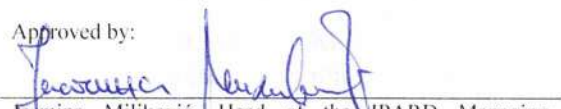


Verica Lazić, Senior Advisor, Group for Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting of IPARD Programme

Controlled by:


Tijana Marinković Denda, Head of the Group

Approved by:


Jasmina Miljković, Head of the IPARD Managing Authority, Head of the Department for Management of IPARD Programme