

# Terms of Reference

## “Evaluation of the implementation of the IPARD II Programme of the Republic of Serbia for 2020-2021”

### 1 Background

Serbia requested the support of the World Bank to strengthen its agriculture monitoring and evaluation (hereinafter: M&E) systems and capacity. Recognizing the limitations in the current M&E framework, MAFWM requested support for improving sector-related data collection and analyses to better inform policy actions and monitor the progress of ongoing (and future) agriculture programs and projects. To this end, Japan’s Policy and Human Resources Development Fund Technical Assistance (PHRD TA) Grants Program under the Performance and Results with Improved Monitoring and Evaluation (PRIME) Window, approved a grant to support this request.

The improvement of M&E systems and capacity is imperative for the Republic of Serbia as the country prepares for EU accession. Specifically, the 2021-2027 CAP orientation towards results-based programming requires that future EU Member States have the capacity to formulate indicators and monitor Agricultural and Rural Development (ARD) policy results. The MAFWM is viewed as the main institution benefiting from PHRD support due to its demonstrated commitment to policy reform, its awareness of the need to improve its capacity for policy analysis and formulation, and its recent efforts to strengthen its capacity for monitoring and evaluating ARD interventions. Strengthened government ownership of the policy process is viewed as a critical outcome of the grant support. The PHRD activities will build on the World Bank’s ongoing engagement with the MAFWM under the on-going Serbia Competitive Agriculture Project (SCAP) (P167634).

As capacity building for the policy evaluation is a core output of this project, this on-going evaluation should contribute to the achievement of the outputs.

#### 1.1 PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Republic of Serbia is located at the crossroads of Central and Southeast Europe and is the central part of the Balkans region, spreading over an area of 77.589 km<sup>2</sup> RS (excluding Kosovo and Metohia)<sup>1</sup>. According to OECD definition of rural areas, in the Republic of Serbia they account for 79.5% of the country’s territory, encompassing about half of the total population (58.7%). The Republic of Serbia is actively pursuing the agenda of association with the European Union.

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<sup>1</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244(1999) and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

In that respect, the Republic of Serbia - along with 5 other Western Balkan countries – was identified as a potential candidate for EU membership during the Thessaloniki European Council summit in 2003. In 2008, a European partnership for the Republic of Serbia was adopted, setting out priorities for the country's EU membership application, and in 2009 the Republic of Serbia formally applied for EU accession. In 2010, the process to ratify the Stabilization and Association Agreement began, and the European Council granted the Republic of Serbia the status of a candidate country on March 1, 2012, on the basis of the Commission's Opinion on the Republic of Serbia's membership application adopted in October 2011. In December 2013, the heads of the European Union Member States confirmed the decision of the Council of Ministers to start membership negotiations with the Republic of Serbia. The first intergovernmental conference took place on January 21, 2014, opening the Republic of Serbia's EU accession negotiations. The process of (explanatory and bilateral) screenings has been completed for all the negotiating Chapters. In December 2015, during the second intergovernmental conference, the first negotiation Chapters between the Republic of Serbia and the EU were opened. Since that date, the Republic of Serbia has opened 18 chapters and completed negotiations for 2 of them.

Within the context of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (hereinafter: IPA), the European Commission allocated to the Republic of Serbia the amount of EUR 175 million, to be withdrawn by 2023 for rural development under IPARD. The IPARD II Programme was officially approved by the European Commission on January 20, 2015, through the Decision of the EC C (2015) 257 (the last modification – Decision of the EC AN/KF/D (2019) 4484892 dated June 27, 2019).

The adopted IPARD II Programme prescribes entrustment of 6 measures in three phases. By entry into force of the Financial Agreement between the Republic of Serbia and the European Commission on June 12, 2018, entrustment of budget implementation tasks was regulated for IPARD Measure 1 (Investments in physical assets of agricultural holdings) and Measure 3 (Investments in physical assets concerning processing and marketing of agriculture and fishery products). Subsequently, an Amendment to the Financial Agreement between the Republic of Serbia and the European Commission has entered into force in November 2020, providing implementation of IPARD Measure 7 (Farm diversification and business development) and Measure 9 (Technical Assistance).

Since the beginning of the IPARD II Programme, nine public calls have been implemented (announced and closed).

With regards to Measure 1, five Public Calls have been published so far:

- The First Public Call covered investments in physical assets of agricultural holdings for the purchase of new equipment and machinery - a total of 85 applications were submitted;
- The Second Public Call covered investments in physical assets of agricultural holdings for the procurement of a new tractor - a total of 393 applications were submitted;
- The Third Public Call covered investments in physical assets of agricultural holdings for the construction and equipping of facilities and the purchase of new equipment and machinery - a total of 151 applications were submitted;
- The Fourth Public Call covered investments in physical assets of agricultural holdings for the procurement of a new tractor - a total of 437 applications were submitted;
- The Fifth Public Call covered investments in physical assets of agricultural holdings for the purchase of new equipment and machinery - a total of 169 applications were submitted.

For Measure 3, three Public Calls were announced:

- The First Public Call covered investments in physical assets concerning the processing and marketing of agricultural and fishery products - the purchase of new equipment - a total of 26 applications were submitted;
- The Second Public Call covered investments for the construction and purchase of new equipment - a total of 81 applications were submitted;
- The Third Public Call covered investments for the construction and purchase of new equipment – a total of 95 applications were submitted.

Under Measure 7, one Public Call was announced (in June 2020):

- The First Public Call covers investments related to farm diversification and business development – a total of 311 applications were submitted.

## **1.2 INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE**

The MAFWM Managing Authority (MA) drafted the IPARD Programme for the period 2011-2013 based on sector studies, which were prepared by independent experts for the country's priority sectors – milk and milk processing, meat and meat processing, and fruits and vegetables and their processing. Due to the short period of implementation of the IPARD Programme, only 3 measures were included – Measure 101: Investment in agricultural holdings, Measure 103: Investment in processing and marketing of agricultural products and Measure 501: Technical Assistance. Although the IPARD Programme for the period 2011-2013 was subject to an ex-ante evaluation, it was never approved by DG AGRI, because at that time, the Republic of Serbia had the status of potential candidate country and, according to the Council Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 of 17 July 2006, establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) was included in Annex II. The condition stipulated in Article 23 of the IPA Regulation was not fulfilled, and candidate status for accession to the EU from Annex II to Annex I was not granted to the Republic of Serbia.

In the period 2011-2012 the Republic of Serbia established the IPARD Operating structure, consisting of the Managing Authority (Department for Rural Development within the Sector for Rural Development of the MAFWM) and the IPARD Agency (hereinafter: IA, Directorate for Agrarian Payments in the MAFWM).

The NARDS for the period 2014-2024 was adopted on July 31, 2014 and published in O.G. 85/14.

MA was supported by EU IPA Twinning light project SR/2013/IB/AG/01/TWL, managed by Agrarmarkt Austria for the preparation of the IPARD II Programme for the period 2014-2020, based on the priorities identified under NARDS and in line with IPA II. The IPARD Programme for the period 2014-2020 was subject to an ex-ante evaluation carried out in the period June-July 2014 under the IPA Project Preparation Facility 5 (PPF5), Contract Number: 2012/302-220. The results of the ex-ante evaluation constitute an integral part of the IPARD II Programme. An on-going evaluation of the IPARD II Programme was carried out for the implementation period 2018-2019 by the Institute for Agricultural Economics of Belgrade.

### 1.3 RELATED PROGRAMMES AND OTHER DONOR ACTIVITIES

The first ex-ante evaluation of the IPARD Programme for the period 2011-2013 was financed under IPA 2011, Framework contract 2012/299740/1, within technical assistance for Evaluation of Agriculture and Rural Development sector. This framework contract was intended to assist the Government of Serbia to perform an assessment/evaluation of the ODA (Official Development Assistance) as defined by the OECD/ DAC within the Agriculture and Rural Development Sector for the period 2007-2011, meaning projects implemented and financed by IPA Programme, bilateral donors in Serbia and concessional loans with grant element of at least 25%.

The evaluation team reviewed, analysed and provided conclusions/recommendations on the extent to which the project design and activities implemented were contributing to the stated programme objectives; the likely effectiveness of the project approach in achieving stated objectives; assessment of external factors affecting the project, and the extent to which the project has been able to adapt and/or mitigate the effects of such factors; the approach to project management, including the role of stakeholders and coordination with other projects in the same sector.

*IPA Project Preparation Facility 5 (PPF5), Contract Number: 2012/302-220*

In accordance with the contract of this project, the MA engaged independent experts to provide consulting services for conducting ex-ante evaluation of the IPARD II programme. Tasks performed included the assessment of the programme-related SWOT analysis and needs identified, IPARD programme targets, expected impacts, proposed implementation procedures, including monitoring, evaluation and financial management.

*EU Twinning Light Project, SR/2013/IB/AG/01TWL “Assistance to Managing Authority of the Serbian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (MAFWM) in elaboration of IPARD II Programme (2014-2020), support to accreditation and training”.*

The project assisted the elaboration of the core elements of the IPARD II Programme 2014-2020 (identifying adequate support measures, indicators, legislative gaps related to implementation of measures, drafting the measure sheets, preparation of evaluation plan, drafting the monitoring and evaluation reports with necessary accompanying documents) and provided training to the MA. Beyond preparation for the new Programme, the project supported on-the-job training of currently employed staff and assisted in the revision of available programme documents in line with obtained comments and recommendations from DG AGRI and the ex-ante evaluation. The submission of the first draft of the IPARD II Programme to the European Commission was the most valuable result achieved under this project.

During the last quarter of 2019 and the first quarter of 2020, an on-going evaluation of the IPARD II Programme was carried out for the first two years of its implementation by the Institute for Agricultural Economics of Belgrade. The activities of the IPARD II Programme evaluation concerned the assessment of the availability and quality of common context indicators defined by the IPARD II Programme as well as strengthening the absorption capacity of IPARD funds through the administrative simplification of IPARD II request processing. The IPARD II Programme evaluation was finalized at the end of March 2020, when the final version of the Report was submitted to the MA.

## 2 Objective, purpose and expected results

### 2.1.1 Overall objective

The overall objective of this consultancy is to assist the national authorities in improving the programme implementation efficiency and effectiveness, overcome implementation bottlenecks and pursue administrative simplification. Also, in order to improve the programme monitoring, an assessment of the methodology for monitoring the result indicator related to the number of new created jobs will be conducted, especially for measures for which this indicator was used as one of the ranking criteria. Finally, taking into account the recommendations of the ex-ante evaluation of the IPARD III Programme which are also related to the above overall objectives, this evaluation will include an assessment of the results and impacts of the IPARD II Programme with the cut-off date 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

### 2.1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide the responsible authorities, in this case MAFWM, with an independent and external evaluation for the assessment of the current state of efficiency of IPARD II Programme implementation and monitoring in order to provide relevant recommendations for their improvement depending on the findings, i.e. evaluation results.

The purpose of this evaluation is to prepare relevant recommendations for administrative simplification of procedures in order to speed up the processing and increase the quality of submitted applications, and thus increase the efficiency of the implementation of the IPARD II Programme.

### 2.1.3 Results to be achieved by the consultant

The main result of this assignment is to draft the report on evaluation of the implementation of the IPARD II Programme of the Republic of Serbia for 2020-2021”Results outlined below are the minimum required to complete the contract, including the following, but not exhaustive activities:

Activity 1. Follow-up of recommendations of ongoing evaluation of the IPARD II Programme for 2017-2019 implementing period;

Activity 2. Assessment of the obstacles to absorption (including barriers to access to finance and relevance/effectiveness of measures’ eligibility and selection criteria) and administrative simplification on the basis of follow-up of recommendations of ongoing evaluation of the IPARD II Programme for 2017-2019 implementation period;

Activity 3. Assessment of the monitoring and evaluation system, including appraisal of monitoring and data collection for result indicator relating to the number of new created jobs within Measure 3 and Measure 7;

Activity 4. Appraisal of targets, achieved results and impacts of the IPARD II Programme so far (cut-off date 31. 12. 2021);

Activity 5. Assessment of monitoring, evaluation and reporting capacity building.

Evaluation of the implementation of the IPARD II Programme of the Republic of Serbia for 2020-2021” is carried out to improve the efficiency of the IPARD II Programme implementation and determine the degree of achievement of goals during implementation period. It is carried out by

independent experts in close cooperation with the MA and other relevant employees and stakeholders.

Furthermore, as the overall objective of the PHRD grant is capacity building for the evidence-based policy making, this evaluation shall strengthen the capacity of the MAFWM in conducting evaluations.

## **2.2 ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS**

### *2.2.1 Assumptions underlying the project*

Assumptions underlying the ex-ante evaluation are:

- MAFWM staff allocation to the relevant departments is compatible with resources needed to conducting of IPARD II Programme ongoing evaluation activities for implementation period 2020-2021;
- Existing information and data are accessible, reliable and in the appropriate form;
- Clear communication between the expert and the relevant stakeholders;
- The short period for conducting the ongoing evaluation of the IPARD II Programme for the implementation period 2020-2021.

### *2.2.2 Risks*

A possible risk could be associated with ensuring that the MA senior staff is available to work alongside the consultant on all matters related to Programme implementation as well as stakeholders' cooperation.

Another possible risk could be the quality of IPARD monitoring data provided by the IPARD Agency. It is expected that the IA monitoring system would be significantly improved based on recommendations provided by ongoing evaluation 2020-2021.

Another risk on implementation of the project is linked to the Covid-19 pandemic and possible pandemic-related restrictions during implementation.

## **3 Scope of the services**

### **3.1 GENERAL**

For the purposes of Article 55 of the FWA, evaluations shall aim to improve the quality, effectiveness and consistency of the assistance from Union funds and the strategy and implementation of the IPARD II Programme. The evaluations shall assess the implementation of the IPARD II Programme towards the achievement of objectives set out in Article 16(5) of the FWA. The evaluations shall examine the degree of utilisation of resources, the effectiveness and efficiency of the programming, its socio-economic impact and its impact on the defined objectives and priorities. They shall cover the goals of the IPARD II Programme and aim to draw lessons concerning rural development policy. They shall identify the factors which contributed to the success or failure of the implementation of the IPARD II Programme, including the sustainability of actions and identifications of best practices. The evaluation shall also assess the quality of programme monitoring and implementation and the experience gained in setting up the system for implementation of the IPARD II Programme. The results of this evaluation shall be taken into account in the programme implementation cycle.

This evaluation of the implementation of IPARD II Programme will be conducted by a functionally independent evaluator(s) of IPARD bodies, engaged by the MA and in accordance with recognized evaluation practices. This means, inter alia, the examination of regular aspect of evaluation such as the relevance and coherence of the Programme, and the potential effectiveness and efficiency of Programme interventions. Independence of evaluation and evaluators must be ensured as required by the IPA Regulation, IPA implementing Regulation and related evaluation guidelines.

Cooperation of evaluation consultant with the MA and IA employees for assessment of all programme implementation activities relevant for this evaluation is necessary to help improving the programme implementation for achievement of the programme objectives and increasing the absorption capacity of the IPARD fund. The consultant shall, participate in operational meetings with MA and IA relevant staff as well as other stakeholders if relevant, to discuss and present the evaluation methodology and results of analyses, findings, draft conclusions, and to answer to evaluation questions.

The evaluation shall draw upon the previous evaluations, studies, analyses and implementation reports and shall cover:

- Follow-up of recommendations of ongoing evaluation of the IPARD II Programme for 2017-2019 implementation period;
- Assessment of the obstacles to absorption (including barriers to access to finance) and administrative simplification;
- Assessment of the monitoring and evaluation system, including appraisal of monitoring and data collection for result indicator relating to the number of new created jobs within Measure 3 and Measure 7;
- Appraisal of targets, achieved results and impacts of the IPARD II Programme till 31. 12. 2021;
- Appraisal of evaluation capacity building.

### *3.1.1 Description of the assignment*

In conducting this evaluation, special consideration will be given to the lessons learnt from the previous IPARD Programme evaluations, especially related to ongoing evaluation of the IPARD II Programme for 2017-2019 implementation period.

Furthermore, the ex-ante evaluation of the IPARD III Programme of the RS, which was conducted in the period July-September 2021, among other things, envisages certain measures / activities to improve in general IPARD Programme implementation, as well as continuous monitoring of the achieved results of Programme implementation. The evaluator shall take into consideration that report as well.

In connection with the above, taking into account the recommendations of the mentioned evaluation, as well as recommendations of the previous ongoing evaluation within IPARD II implementation period, this evaluation of the IPARD II Programme will focus on the following activities:

#### ***Activity 1. Follow-up of recommendations of on-going evaluation of the IPARD II programme for 2017-2019 implementation period***

Within this activity, it is necessary to assess in general the degree of implementation of the recommendations of the previous evaluation of the IPARD II Programme for the implementation

period 2017-2019, accepted by the IPARD Operating Structure (OS) and provide feedback in general on the degree of implementation of recommendations.

***Activity 2. Assessment of the obstacles to absorption (including barriers to access to finance) and administrative simplification based on follow-up of recommendations of ongoing evaluation of the IPARD II programme for 2017-2019 implementation period and a recommendation of measures for further improvement based on the achieved results in this area.***

This activity was the subject of previously ongoing evaluation of the IPARD II Programme, for implementation period 2017-2019. The purpose and importance of re-inclusion of this activity in the evaluation is due to need for continuous work on improving the absorption capacity of the IPARD fund from the aspect of reducing implementation bottlenecks and pursuing further administrative simplification, having in mind that absorption of EU contribution of IPARD support by the end of October 2021 was only 10.7% of allocated funds. Within this activity, an analysis of the implementation of the accepted recommendations of previous ongoing evaluation related to obstacles to absorption and administrative simplification will be conducted. Feedback on any administrative simplification will be given based on the results of the analysis of the current situation within the programme implementation. At the same time, this activity will include an assessment of progress in creating conditions for overcoming barriers to access to finance of potential IPARD recipients in order to increase the overall absorption of the IPARD fund.

***Activity 3. Assessment of the IPARD II monitoring and evaluation system, including appraisal of monitoring and data collection for result indicator relating to the number of new created jobs within Measure 3 and Measure 7***

As part of this activity, an assessment of the functioning of the entire system for monitoring and evaluation of the IPARD Programme will be conducted, including follow-up of Recommendation No 2 /Activity 2 of the previous ongoing evaluation of the IPARD II Programme. Special emphasis will be on the assessment of the methodology of data collection for result indicator relating to the number of new jobs created within Measure 3 and Measure 7 and indicators related to capacities before IPARD and their increase after IPARD as presented in the Common indicator tables for monitoring and evaluation of IPA rural development programmes 2014 – 2020.

***Activity 4. Appraisal of targets, achieved results and impacts of the IPARD II Programme***

In view of fulfilling these tasks, the evaluation has to:

- assess the extent to which the Programme objectives are achieved with the financial resources allocated to the different measures;
- assess if the targets set for each measure and milestones per each year of Programme implementation are realistic (they should not be too low or unrealistically high); methodology on indicator calculations, in order to assess the quality and reliability of the data to be used and identify possible sources of error;
- assess the realized target values for 2020 and 2021 implementing year for each IPARD measure and cumulatively at the Programme level;
- assess the progress achieved in regard to the socio-economic, sectoral and environmental context indicators of the IPARD II Programme for 2020 in relation to the Programme base reference year (2012).



### ***Activity 5. Appraisal of evaluation capacity-building***

Within this activity, planned and implemented trainings of the MA and IA employees in the field of monitoring, evaluation and reporting within the implementation of the IPARD Programme will be assessed. If deemed necessary (through this assessment), additional trainings will be proposed. Hence, the objective of this activity is to develop a training needs assessment. In order to assess the training needs, a questionnaire should be delivered to the staff. The results of the questionnaire, and the staff opinion on their capacity to carry out their job in an efficient manner, will enable to identify the training needs. Based on the results of the analysis, recommendations will be given for improving the planning and implementation of training of relevant IPARD OS staff.

In conducting this evaluation services, the consultant will use the following evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and coherence<sup>2</sup>.

The consultant will be expected to deliver the following reports:

- Phase 1: Inception report;
- Phase 2: Interim report;
- Phase 3: Draft final report;
- Phase 4: Final report "Ongoing evaluation report of the IPARD II Programme of the Republic of Serbia for 2020-2021 implementation period".

The close cooperation of the consultant and the MA and IA relevant staff is very important for the successful implementation of the above evaluation activities in order to prepare the Final report. The MA will support the consultant in obtaining relevant data from other institutions in the RS.

The results and recommendations of this evaluation, including the description of the follow up activities to be undertaken by the IPARD OS (MA and IA) and other relevant stakeholders if any, will be included in the AIR 2021 in the form of the executive summary, including the programme table of the results and recommendations of the programme evaluation.

The consultant shall prepare and provide an evaluation plan together with proposed evaluation methodology in the inception period of max 10 (ten) days after the contract is signed. The evaluation plan should be developed based on this ToR and a review of available documentation. Organization and evaluation methodology prepared by the consultant shall be included in the Inception report.

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<sup>2</sup> **Relevance:** Appropriateness of the objectives of a Programme in relation to the sectoral needs and socio-economic problems to which the Programme should respond;

**Effectiveness:** Assessment of the effects in relation to the objectives of the evaluated Programme. An action will be effective when the objectives have been attained. For example, the ratio between the "number of kilometers" of water pipes that should have been constructed (quantified objective) and the "number of kilometers" that have actually been constructed could serve to assess the effectiveness of an agricultural measure concerning irrigation;

**Efficiency:** Assessment of the achieved effects in relation to the inputs (financial or administrative) mobilised; i.e., how economically have the inputs been converted into outputs, results or impacts. Could the same result have been achieved with less resources, or more results with the same resources?

**Coherence:** Assessment of whether a better complementarity or synergy could be found within a Programme and in relation to other programmes. The internal coherence refers to the correspondence between different objectives of the Programme. The external coherence refers to the adequacy between the evaluated Programme and other related programmes, e.g. other Community or national aid schemes.

## **3.2 INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

### *3.2.1 Contracting authority*

Contracting authority is the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (MAFWM).

### *3.2.2 Responsible body*

The responsible body for overseeing of the implementation of this consultancy from the side of the MAFWM shall be the Department for Management of IPARD programme (Managing Authority of the IPARD Programme, MA).

### *3.2.3 Management structure*

MA is responsible for overseeing of the implementation of this consultancy, the adequate use of the allocated resources to the consultant for achieving the ex-ante evaluation objectives, ensuring the conditions for the contract implementation are met, and cooperating with the consultant in the following areas:

- controlling and approving the work schedules of the consultant during the assignment, cooperating with the consultant and rendering logistical or other assistance, including support with obtaining relevant data and information, as required;
- organization, coordination and invitation of members to meetings, as per the work plan of the ex-ante evaluation.

The MA will analyse the reports prepared by the consultant (as a first verification of the outputs), ensure that all reporting requirements are met and approve provisional/final acceptance certificates (“certified correct”).

An initial meeting will be held to ensure correct understanding of the contract requirements and explain the role and responsibilities as well as expectations of each party, clarifying the specific administrative and implementing procedures.

During the contract implementation period, regular (monthly) meetings will be organized to follow the progress of the IPARD III Programme activities.

All meetings between the consultant and the MA shall take place at the premises of the MA in Belgrade or virtually, if Covid-19 pandemic situation will require, with the prior approval of the MA. All costs related to the preparation and participation in these meetings by the consultant must be taken into account when preparing the tender and included in the financial offer.

When needed, other meetings between the consultant and the MA to clarify potential implementation challenges will be held.

The composition of the evaluation team will be determined by the consultant.

The approach for day-to-day work management and description of the means and tools to be put in place to ensure efficient collaboration with the MA shall be explained in the organisation and methodology.

### *3.2.4 Facilities to be provided by the contracting authority and/or other parties*

The MAFWM will:

- Ensure that Ministry staff is made available to work alongside the consultant and on all matters relating to project implementation and stakeholders' cooperation. Provide to the project experts data, reports, facilitate and provide access to all relevant information, legislation, regulations, studies, reports and other relevant documents necessary for the implementation of the project;
- Provide support for the various events. Provide support for the preparation and implementation of the workshops and project presentations for stakeholders and the public;
- Provide all possible assistance to solve unforeseen problems that the consultant may face. The possible failure to solve some of the consultant's problems encountered locally will not free the consultant from meeting their contractual obligations.
- Provide office space in the premises of the MA

The IPARD Agency is the main data collector for the purpose of the IPARD III Programme monitoring, evaluation and reporting system. Thus, the IPARD Agency will support implementation of this evaluation and is obliged to respond to all data requests (for the data additional to the once collected in the IPARD Programme monitoring system) shall these be submitted sufficiently in advance and specifying the required format. The consultant should also avail itself to support the IPARD Agency to compile the required data.

### **3.3 LOGISTICS AND TIMING**

#### *3.3.1 Start date & period of implementation of tasks*

The intended start date of this consultancy is February, 2022 and the period of implementation of the contract will be six (6) months from the date of contracting. The final draft on programme ongoing evaluation report should be produced by the end of June 2021 while the consultant should remain available after that period until adoption of the AIR 2021 by the European Commission.

Interim Report however needs to be submitted to the MA not later than end of April and should present preliminary findings. These preliminary findings shall form the basis for the evaluation chapter of the Annual Implementation Report for 2021.

### **3.4 REQUIREMENTS**

#### **Qualifications and skills**

- University Degree in agriculture, management, economics, organization sciences, natural sciences, monitoring and evaluation; Postgraduate Degree in one or more of the above is highly desirable.
- Extensive knowledge of EU policy and legislation related to agriculture and rural development.
- Very good command of written and spoken English. Knowledge of the Serbian language will be considered as an asset.
- Excellent communication skills will be considered as an asset.

#### **General professional experience**

- At least 7 years of professional experience in implementation of EU funded programmes (Agriculture and Rural Development policy or Cohesion policy).

#### **Specific professional experience**

- Participation with an active role in at least two evaluations of an EU funded programme, including one evaluation of a rural development programme.
- Participation in ex-ante evaluation will be considered an asset
- Previous experience in implementing monitoring and evaluation standards and procedures in the EU funded programmes will be considered an asset.
- Knowledge of the local context, legal and institutional framework in the field of rural development will be considered as an asset.

Starting and end date (month/year) of experience must be clearly specified in the CV (overlapping activities will be counted once).

Consultant must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities they take on.

#### 3.4.1 Office accommodation

Office accommodation for the Consultant under this consultancy is to be provided by the MAFWM.

### 3.5 REPORTS

#### 1.1. Reporting requirements

The Consultant will submit the following reports in English in two (2) originals in hard copy and one (1) electronic version:

Phase 1: Inception report

Methods and tools are to be proposed by the consultant/evaluator, in accordance with recognized evaluation practices. They have to be discussed (amended if necessary) and finally validated by the MAFWM.

Phase 2: Interim report

Phase 3: Draft final report

Phase 4: Final report.

In total four (4) deliverables are expected to be submitted. The number of meetings to discuss the working progress will be arranged between the evaluation expert and the IPARD MA.

<b>Report</b>	<b>Tentative deadlines</b>	<b>Payments</b>
Inception report	10 days after the contract signing	20% after the approval
Interim report	+ 45 days (of the approval of Inception report)	20% after the approval of the Interim report
Draft final ongoing evaluation report	+ 45 days (after the approval of Interim report)	

Final ongoing evaluation report	+10 days (after the submission of the comments to the Draft final ongoing evaluation report)	60% after the approval of the Final ongoing evaluation report
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**3.6 SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL OF REPORTS**

The Inception report of a maximum of 12 pages shall be delivered not later than ten (10) days from the signing of the contract. In the report, the consultant shall describe e.g. initial findings, progress in collecting data, any difficulties encountered or expected in addition to the work programme and staff travel. The consultant should proceed with the remaining tasks of the project unless the MAFWM sends comments on the Inception report in a period not exceeding ten (10) days after its submission. The final/revised Inception report must be submitted along with the corresponding invoice.

Interim report, shall be submitted not later than 45 days after the approval of the Inception report. This report is to give clear preliminary recommendations for the improvements within the appropriate ongoing evaluation activities based on the findings in line with the results of previously conducted analysis. It shall form the basis for the AIR 2021 chapter on evaluations. MAFWM will have 10 days to comment on the report and send it back with eventual comments.

Draft final report of maximum fifty (50) pages (main text, excluding annexes and including the executive summary of a minimum five (5) pages and short description of achievements including problems encountered and recommendations. This Report should be partly based on the Interim report submitted earlier. It should explain the methodology applied for the assignment and include an assessment of the quality of the data and reliability of findings. This report shall be submitted no later than 45 days after the approval of Interim report. MAFWM sends comments on the Draft final report in a period not exceeding ten (10) days after its submission.

The deadline for sending the Final report is 10 days after receipt of comments on the Draft final report. The detailed analysis underpinning the evaluator’s recommendations will be presented in annexes to the main report. The Final report must be submitted along with the corresponding invoice.

All written submissions are to be made in English, delivered in two (2) hard copies and one (1) electronic copy to the Contracting Authority. The approved Final report and supporting documents will be submitted in hard and electronic copy to the MAFWM. All reports should have a title page, which should include: project name, project code or reference, report title, date issued, period covered and name and address of the consultant.

The Final report should be well structured, contain an executive summary, a table of contents, a table for acronyms. The reports will summarize the main achievements and leave detailed and in-depth subject matter for Annexes. Recommendations will be clearly highlighted. Facts in text and data in tables should be consistent with each other, with cross-references of information/data sources if necessary. Precise sources of information must be critically assessed prior to being considered. A list of essential contact persons is to be included.

The MAFWM will coordinate the submission of comments from MAFWM and Monitoring Committee. For the Draft final report, the MAFWM will send comments to the Consultant within ten (10) working days of receiving the draft reports. In the absence of comments by the MAFWM

within the set deadline, the reports are deemed to be approved. The Consultant shall ensure that the comments on the draft reports are addressed duly submitting Grid of comments attached to the Final report.

The MAFWM is responsible for approving the reports. This Interim Report will be annexed to the AIR 2021 that will be submitted to IPARD II Monitoring Committee for approval for submission the European Commission. The full On-going evaluation Report will be annexed to the AIR 2022.

Further copies may be requested if necessary. The consultant shall provide the MAFWM with electronic and hard copies of all the material prepared under this assignment, which should be annexed to the reports.

All reports will be checked prior to the approval and certification of payments (“certified correct” and “passed for payment”) to verify compliance with the terms and conditions of the contract – timeliness and quality of execution of services.

## **4 Engagement**

The Contract will be the Standard World Bank Lump-Sum Contract. The payments will be upon submission of all required documents, draft or final versions as case will be.

It is expected that the service should not use more than 50 expert/days throughout the duration of the contract.