



Brussels, 9.3.2022
C(2022) 1537 final

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

of 9.3.2022

**adopting the IPA III Rural Development programme (IPARD III) of the Republic of
Serbia for the years 2021-2027**

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012¹, and in particular Article 110 thereof,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/1529 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 September 2021 establishing the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III)², and in particular Article 9(1) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) In order to ensure the implementation of the IPA III Rural Development programme (IPARD III) of the Republic of Serbia for the years 2021-2027, it is necessary to adopt a multi-annual financing decision, which constitutes the multi-annual action plan for 2021-2027.
- (2) Article 110 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 ('the Financial Regulation') establishes detailed rules on financing decisions.
- (3) The envisaged assistance is to comply with the conditions and procedures set out by the restrictive measures adopted pursuant to Article 215 TFEU³.
- (4) Regulation (EU) 2021/1529 lays down the rules and objectives for pre-accession assistance to beneficiaries listed in Annex 1 of that Regulation.
- (5) The Commission has adopted an IPA III Programming Framework⁴ for the period 2021–2027, which identifies five thematic windows for the delivery of the specific objectives and thematic priorities of Regulation (EU) 2021/1529.
- (6) In accordance with Article 20(1) of Commission Implementing Regulation 2021/2236 of 15 December 2021, rural development assistance should be subject to a multi-annual programme, which is a multi-annual action plan in accordance with Articles 23 and 24 of Regulation (EU) No 2021/947, to be drawn-up at central level, prepared by

¹ OJ L 193, 30.7.2019, p.1.

² OJ L 330, 20.9.2021, p.1.

³ www.sanctionsmap.eu Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

⁴ Decision C(2021) 8914 of 10 December 2021.

the relevant authorities designated by the IPA III beneficiary and submitted to the Commission after consulting the appropriate stakeholders.

- (7) The actions provided for in this Decision contribute to climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in line with the European Green Deal.
- (8) The objectives pursued by the IPA III Rural Development programme (IPARD III) of Serbia for 2021-2027 are: to support sustainable food systems, through increasing the competitiveness of the agri-food sector, progressively aligning it with the EU standards and improving the efficiency and sustainability of on-farm production, which will provide a better response to societal demands for safe, nutritious and sustainable food and animal welfare; to facilitate business development, growth and employment in rural areas, improve farmers' position within the value chain and attract young farmers into agriculture; to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, foster sustainable management of natural resources and contribute to the protection of the environment; and to improve community development and social capital in rural areas and build-up modern public administrations for agriculture and rural development, respecting good governance principles.
- (9) In accordance with Article 9(1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1529, the assistance under this Regulation may be implemented through indirect management.
- (10) The Commission is to ensure a level of protection of the financial interests of the Union with regards to entities and persons entrusted with the implementation of Union funds by indirect management as provided for in Article 154(3) of the Financial Regulation.
- (11) To this end, the Commission should be able to entrust the implementation to Serbia, or the bodies designated by Serbia, subject to the conclusion of a financing agreement in accordance with Article 158 of the Financial Regulation.
- (12) The maximum contribution of the European Union set by this Decision should cover any possible claims for interest due for late payment on the basis of Article 116(5) of the Financial Regulation.
- (13) In order to allow for flexibility in the implementation of the IPARD programme of Serbia, it is appropriate to allow changes which should not be considered substantial for the purposes of Article 110(5) of the Financial Regulation.
- (14) The multi-annual programme (IPARD III) provided for in this Decision is in accordance with the opinion of the IPA III Committee, established under Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1529.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1
Adoption of the Programme

The multi-annual financing decision, constituting the multi-annual action plan for the implementation of the IPA III Rural Development programme (IPARD III) for the years 2021-2027 for the Republic of Serbia, as set out in the Annex, is adopted.

Article 2
EU financial contribution

The indicative maximum European Union contribution for the implementation of the IPARD III programme referred to in Article 1 is set at EUR 288 000 000, split per year as follows, in million euros, and shall be financed from appropriations entered in the budget line 15 02 02 02 of the general budget of the Union.

Year	2021	2022 indicative amount	2023 indicative amount	2024 indicative amount	2025 indicative amount	2026 indicative amount	2027 indicative amount
Total	20	25	31	43	54	57	58

The indicative amounts of the EU contribution per measure are set out as follows:

Measure	EU contribution
Investments in physical assets of agricultural holdings	86 400 000
Investments in physical assets concerning processing and marketing of agricultural and fishery products	60 480 000
Agri-environment - climate and organic farming measure	14 400 000
Implementation of local development strategies – LEADER approach	14 400 000
Investments in rural public infrastructure	51 840 000
Farm diversification and business development	51 840 000
Technical Assistance	8 640 000
Total	288 000 000

The appropriations provided for in the first paragraph may also cover interest due for late payment.

The implementation of this Decision is subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2021-2027 following the adoption of that budget by the budgetary authority for the respective years 2022-2027.

Article 3 Methods of implementation

The implementation of the actions carried out by way of indirect management, as set out in the Annex, may be entrusted to the Republic of Serbia subject to the conclusion of the relevant agreements, provided that the Republic of Serbia, has fulfilled the requirements pursuant to Article 154 of the Financial Regulation.

The implementation of the actions shall correspond to the following measures contained in the IPARD III for Serbia:

- Investments in physical assets of agricultural holdings,
- Investments in physical assets concerning processing and marketing of agricultural and fishery products,
- Agri-environment - climate and organic farming measure,
- Implementation of local development strategies – LEADER approach,
- Investments in rural public infrastructure,
- Farm diversification and business development,
- Technical Assistance.

Article 4
Flexibility clause

Increases⁵ or decreases of up to EUR 10 million and not exceeding 20% of the contribution set in the first paragraph of Article 2, considering each financial year separately, or cumulated reassignments of funds between actions contained in an action plan not exceeding 20% of that contribution, as well as extensions of the implementation and execution period shall not be considered substantial within the meaning of Article 110(5) of the Financial Regulation, where these changes do not significantly affect the nature and objectives of the actions.

The authorising officer responsible may apply the changes referred to in the first paragraph acting in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and proportionality.

Done at Brussels, 9.3.2022

For the Commission
Janusz WOJCIECHOWSKI
Member of the Commission

⁵ These changes can come from assigned revenue made available after the adoption of the financing Decision.