

Brief overview analyses of operations of the National Operating Structure .

Activities at the Programme level

- The Territorial Cooperation Management Operating Structure within the Ministry of Local Self Government as of the designated body in charge of the Programme coordination in the Republic of North Macedonia together within other competencies and responsibilities continued coordinating the appointment of First Level controllers to IPA project partners in the country. The table showing here, illustrate the National Operating Structure administrative processes and services accomplishment to date.

| Management verification in the Republic of North Macedonia FIRST LEVEL CONTROL - FLC updated: 14.12.2020 | | | | | |
|--|--------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| No. of IPA beneficiaries | | Project expenditure verifications | | | |
| 1st CfPPs | Submitted requests | Total estimated | Declared to date | Verified in 2020 | Verified to date |
| 89 | 76 | 445 | 155 | 93 | 155 |
| 100% | 85.39% | 100% | 34.8% | 20.9% | 34.8% |

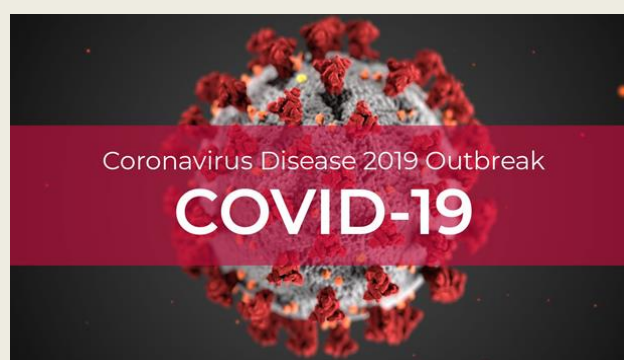
In result to verification management processes, the national co-financing rate of 15% has been paid to IPA beneficiaries, to thus who claimed for accordingly and respectfully the rules of the procedure described in the **Management and Control System (MCS)**, the main programme document framework usage for all actors involved in the Programme and projects level.

| National co-financing v.v. Certificates approved (National contribution of 15%) updated: 23.12.2020 | | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|----------------------|-------|-----------------|
| IPA project beneficiaries - 1st CfPPs Co-financing requests | | | Annual disbursements | | |
| Total estimated | Submitted | Processed | 2019 | 2020 | shifted in 2021 |
| 445 | 124 | 112 | 43 | 69 | 12 |
| 100% | 27.9% | 25.2% | 9.7% | 15.5% | 2.7% |

In this line, the co-financing payment requests that have been submitted by the IPA beneficiaries to date were processed and paid in an accurate and timely fashion. The following table illustrates the data for the relevant period under the programme to date.

| National co-financing v.v. IPA beneficiaries (National contribution of 15%) updated: 23.12.2020 | | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|----------------------|-------|-----------------|
| Requests per single IPA beneficiaries -1st CfPPs | | | Annual disbursements | | |
| Total contracted | Submitted | Processed | 2019 | 2020 | shifted in 2021 |
| 89 | 73 | 63 | 21 | 42 | 10 |
| 100% | 82.0% | 70.8% | 23.6% | 47.2% | 11.2% |

- Depending on the severity of the impact of COVID-19 at the international level, the outbreak conditions in the country - including those that are growing into a pandemic, obviously affected all aspects of daily life, seriously affecting the activities of the program, and especially the communication plan and the strategy for its implementation. Due to the reduction of the impact of the conditions on the daily activities in the Ministry of Local Self-Government, and due to the conditions with the epidemic of COVID-19, the levels of risks at work were determined, for which the Head of the National Authority determined appropriate safeguards. Consequently, the guidelines on the measures applied against COVID-19 and the recommendations stated by the Managing Authority and of National Authority of the Programme have become mandatory for all participants in the program until nowadays.



Technical support activities

In accordance with the 20th written procedure of the JMC decision of approvals the request for modification of the project multiannual budget plan for technical support of the National Operating Structure, the following follow-up activities are implemented:

- **Expert services for support at the level of management and implementation**

Recruitment of the new employee to the post of monitoring and control officer (MCO) with competencies and responsibilities in support to National operating structure and to Antenna officer based in Bitola was essential during this year. The MCO played an important role, particularly in providing assistance to Finance and Control Officer and to Irregularity Officer during the supervision of FLC controllers on the project site visits in August 2020. He was supporting the National structure in the day-to-day basis for collecting and processing the reference data for generating various reports on management verification and of national co-financing payments to IPA beneficiaries. Also, the MCO it coordinates the work established between the service provider and the designated National Structure within the Ministry of Local Self Government regarding the implementation of scheduled activities followed up by the secondary procurement plan under the contract terms for developing the Information module.



- **Activities for development of a tool for management and implementation**

Ministry of Local Self-Government procured new IT equipment - hardware and software for installation of an Information module. More about it is explained in this issue in the aforementioned topic. Here below is exemplified the Information module's operation and its digital transformation of admin processes and services in the frame of the management and control system, implemented by the National Authority of the Programme in the country.



- **Participation in online meetings of Operating Structure of the National Body and other bodies involved in the programme implementation.**

To reduce the impact of COVID-19 and potentially worsening outbreak conditions on day-to-day basis, all the planned meetings over this year period were organized on-line via video conferencing using the zoom meeting tool. In this matter, most often were organized the weekly staff meetings with participation of Operating structure staff from the ministry's premises in Skopje and of Antenna Officer joined by the Monitoring and Control Officer, both based in Bitola. This access for communication helped to work without interruptions during the entire period of the pandemic till nowadays. Also, as aforementioned in this issue, *regular meetings were organised on-line with a group of multidisciplinary experts engaged to develop the software for Information module, as part of the scope of works to be implemented in due course as per service contract terms.*

- **Technical assistance budget savings**

In coordination with the Managing Authority and followed by the e-mail communicated from the JS Coordinator, Dr. Spyros Arseniou on November 2020, the National Authority submitted the new projections sheet of safe estimated technical assistance savings (NMK budget) that will occur for the years 2020--2023. The savings are intended to be reallocated to the other two priority axis of the Programme.

- **Publicity, information, promotion**

Respecting the provisions of the IPA II Regulations and the Programme publicity rules all deliverables and all documents bear in a visible part the project name, the Programme logo, the IPA II co-funding and the European Union emblem, according to the Programme provisions and the provisions of Regulation (EU) 447/2014 and Regulation (EU) 1303/2013.

All the documentation of TA project paid for publication, information and promotion are ensured for the following FLC verification of expenditure for 2020, like for example the contracts and documents for the award procedure (call, tenders, evaluation, decision etc.); certificate of acceptance of products and services; invoices and dispatch notes which states the project and the Programme; documents of payment etc.

- **Preparation and execution of FLC verification for the technical assistance expenditure incurred in 2020, follow-up activity**

All accounting and other supporting documents linked to the TA project expenditure that is attributable to the FLC verification will be ensured timely and will be available to the FLC controller by the end of the third week of December month.

The National Authority will enter them in the MIS system and meanwhile, will submit it to the FLC controller for verification, the Table of Verified Expenditure of Annex 8.2_b_T4 associated with all supporting documents. The verification will include all costs paid out in 2020 including the last payment shown up in the final bank statement, issued end of the year.

