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Preparation of Western Balkan countries for IPARD (Instrument for Pre-Accession Rural Development Component)

Next steps in the process of preparation for IPARD

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Steps to be taken

- IPARD must be acknowledged as a political objective
- Basic data needs to be made available
- Spatial planning must include rural development
- Structures must be set up
- A programme needs to be elaborated
- Donors must be found
- Use the assistance provided by the EU



The political will for rural development is decisive

- the importance of rural areas needs to be recognized
- independently from accession
- IPARD is the best development approach, based on the experience in Member States of the EU

The general public must be won for rural development

- by enhancing the knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of rural areas
- by drawing the attention to the opportunities of rural areas and to the threats which they are facing
- by raising the general awareness for rural problems



Basic data needs to be made available



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- rural census provides data on rural areas
- farm register is needed for structuring farming activities
- land cadastre is securing ownership
- price statistics are the basis for public funding
- sector analysis for the more important agricultural sectors are needed for IPARD
- etc

Planning must include rural areas



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- An integrated planning approach is necessary
- Rural development must be part of national or regional spatial planning covering urban and rural areas alike
- This needs re-thinking, away from political sector thinking towards territorial understanding
- top-down and bottom-up initiatives are necessary
- a participatory concept is needed



Planning must include rural areas

Start with the elaboration of a National Strategy for Rural Development

- which could be the basis for a National Strategy Plan similar to the ones for Member States
- which could be later on funnelled into IPARD planning



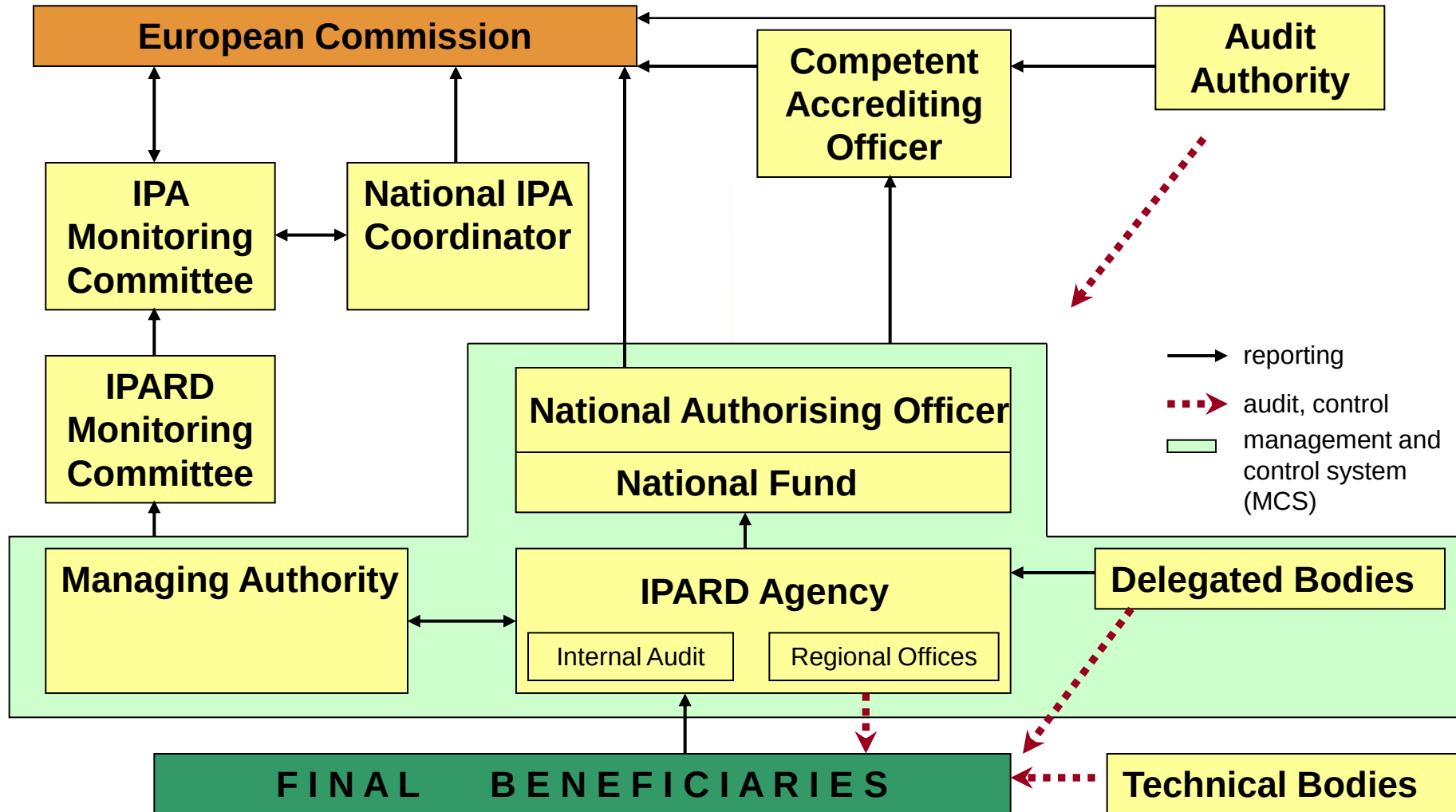
Structures must be set up



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- Establish administrative structures able to define strategies, programmes, management and monitoring conditions for IPARD type programmes;
- Involve other public bodies as well as civil society partners (farmers, food processors, environment and local rural development associations) at all stages

Structures to be set up for IPARD





Structures to be set up



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Managing Authority

- For the management of the programme
- Should also contribute to the formulation of rural development policies
- Could be part of an “agricultural ministry” or better “agricultural and rural development ministry”
- Should be administratively independent from the IPARD Agency



Structures to be set up



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IPARD Agency

- For the implementation and the payment of the programme
- Is the contractual partner of the final beneficiaries
- Must guarantee the necessary level of controls
- Shall be administratively independent from the Managing Authority
- Could be part of a “ministry of finance”
- Shall be working in accordance with “internationally accepted accounting principles”
- Must be adequately staffed

- Functionally independent from all IPARD actors
- Audits in compliance with international generally accepted auditing standards
- Responsible for verification of management and control systems + assessment of reliability of management financial and accounting information presented to the Commission



Establish a programme



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IPARD Programme

- contains a thorough description of the rural areas
- is identifying the strengths, the weaknesses, the opportunities and threads of the rural areas
- is developing objectives and targets to be met when providing assistance
- is formulating a strategy to meet these objectives and targets
- is defining adequate measures to implement the strategy
- is providing for a thorough monitoring and evaluation of the implementation
- belongs to the beneficiary country

Establish a programme



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- Start to think about rural credit for co-financing
- Take account of the need for competent advisory services
- Try to gain experience through well defined and targeted 'pilot projects '

Find donors



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- **Rural areas need support**
- **Preparation of IPARD needs money**
- **Donors are available**
- **IPA offers support to Potential Candidate Countries under its Components I and II**

Make use of the EU



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Component I is supporting:

Beneficiary: public bodies/adiminstration

- Administrative cooperation (twinning, TAIEX)
- Investments in the regular infrastructure, in particular to support alignment with EU norms and standards (laboratories, equipment for Paying agency, IT software etc.)
- For PCCs: measures and actions of a similar nature as those under IPA components III, IV and V

Make use of the EU



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Component I is providing specific support for IPARD preparation:

- Strengthening the administration to draft/implement/manage RD strategy/programme
- Activities to enhance knowledge/transparency on the economic situation of the sector: rural census, farm register, land cadastre, price statistics, sector analysis
- Support for the organisation of civil society partners related to agriculture and RD (farmer's association, food producers, environmental and local rural development associations)
- Facilitation access to credit for farmers and rural businesses
- Establishment of advisory/extension services for farmers



First step towards IPARD



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but above all and to start with:

Rural Development needs the commitment of the general public, of the politicians and of the responsible authorities

It must be understood as part of overall spatial planning and as a responsibility of society

Only then the preparation for IPARD can start