

## Ministry of Agriculture hires More People because of the EU Projects

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173 extra employees will be hired for faster inspection of projects by agricultural producers applying for European funding, Minister Valeri Tsvetanov informed after a session of the Public Counsel under Deputy Prime Minister Meglena Plugchieva (reports the government press office ).

It is expected that the advertisements for hiring additional personnel be published by State Fund Agriculture shortly. Part of the newly hired staff would work as appraisers on a central level but most experts would start working in regional offices to strengthen the capacity for accepting projects, especially on Axis III which is to start soon and a great amount of small projects are anticipated on it. In regard with the problem noted by Angel Angelov of National Association of Small and Medium Business about the significant delays in assessment in the sector, Valeri Tsvetanov emphasized that great effort was put into launching and normal functioning of the Paying Agency and that that was a subject of utmost attention.

The Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food Byurhan Abazov informed the members of the counsel that the Operational Programme on "Fisheries and Aquaculture" sector development would start on November 11th 2008 and would accept projects under the first three measures open, regulations for which had already been promulgated in Official gazette.

The participants in the Counsel discussed a proposal by Bozhidar Bozhinov on amending a government degree, enacting the participation of business and non-governmental organizations in the monitoring committees in each of the operational programmes which would allow equal proportion of business and state representatives in the committee.

Stress was put on the proposal for removing VAT taxation and corporation tax on money from the EU funds and on contracts made with them as well as undertaking particular measures on separate operational programmes for increasing publicity and accountability on them.

On an extended session of the Public Counsel with participation of ministers, deputy ministers and experts from the ministries managing operational programmes other concrete measures were discussed. They referred to improving the procedures for preparation, acceptance and control of the implementation of projects funded by the EU as well as amendments in regulations concerning putting the EU funds into use.