



**Press Release - 321/04/2020**

27.04.2020  
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## **Interim assessment of the NRW Immediate Assistance Scheme after one month**

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**Minister Pinkwart: State and federal governments have supported 331,000 small businesses, freelancers and sole traders with a total of 3.5 billion euros – Average processing time: eight days**

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**The Ministry for Economic Affairs, Innovation, Digitalisation and Energy says:**

Hundreds of thousands of small businesses, sole traders and self-employed freelancers have received more than 3.5 billion euros in support to help them get through the crisis. This was the assessment made by Economic and Digital Affairs Minister Prof. Dr. Andreas Pinkwart one month after the launch of the NRW Immediate Assistance Scheme: Over the last few days alone, 39,000 applications have been paid out in two tranches totalling more than 400 million euros. All in all, more than 80 percent of applicants submitting an application with a clear tax number have received their money.

Minister Pinkwart: “The NRW Immediate Assistance Scheme is the biggest ever economic programme in North Rhine-Westphalia. The coronavirus arrived very quickly and we had to act just as fast. Over the last month, 417,000 applications have been made to the scheme. The only way to cope with such numbers is with strong partners. We therefore worked with the district councils, IT.NRW, the finance administration and the chambers and developed within days an end-to-end digital process so that the money arrives quickly and securely. We are able today to give a positive progress report: 80 percent of applicants had their money in their account after on average eight days. This is a pace that we now want to maintain.”

At the same time, the state is working on a solution for sole self-employed individuals, who according to national government rules are supposed to use the basic social security benefits to keep themselves going and not the Immediate Assistance Scheme. The preference of the great

majority of the federal states is that those affected should be able to choose for themselves whether to use the basic benefits system or the Immediate Assistance Scheme.

The Minister: “Our proposal was supported by a large, cross-party majority at the conference of economic affairs ministers. Finance Minister Lutz Lienenkämper intends to speak in support of it at the finance ministers’ conference on Thursday in order to achieve a quick and non-bureaucratic solution for the solo self-employed.”

Immediate assistance is soon to be available also to start-up business owners who began offering their products or services only after 31 December 2019. With the help of their tax advisor they are able to make an application if by 11 March 2020 they had already achieved some turnover, had received an order or had entered into a long-term or permanently recurring business payment obligation. Work on the form and on getting the necessary agreement of all parties is already in progress.

***If you have any questions, please contact the press office of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Innovation, Digitalisation and Energy (Matthias Kietzmann on 0211 61772-204).***

***This press release is also available online on the state government website [www.land.nrw](http://www.land.nrw)***

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