



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
MINISTRY FOR AGRICULTURE,
FISHERIES AND ANIMAL RIGHTS
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL PAYMENTS AGENCY



Guidelines on the Submission of Payment Claims (Non-IACS Interventions)

Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan 2023-2027

Intervention 73.5 - On-Farm Productive Investments (Simplified Scheme under €15,000 Grant)

Version 2.0
23rd April 2025



Co-funded by
the European Union

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1. Introduction

These guidelines aim to provide general information and support to beneficiaries when implementing their projects and submitting reimbursement claims under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). This falls within the framework of Malta's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Strategic Plan 2023–2027, and is aligned with the CAP Strategic Plan Regulations (EU) 2021/2115 and 2021/2116, along with their related delegated and implementing acts. Beneficiaries are also expected to comply with relevant national and EU legislation, as well as any additional guidance issued by the Managing Authority and the Agriculture and Rural Paying Agency (ARPA).

When beneficiaries are granted funds to implement a project, it is crucial that such funds are managed prudently, with utmost transparency, accountability, and efficiency in line with the principles of sound financial management and good governance.

The eligibility requirements applicable under each Intervention are set out in the specific guidelines issued by the Managing Authority with the respective Call for Applications, as well as the National Eligibility Rules Programming Period 2021-2027.¹

These guidelines may be reviewed from time-to-time by the Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency (ARPA), and therefore beneficiaries are to follow the latest guidelines being provided.

2. Approved Project

Once a beneficiary's project proposal is selected and awarded a grant, the beneficiary will be invited to enter into a formal agreement with the Managing Authority (MA), hereafter referred to as the Grant Agreement. The beneficiary shall implement the project on the terms and conditions set out in the Grant Agreement.

Following signature of the Grant Agreement by both parties, and subject to the eligibility rules of the specific guidelines issued with the Call for Application under which the project was selected, the beneficiary may submit its payment claim to ARPA for processing, verification and, ultimately, payment authorisation.

It is important to note that the approved application form, forming part of the Grant Agreement, constitutes the main reference to determine the eligible actions and expenses that the beneficiary can undertake and incur, unless otherwise specified through written communication by the Managing Authority. Therefore, requests for reimbursement of payments which are not in line with these prerequisites shall not be processed by ARPA.

3. Documents to be submitted to ARPA prior to submission of Payment Claims

3.1 Bank Payment Form

Following signature of the Grant Agreement and prior to the submission of any claims for reimbursement, the beneficiary is to ensure that a duly filled-in Bank Payment Form is submitted to

¹ Such documents can be accessed through Fondi.eu website.

ARPA. This is required to create a beneficiary profile in ARPA's payment system, therefore in the absence of a Bank Payment Form, funds cannot be paid to the beneficiary.

In accordance with the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/127, all payments due under the approved project must be made directly and exclusively in the beneficiary's bank account. Therefore, the bank account must be under the name of the person who applied for financial assistance, i.e. the beneficiary. Payments in joint accounts are only acceptable in cases where such account belongs to married couples, or couples joined by civil union.

The Bank Payment Forms include further explanatory notes which the beneficiary is obliged to follow accordingly.

Should the beneficiary already have a bank account registered with ARPA, and s/he would like to continue using the same bank account for the purpose of this project, s/he would be required to inform ARPA through written communication confirming that s/he would like to utilise the bank account in question.

Moreover, prior to the submission of a Bank Payment Forms, beneficiaries are to refer to Section 4 – *Obligations to Maintain a Separate Accounting or Appropriate Coding for Transactions* of these guidelines.

3.2 SMS Notification

Beneficiaries may also opt to register for ARPA's SMS notification service whereby notifications shall be sent by ARPA, indicating the amounts that have been deposited in the beneficiary's account as well as inform registrants about various obligatory courses and any agriculture related material.

Should the beneficiary opt to subscribe for this service, s/he is to complete the 'Application to Receive Information by Mobile Phone Message'.

3.3 BiedjaCam

BiedjaCam mobile application features for the uploading of real-time photographic evidence of machinery and/or equipment and structures based on geo-tagged photo technology.

The App also includes the following functionalities:

- Receive important reminders and notifications from ARPA,
- Reply to messages sent by ARPA,
- See all your registered parcels,
- Follow EU aid applications,
- See all payments received.

For further information on the BiedjaCam, beneficiaries are to access the following link: <https://arpa.gov.mt/en/mobile-app-information/>. The webpage includes video tutorials on how to activate and use the App.

3.4 Delegation of Authority

Should the beneficiary opt for a project manager, consultant, or representative with whom ARPA is to be in contact with during project implementation and act on his/her behalf, the beneficiary must fill in the Delegation of Authority Form. If the beneficiary wishes to withdraw this delegation, s/he shall inform

ARPA through written communication. ARPA shall not be held responsible for any damages sustained should the representative access any information after the beneficiary has informed him/her that s/he shall no longer act as a representative, but before the beneficiary has formally informed ARPA about the withdrawal of this delegation.

Moreover, the beneficiary remains responsible for the implementation and good governance of the project.

This Form is to be submitted only if it has not been submitted at application stage or has not indicated a project manager, consultant, or representative at application stage, or if the beneficiary would like to withdraw a delegation and submit another.

4. Obligation to Maintain Separate Accounting or Appropriate Coding for Transactions

In line with Article 74(1)(a)(i) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, and Article 83(3)(c) and Article 123(2)(b)(i) of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115, beneficiaries are required to maintain either a separate accounting records or appropriate accounting codes for transactions related to EU-funded projects. This obligation is essential for ensuring transparency, accountability, and compliance with EU regulations regarding the use of public funds.

The obligations for different types of beneficiaries are set in Circular HR/OPM-EES/7/2024, which can be accessed through the following link: https://fondi.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Circular-HR_OPM-EES_7_2024.pdf.

5. Payment Claim and Accompanying Documents

5.1 Payment Claim

Due to the short timeframes in implementing the project, the beneficiaries can only submit **one** final Payment Claim following project completion. **No interim payments will be accepted.**

ARPA will perform administrative checks on the payment claim submitted by the beneficiary. Checks include but are not limited to:

- (i) Verification of the correctness and completeness of the information included in the Payment Claim Form by cross-checking the fields inserted therein with the actual documentation provided,
- (ii) Verification of compliance with the principles of the Public Procurement Regulations (in case of expenditure submitted under 'Actual Budget with three Quotations'),
- (iii) Checks on supporting documentation, including validation of invoices and/or proof of payments, validity of VAT numbers, etc, as applicable,
- (iv) Checks on eligibility of amounts claimed in line with any guidelines issued by the Managing Authority / ARPA, the Award Letter, the Grant Agreement and respective change request decisions,
- (v) Checks on conflict of interest between stakeholders, economic operators and other involved persons, as applicable.

During the verification process, ARPA may request the beneficiary to submit clarifications on the payment claim and accompanying documentation, or to present additional documentation. Failure by the beneficiary to submit the requested clarifications and/or additional documentation may lead to the rejection of the payment claim and/or penalties may apply. In this regard, the beneficiary will be notified through written communication that the payment claim is being rejected and about its shortcomings.

5.2 Accompanying Documents

Once a project is fully completed, functioning and fully operational in line with the approved project Application Form, the following documentation is to be submitted to ARPA:

Type of Budget	Component	Documentation Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft Budget ▪ Actual Budget ▪ Actual Budget with three (3) Quotations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Equipment and/or Machinery ▪ Structural Works 	A duly filled-in and signed Payment Claim Form . The Payment Claim Form is to be signed in blue pen by the beneficiary or Project Leader thereof.
		Proof of payment , i.e. encashed cheque image, fiscal receipt or bank transfer.
		Photographic evidence , as directed by ARPA.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Actual Budget with three (3) Quotations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Equipment and/or Machinery ▪ Structural Works 	Request for Quotations .
		A minimum of three (3) comparable and independent quotations .
		Invoice .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft Budget ▪ Actual Budget ▪ Actual Budget with three (3) Quotations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Equipment and/or Machinery 	Product guarantees , if applicable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Actual Budget ▪ Actual Budget with three (3) Quotations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Structural Works 	Final certified Bill of Quantities (BOQ) , dated and signed by a warranted Architect, including a declaration stating that the investment carried out is completed and functional and in line with all applicable Planning Authority permits and other applicable Regulations.

Beneficiaries should refer to the Award Letter and Grant Agreement to determine when the expenditure is classified as 'Draft Budget', 'Actual Budget' or 'Actual Budget with three Quotations'.

In the case of the '**Overheads**' component, beneficiaries do not need to provide any documentation. Should the beneficiary fail to carry out a part of the investment that was approved in the Grant Agreement, the Overheads component will be recalculated and paid at 7% of the eligible investment that was found to be in place and operational, subject to a maximum grant value of €15,000 in total.

➤ **IMPORTANT NOTE:**

Functionality of the Project

When submitting the Payment Claim Form, the beneficiary is declaring that:

- (i) The project has been completed in line with the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement, approved Change Requests, and the related documentation, and
- (ii) Any structures built as part of the project are fully completed and functional i.e. in use for the use they were originally intended for, as outlined in the beneficiary's application and respective Letter of Award and Grant Agreement, and
- (iii) Any equipment procured as part of the project is installed, commissioned, fully functional and in regular use, and
- (iv) The beneficiary has not obtained, and will not seek, any other source of funding to procure the same works / supplies / services for which support was granted through the project.

Unless the project is functional and in regular use as stipulated in the Grant Agreement or any subsequent Change Request, as approved by the Managing Authority, ARPA cannot issue the Final Payment. Further documentation to provide sufficient evidence of the functionality and use of the project prior to issuing the final payment may be requested to ensure that all the objectives indicated in the Application Form, Award Letter, Grant Agreement and any subsequent Change Requests have been fully achieved.

Failure to prove such functionality/use when requested by the ARPA or during an on-the-spot check, will be deemed as a false declaration, which may in turn, as a minimum, result in a full recovery of funds already issued in relation to the project, as well as rejection of any pending payment amounts.

Definition of "Functional and in Regular Use"

A project is considered **functional and in regular use** when it is operational and being used for the purpose stated in the approved Application. If certain project components (even if not selected for co-financing) are essential for the project to be functional, these must also be completed and in place within the stipulated timeframes.

Submission of Documentation

All the documentation needs to be submitted either electronically through arpa-rdpinvestmentclaims@gov.mt, or copies thereof at one of ARPA's Offices listed in Section 14 – Contact Details of these Guidelines. It is important that the documentation is submitted in **full colour**.

6. Procurement

6.1 Expenditure being claimed under 'Draft Budget'

In case of expenditure being claimed under 'Draft Budget', beneficiaries are obliged to purchase the equipment and/or machinery from the service provider whose quotation was presented at application stage and approved by the Project Selection Committee. Therefore, the specifications of the equipment and/or machinery purchased should be in accordance with those presented in the quotation at application stage or improved requirements.

Therefore, no further procurement documentation is to be submitted.

6.2 Expenditure being claimed under 'Actual Budget'

In case of expenditure being claimed under 'Actual Budget', beneficiaries are obliged to provide the following documentation when presenting their payment claim:

- (i) Final certified Bill of Quantities (BOQ) (signed and dated) by a warranted Architect, including a declaration confirming that the investment carried out is completed, functional and in line with all applicable permits and Regulations in cases where applicable building permits are necessary;
- (ii) Proof of payment

6.3 Expenditure being claimed under 'Actual Budget with three Quotations'

The beneficiary is bound by the principles of good governance, sound financial management and any relevant EU or national legislation when procuring works and/or equipment, and structural works for expenditure being claimed under 'Actual Budget with three Quotations'.

As part of the procurement procedure, beneficiaries are to submit the following documentation when submitting their Payment Claim Form to ARPA:

- (i) The **request for quotations** (RFQ) email or letter signed by the beneficiary, outlining the specifications and requirements in line with the approved line item as listed in the Grant Agreement or any subsequent Change Request approved by the Managing Authority;
- (ii) A minimum of three **quotations** from different and independent service suppliers or contractors, dated not earlier than six (6) months from the first invoice, proof of payment, or acceptance letter, or revalidation of quotation. Quotations obtained by hand are to be duly endorsed by the supplier or contractor.

6.3.1 Request for Quotations

A Request for Quotation is to be submitted by the beneficiary to potential suppliers / contractors through an e-mail or letter. Such requests shall include:

- (i) Name and address of the supplier / contractor and that of the beneficiary,
- (ii) The minimum acceptable specifications in compliance with the Grant Agreement to make a like-with-like comparison of offers,
- (iii) The validity period of quotations received in connection with this request, being not less than six (6) months from date of quotation,

- (iv) A deadline for the submission of quotations, which shall be the same for all contractors/suppliers/service providers.

6.3.2 Quotations

A minimum of three quotes from three independent/unrelated suppliers are to be obtained.

In the event that, due to exceptional circumstances, private beneficiaries are unable to obtain a minimum of three (3) quotations, the beneficiary must provide a detailed justification. The decision to accept or reject such a justification shall be at the sole discretion of ARPA.

Moreover, beneficiaries shall ensure that there are no potential conflicts of interest between suppliers/contractors; ARPA shall verify this through crosschecks with, but not limited to, Malta Business Registry. Moreover, quotations obtained are to be comparable in model specifications, works to be performed or service to be provided, in line with the Request for Quotations.

Quotations should also bear all the fiscal details necessary to be able to verify the details of the contractors or suppliers. These include:

1. Name and address of the supplier / contractor and that of the beneficiary,
2. VAT number of the supplier / contractor and that of the beneficiary,
3. Date,
4. A clear description of the equipment and/or machinery or works to be provided, with all the necessary specifications and quantities of the items, price per item and net amount, and
5. A breakdown of items being quoted, a net amount, the relevant applicable VAT rate, the VAT amount and the gross amount inclusive of VAT. If a quotation does not specify whether the total price includes VAT or not, it is understood that the quotation is inclusive of VAT. Only in cases where the quotations explicitly indicate that the contractor or supplier is VAT exempt will ARPA not deduct the VAT component from the total amount quoted.

Quotations with amendments/corrections in pen, pencil or correctional fluid/eraser will not be accepted unless the amendments carry an accompanying signature.

All contractors, suppliers or service providers are to be in possession of a valid VAT registration number with the respective VAT Department, which can be verified through the European Commission's VIES VAT number validation website. If any of the bidders are found to have an invalid VAT registration number or are found to be related to each other or with the beneficiary, financial corrections may apply.

If the cheapest quotation is not chosen by the private beneficiary, the Grant amount to be processed by ARPA can only be based on the cheapest quotation obtained.

In cases where any of the quotations submitted to ARPA do not meet the above criteria, ARPA may request further quotations which were obtained during the same period as the quotations submitted originally. If the beneficiary is not able to provide such quotations, ARPA reserves the right to apply financial corrections of up to 100% of the related expenditure, in line with the applicable guidelines issued by the European Commission.

7. Invoices and Proof of Payments

7.1 Invoices

Invoices are to be presented where expenditure is being claimed under 'Actual Budget with three Quotations'.

Invoices are to be clear and valid as per the twelfth schedule of the Value Added Tax Act (Chapter 406 of the Laws of Malta), which stipulates what a tax invoice should include. In general, a tax invoice should contain the following particulars:

- (i) Date of issue,
- (ii) A sequential number which uniquely identifies the invoice,
- (iii) Name, address and VAT number of the supplier,
- (iv) Name, address and VAT number of the customer,
- (v) Description sufficient to identify the quantity and nature of the goods or the extent and nature of the goods or the extent and nature of the services applied,
- (vi) Breakdown of price in case of multiple items or services in a single invoice and breakdown of price with clear distinction of the amounts excluding VAT, the VAT element and the gross total of the invoice,
- (vii) The date on which the supply was made or completed or the date on which a payment on account of a supplier was made,
- (viii) The taxable value per rate or exemption, the unit price exclusive of tax and any discounts or rebates if they are not included in the unit price,
- (ix) The amount of tax chargeable, if any, at each rate so chargeable,
- (x) The total amount of tax chargeable, if any.

Hand-written invoices are also accepted provided that such documents are signed by the contractor, supplier or service provider, and bears all the details included above.

Statements cannot be considered as replacements of invoices and thus are not considered valid. However, Requests for Payment are equivalent to an invoice provided that the following details are included:

- (i) Date of issue,
- (ii) Request number,
- (iii) Name, address and VAT number of the contractor, supplier or service provider,
- (iv) Name, address and VAT number of the beneficiary (the client),
- (v) Description of works/supplies/service provided.

Furthermore, in case of a Request for Payment, a VAT receipt should be submitted. If this document is computer-generated then this must bear an EXO number. In which case no additional proof of payment shall be required.

Invoices / Request for Payments / Cash Sales should always be issued in the name of the beneficiary as the client. This is very important given that it is the beneficiary that is being reimbursed through the funds, so it must be the beneficiary that incurs the costs of implementing and completing the project.

There should not be any form of amendment / correction carried out in pen or by correction tape or fluid on the invoice since this will render the invoice ineligible, unless effected in blue ink and duly endorsed (signed) by the contractor / supplier / service provider.

7.2 Proof of Payment

The Payment Claim should be accompanied by valid proof of payment to demonstrate that the relevant payment transaction between the beneficiary and the contractor, supplier or service provider has been affected in the timeframes stipulated in the Intervention Guidelines, Award Letter or Grant Agreement. Therefore, all proof of payments must be dated prior to the expiry date of the Grant Agreement and after the start of the eligibility period as indicated in relevant Intervention Guidelines.

The beneficiary is therefore to present at least one of the following documents:

- (i) Fiscal VAT receipt, cash register receipt or cash receipt issued through a computerised system that has been authorised by the VAT Department and includes an EXO number. Receipts are to include the VAT number of the beneficiary, or
- (ii) Bank statement / transaction report, or
- (iii) Encashed cheque image.

There should not be any form of amendment/correction carried out in pen or by correction tape or fluid on the proof of payment since this will render the document ineligible. Any amendments in the receipts are to be affected in blue ink and duly endorsed (signed) by the contractor / supplier / service provider. It is advisable that fiscal receipts issued through cash registers are photocopied (upon being issued) as these will eventually fade rendering the print illegible and subsequently unverifiable.

8. Irregularities

8.1 Detection of Irregularities

Beneficiaries should note that EU funds are public funds and EU funded operations are subject to audits by various national and EU auditing bodies. Therefore, by signing the Grant Agreement, the beneficiary is also undertaking an obligation for the below-mentioned checks that may be undertaken by the following competent authorities:

- (i) The Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency (ARPA) as the body responsible for the management and control of expenditure,
- (ii) The Managing Authority (MA) as the authority responsible for managing and implementing the programme in an efficient, effective and correct way,
- (iii) The Internal Audit and Investigations Directorate (IAID) as the Certifying Body (CB),
- (iv) The National Audit Office (NAO) as the external auditor of the Government given that public funds are being utilised for the implementation of the investment,
- (v) The audit services of the European Commission (EC) and the European Court of Auditors (ECA) in view that the investment is benefitting from EU funds,
- (vi) The State Aid Monitoring Board (SAMB) to ensure that the project is/has been implemented in accordance with State Aid Regulations,
- (vii) The VAT Department to ensure that VAT regulations have been respected.

Beneficiaries shall grant the above-mentioned entities full access to the documentation tied to the investment and verification of expenditure, if so required.

Failure to comply with the applicable EU and national Regulations may lead to recovery of funds. Therefore, if irregularities are detected from one of the competent authorities, a financial correction, which could reach up to 100% of the contract value, may be applied accordingly.

Financial corrections may apply in the following situations, however the below list is non-exhaustive:

- (i) Conflict of interest which may arise due to Related economic operators, economic operators who hold a direct relationship with the beneficiary, and companies in which the beneficiary or a representative of the beneficiary have direct control or shareholding,
- (ii) Lack of observance with the principles of Public Procurement Regulations,
- (iii) Lack of observance of any national and EU laws and Regulations,
- (iv) Lack of compliance with approvals/permits from the relevant Competent Authorities,
- (v) Non-compliance to the Grant Agreement and Change Request Decision,
- (vi) Failure to complete the project by the final approved project end date.

Determination of the applicable financial corrections are at the discretion of ARPA, however they will be carried out in line with the European Commission's Guidelines for determining financial corrections to be made to expenditure financed by the Union under shared management, for non-compliance with the rules on public procurement, as may be the case.

The beneficiary will be notified through written communication, indicating the reason why such financial correction(s) took place.

8.2 Debt Recovery

Should ARPA identify any undue payments issued to a beneficiary or note that irregularities have been made by a beneficiary, ARPA will initiate debt recovery procedures.

A beneficiary will be notified of a debt through written communication. Such a letter will include the amount to be recovered and the reason for recovering these amounts. On receiving a debt notification, the beneficiary is required to either accept the debt or object to it.

8.3 Objection

If the beneficiary does not agree with the debt / financial correction, and if the debt/reduction amount falls between €50.00 and €5,000.00, then the Objection Form is to be completed and submitted together with any supporting documentation or evidence to ARPA within 60 calendar days from the date of the debt notification letter. Objections to reductions or penalties imposed will be reviewed by ARPA's Objection Board. Beneficiaries are to note that the primary findings of the ARPA's own verifications and controls form the basis of the decisions taken which may be contested, and that for successful outcomes the Board requires compelling evidence to be provided which rebuts or sheds new light upon such findings. Decisions which are contested and shown to have been based on mistaken, erroneous or incomplete information or data, will be redressed by the Board. The beneficiary will be notified in writing of the Board's decision to accept or refuse such an Objection.

Once the Board's decision is issued, ARPA will no longer be able to consider any further representations by the beneficiary or his/her legal representatives. Other remedies at law remain available to a beneficiary who feels aggrieved by the decision, as outlined in Subsidiary Legislation 146.03. This also applies for beneficiary's whose debt and/or financial correction exceeds the €5,000.00 threshold.

If the beneficiary has any pending debts after the elapse of 60 calendar days from the date of debt notification and has neither submitted a Debt Acceptance Form nor an Objection Form, interest at a rate of 8% will be applied in line with Regulation (EU) No. 2021/2116 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Commission Implementing Regulations (EU) No. 2022/128, and Article 1852 of Chapter 16 of the Laws of Malta.

9. Controls

9.1 Controls prior to the Processing of Payment

Verifications on the realization of the investment will be performed by ARPA on all projects to verify that the project is functional and in line with the approved application, Grant Agreement and any subsequent addenda or Change Requests approved by the Managing Authority. These may be carried out through geo-tagged photographic evidence or through physical checks, at the discretion of ARPA.

Reimbursement of payment claims may also be verified through an on-the-spot check prior to the issuance of the payment. The control verifies the compliance of the beneficiary to the engagements.

9.2 Controls after Termination of the Project (Durability Period)

The reimbursement for payment claims may be verified through *ex post* checks after the project is completed and the final payment is issued by ARPA, for a maximum period of one (1) year or as indicated in the Grant Agreement under the durability period. Beneficiaries are to refer to their respective Grant Agreement to confirm the duration and obligations they need to abide to.

Such a control verifies and confirms that the beneficiary has abided by the conditions stipulated in the respective Grant Agreement which are namely:

- (i) Investments outlined in the project have been retained for one (1) year (or as indicated in the Grant Agreement) following the issue of the final payment,
- (ii) The project has not undergone a cessation or a relocation of a productive activity outside the programme area,
- (iii) There was no change in ownership of an item of infrastructure which gives to a firm or a public body an undue advantage, and
- (iv) There were no substantial changes affecting its nature, objectives or implementation conditions which would result in undermining its original objectives.

This means that the beneficiary must maintain ownership of all the assets purchased/supported through the EAFRD and the beneficiary has to ensure that the acquired assets are kept in good condition during and after implementation of the project for at least the period indicated in the Grant Agreement.

Besides the above, all supporting documents regarding the project and expenditure supported by the Fund on approved operations are to be retained by the beneficiary and made available to ARPA or any other stakeholder indicated in these Guidelines, for at least a 5-year period from 31 December of the year following the submission of the accounts in which the last expenditure of the project is included.

9.3 Setting of appointments for On-the-Spot Check

If, after multiple attempts at communicating by phone the beneficiary still does not respond to ARPA's request to carry out an On-the-Spot Check, a registered letter is sent out to the beneficiary providing a deadline by when contact is to be made with ARPA. Following expiry of the stated deadline, if no response is received from the beneficiary, this will be considered a refused inspection, and may lead to full recovery of funds. Failure to accept the registered letter shall also be construed as no response and hence the aforementioned applies.

10. EU Publicity Obligations

Publicity is an integral part of the project. The beneficiary must be aware of the source of funding through which he/she is given the grant. In addition, upon completion of the project, the beneficiary must ensure that the necessary EU publicity requirements are adhered to.

For the scope of this scheme, beneficiary are obliged to affix EU-funded stickers on all the equipment and/or machinery which is purchased as part of the project. These are to be affixed in an area clearly visible to users and passers-by. Such stickers can be collected from one of ARPA's Front Offices.

The beneficiaries are to refer to the 'Visual Identity Guidelines' for more information: <https://fondi.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Communication-and-Visibility-Requirements-Malta-1-2.pdf>.

11. Force Majeure

Force majeure is generally considered to imply an abnormal or unforeseeable circumstance beyond the beneficiary's control; the consequences of which could not be avoided by reasonable action. In cases of force majeure or exceptional circumstances a beneficiary is to notify ARPA in writing, including any relevant supporting documentation within fifteen (15) working days from the date on which the beneficiary or the person entitled through him, is in a position to do so. Such requests will be reviewed by the ARPA's Force Majeure Board and the beneficiary will be notified in writing of the Board's decision whether his/her request has been accepted or refused.

12. Data Protection

Any information will be processed in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act. By submitting the payment claim, the beneficiary is giving his/her consent to have its details and that of the project published in line with the obligations in the relevant EU Regulations. Moreover, this information may be used for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

13. Amendment to Payment Guidelines

These guidelines may be amended as necessary by ARPA to ensure harmonisation with EU and national legislation as well as to ensure the effective implementation of Malta's Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan 2023-2027.

14. Contact Details

Downloading and Submitting the Forms

The Forms listed in these Guidelines can be downloaded from the ARPA's website (www.arpa.gov.mt). The original duly filled in documents are to be submitted to one of the Offices listed hereunder.

Only the Payment Claim Form and its applicable documentation, such as invoices, proof of payments, product guarantees, declarations from warranted architects, and procurement documentation, as may be necessary, is to be submitted either electronically through arpa-rdpinvestmentclaims@gov.mt, or

copies thereof at one of ARPA's Offices listed hereunder. It is nonetheless important that the documentation is submitted in **full colour**.

Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency's Offices

Main Offices	
Address	Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights (MAFA), Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency (ARPA), Luqa Road, Qormi, QRM9075.
E-Mail Address	arpa-rdpinvestmentclaims@gov.mt
Contact Numbers	2339 7142 / 2339 7114 / 2292 4306
Opening Hours	
1 October – 15 June	
Tuesday	07:00 – 12:00
Wednesday	13:00 – 15:00
16 June – 30 September	
Tuesday	07:00 – 11:00
Wednesday	07:00 – 11:00

Malta Front Office	
Address	Malta Front Office, Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency (ARPA), Pitkali Markets, Ta` Qali L/O Attard, Malta.
Opening Hours	
1 October – 15 June	
Monday - Thursday	07:00 – 12:30
Friday	11:00 – 15:00
16 June – 30 September	
Monday - Friday	07:30 – 11:30

Gozo Front Office	
Address	Gozo Front Office, Government Experimental Farm, Mgarr Road, Xewkija, Gozo.
Opening Hours	
Monday - Friday	07:30 – 12:30