



GOVERNMENT
OF MALTA



GUIDANCE NOTES

On-Farm Productive Investments – Vineyard Renewal and Development Intervention 73.5.4

COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY STRATEGIC PLAN
(MALTA) 2023 - 2027

15th October 2025

Version 1.0

MANAGING AUTHORITY (CAP-SP)

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the European Union

Disclaimer

The Managing Authority reserves the right, in particular on the basis of approval or direction by the European Commission, to amend from time-to-time certain provisions established by this guidance document.

In case of any conflicts between these guidelines and the text of the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan (CAP SP) 2023 - 2027 and other legislative text, the interpretation given by the CAP SP and relevant legislation will be given priority.

The English version will be the legally binding text.

The Managing Authority also reserves the right to request additional information not included in this Guidance Document, in order to proceed with checks and evaluation of the application throughout the process.

This document supersedes any previous guidance notes, website notifications or other media notification issued on this Intervention prior to the launch of this call. Other notifications can be issued on such platforms following the issue of this call.

Further details on the application process may be published in due course on the website of the Managing Authority <https://fondi.eu/> For more information, the Managing Authority can be contacted by email at fondi.eu@gov.mt or (+)356 2555 2555 during office hours.

Notices

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
Version	Publication Date	Change
1.0	15.10.2025	Publication of Call 1

Prospective applicants are to submit **their application online** using the following link
<https://iacs.gov.mt.abacogroup.eu/customerportal/login>

FIRST TIME APPLICANTS

First time applicants are required to register with ARPA Front Office in order to create an account and have access to the online system. Contact details as follows:

Malta Front Office – Telephone: 22 92 61 48

Front Office

Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency (ARPA)

Pitkali Markets, TA' QALI L/O ATTARD

Malta

Front Office Opening Hours (Malta):

1st October – 15th June: Monday – Friday 07:30 – 15:00

16th June – 30th September: Monday – Friday 07:30 – 12:30

Gozo Front Office – Telephone: 22 15 69 79

Gozo Office

Government Experimental Farm, Mgarr Road, XEWKIJA

Gozo

Gozo Office Opening Hours:

Monday – Friday: 07:00 – 12:30

APPLICANTS BEING ASSISTED BY A THIRD PARTY

It is possible for a 3rd party to assist an applicant with their application. Applicants who make use of such assistance are required to complete a form authorising third parties to access and manage their application. Such form needs to be signed by both parties (applicant and 3rd party or consultant) and may be obtained from the ARPA Front Office.

DEADLINES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application is submitted prior to the set deadline.

Upon submission of an application through the online portal an automated acknowledgement email will be sent to applicants via the online system.

Upon receipt of applications, the Managing Authority will not be in a position to validate with applicants whether their submission satisfies the admissibility check to be considered for evaluation. It is the applicant's sole responsibility to ensure the application has been submitted in its entirety. The MA remains available to confirm with applicants that an application has been received if contacted via email on communications.eufunds@gov.mt or **(+356 2555 2555)** during office hours.

The online system is not responsible for the administrative compliance of the application form. The acknowledgement email does not imply that the applicant has submitted all the necessary documentation. The Managing Authority (MA) may request clarifications following the issuance of the acknowledgement letter.

THE SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTATION

Applications in hard copy, whether submitted by mail, by hand or any other means, will not be accepted and in this case, the application will not be deemed admissible and hence will not be considered during the evaluation process. This also applies for any applications submitted via e-mail. Pen-drives and CDs etc are not required and will not be accepted. This applies to submissions at both the Front Offices in Malta and Gozo as well as the Managing Authority Offices in Hamrun.

All documentation will be submitted through the online application portal together with the application, including but not limited to, quotations, bills of quantities, qualifications, tax, etc. is to specifically state the name of the applicant and not of any other individual/company. This also applies in terms of partnerships, where all the documents must be in the partnership's name.

DISCLAIMER

This notification supersedes any previous guidance notes, website notifications or other media notification issued on this Intervention prior to the launch of this call. Other notifications can be issued on such platforms following the issue of this call.

Further details on the application process may be published in due course on the websites of the Managing Authority <https://fondi.eu/> For more information, the Managing Authority can be contacted by email at communications.eufunds@gov.mt or **(+356 2555 2555)** during office hours.

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Definitions

CAP: Common Agricultural Policy is a commitment that the EU is promoting amongst its Member States to ensure a stable supply of food, safeguards farmers' income and protects the environment, while keeping rural areas vibrant.

CAP SP: Common Agricultural Policy – Strategic Plan is a plan drawn up by each Member State to contribute towards reaching the aims of the Common Agricultural Policy. CAP Strategic Plans encourage the transition towards a smart, sustainable, competitive, resilient, and diversified agricultural sector, while ensuring long-term food security.

CAP SP Regulation: REGULATION (EU) 2021/2115 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013 and (EU) No 1307/2013 and REGULATION (EU) 2021/2116 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013.

CPR: (where applicable) Common Provision Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy.

Checks and controls: Provide a means of verification that the investment operation complies with, and is in conformity to, the relevant rules and regulations.

Contact Person: A person that is authorised by the applicant and can be contacted directly for matters in connection with the application and eventually the project.

CRRB: Change Request Review Board

EAFRD: European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

Evaluation: A periodic collection and analysis of evidence to form conclusions on the effectiveness and efficiency of interventions.

Grant Agreement (GA): An agreement signed between the MA and the selected applicant (beneficiary) containing provisions and conditions related to the particular support being given.

Grant Award Letter: A letter sent by the MA to selected applicants upon the completion of the selection process in order to inform applicants of its outcome. The award letter can include certain conditions and actions expected on the part of the applicant.

Intervention: There are two types of interventions - those related to land (e.g. practices on agricultural land) or through investments (e.g. investing in the infrastructure of a farm)

Land Registration Identification System (LPIS): The system contains all agricultural areas, registered at the Front Office (ARPA) that may be eligible for a land-based intervention under the Common Agricultural Policy.

Managing Authority: A national or regional body designated by a Member State to manage and implement the CAP Strategic Plan.

Monitoring: Regular examination of the resources, outputs, and results of interventions.

Paying Agency: The Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency (ARPA) within the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights (MAFA).

Project Leader: Is a person who is authorised by the applicant to ensure a project is carried through and in line with commitments. The Project Leader can be contacted directly for matters relative to an on-going project and is expected to have responsibility for the execution of a project.

Project Selection Committee (PSC): An independent Committee that assesses and ranks project proposals (applications).

Project Selection Appeals Board (PSAB): An independent Committee that assesses appeal submissions.

Results: The direct effects or changes that arise due to the intervention.

Simplified Cost Options (SCOs): Expenditure which is reimbursed according to predefined methods (translated into amounts/percentages) based on processes, outputs or results representing the best approximation of real costs incurred when implementing an action.

1.0 Introduction

These Guidance Notes are intended to assist Applicants understand the requirements for requesting and receiving funding support under the On-Farm Investment Intervention of the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan 2023-2027.

Applicants are advised to familiarise themselves with these Guidance Notes prior to filling in an application form. The Guidance Notes, Application Form and all Annexes and other documentation are available at <http://www.fondi.eu>.

Applicants are reminded to ensure that they refer to the latest guidance notes available on the website, and that they have filled in the latest available version of the application form that is available for download from the website. **Only the version available at the time of opening of the batch will be considered for evaluation.** The relevant version of the guidance notes will be made online available together with a specific call. The guidance notes may change from time to time, applicants are to ensure that reference is made to guidance notes accompanying any specific calling order to ensure that the application is considered compliant.

1.1 Authorities

The Funds and Programmes Division (FPD) within the Ministry for European Funds and Implementation of the Electoral Programme is the Managing Authority (MA) responsible for managing the Interventions of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development Fund (EAFRD) in accordance with the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan (CAP SP) for Malta for the 2023-2027 programming period.

The Paying Agency (PA) is the Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency (ARPA) within the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries, and Animal Rights (MAFA).

Other national authorities may be involved and referred to in the assessment of an application, or during project implementation.

1.2 Scope & Objectives

The On-Farm Investment Intervention tied to on-farm productive investments aims to fund investment in agricultural holdings targeting **Vineyard Renewal and Development**, focusing on the entire territory of Malta. It intends to ensure that actions align with European Union wine quality standards (DOK and IGT).

The key objectives include vineyard renewal, quality improvement, increased mechanization, cost reduction, and enhanced competitiveness.

1.3 Regulatory Framework

The following is a list of the applicable Plan and main Regulations:

- a. The Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan that provides support from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development;

- b. Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013 and (EU) No 1307/2013;
- c. Regulation (EU) 2021/2116 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013;
- d. Regulation (EU) 2021/2117 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products, (EU) No 1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs, (EU) No 251/2014 on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and the protection of geographical indicators of aromatised wine products and (EU) No 228/2013 laying down specific interventions for agriculture in the outermost regions of the Union;
- e. Regulation (EU) 2022/129 of the European Parliament and the Council of 21 December 2021, laying down rules for types of intervention concerning oilseeds, cotton and by-products of wine making under Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council and for the information, publicity and visibility requirements relating to Union support and the CAP Strategic Plans;
- f. Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy;
- g. Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1475 of 6 September 2022 laying down detailed rules for implementation of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plans and the provision of information for monitoring and evaluation;
- h. Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012;
- i. L.N.122 of 2024 Categorisation of Farmers Regulation laying down the bases for the categorisation of farmers;
- j. Environment Protection Act (CAP 549 of the Laws of Malta).

The above list is not exhaustive and may be amended. It is up to the application to ensure that all national and EU rules are being followed at all times.

1.4 Contribution towards the CSP Objectives

The most relevant Specific Objectives to which ***On-Farm Productive Investments – Vineyard Renewal and Development*** contributes are:

SO2: Enhance market orientation and increase competitiveness, including greater focus on research, technology and digitalisation.

SO3: Improve the farmers' position in the value chain.

SO4: Contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, including by reducing greenhouse gas emission and enhancing carbon sequestration, as well as promote sustainable energy.

SO5: Foster sustainable development and efficient management of natural resources such as water, soil and air, including by reducing chemical dependency.

SO6: Contribute to halting and reversing biodiversity loss, enhance ecosystem services and preserve habitats and landscapes.

SO7: Attract and sustain young farmers and other new farmers and facilitate sustainable business development in rural areas.

SO8: Promote employment, growth, gender equality, including the participation of women in farming, social inclusion and local development in rural areas, including the circular bio-economy and sustainable forestry.

SO9: Improve the response of Union agriculture to societal demands on food and health, including high quality, safe and nutritious food produced in a sustainable way, the reduction of food waste, as well as improving animal welfare and combatting antimicrobial resistances.

XCO Cross-cutting objective of modernising the sector by fostering and sharing of knowledge, innovation and digitalisation in agriculture and rural areas, and encouraging their uptake.

Needs addressed by the intervention:

Code	Description
Code	Description
2.4	Identify and support the investment needs of the sector to increase its market competitiveness
4.3	Use animal and agricultural waste and residues as a resource
5.4	Increase efficient use of water and soil by restoring geographical and landscape features
5.5	Encourage farmers to invest in efficient farming systems that make efficient use of resources
5.7	Identify ways to reduce nutrient loading to air, soil and water from agricultural activity
6.1	Promote measures that protect and enhance biodiversity on agricultural holdings & wider rural areas

6.2	Disseminate knowledge amongst farmers to safeguard biodiversity on Natura 2000 sites
XCO.1	Developing a holistic and strategic approach to grow and enhance the AKIS in Malta

Result Indicators addressed by the intervention:

R.16 Share of farms benefitting from CAP investment support contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and to the production of renewable energy or biomaterials
R.26 Share of farms benefitting from CAP productive and non-productive investment support related to care for the natural resource
R.3 Share of farms benefitting from support for digital farming technology through CAP
R.35 Share of beehives supported by the CAP
R.9 Share of farmers receiving investment support to restructure and modernise, including to improve resource efficiency

1.5 Complementary with other interventions

On-farm productive investments will complement investments in processing / marketing / development.

1.6 Duration

This call shall close on Wednesday 28th January 2026, at noon (1200hrs Central European Time) subject to availability of funds and/or notifications by the MA informing otherwise.

1.7 Budget

The overall allocated budget for this call is €300,000. The MA reserves the right to amend the budget allocated.

1.8 Maximum Grant Value and Aid Intensity

This call is open for investments for small projects up to a maximum grant value of €15,000. The co-financing rate under this scheme is set up to 50%¹ meaning that an applicant may apply for an investment of €30,000 in total cost. Should applicants submit an application for an investment(s) that is(are) larger than €30,000 in total costs, the maximum Grant Value that will be awarded through EAFRD shall be capped at €15,000.

¹ The maximum range of support (aid intensity) may be increased to 65% for certain categories of farmers, in line with the Categorisation of Farmers Regulations of 2024. To qualify for such support rate, those with Livestock or holdings with Mixed agricultural activity must be classified as Category 4 or higher, whilst crop holdings must be classified as Category 3 or higher (Annex II).

The category upon which the aid intensity will be set will be that as notified by the Department of Agriculture in line with Article 4(1) of Legal Notice 122 of 2024, Agriculture Act (CAP. 639) Categorisation of Farmers Regulations.

2.0 Standard Eligibility Conditions

2.1 General Eligibility Criteria

The following are the general eligibility criteria to which the application must conform:

- (a) Submitted application is fully completed/filled-in
- (b) Applicant demonstrates that the applicant forms part of (or is the legal representative) the beneficiary/applicant organisation.
- (c) The proposed project will be implemented within the eligible territory.
- (d) The proposed project contributes to the targets and objectives of the relevant intervention.
- (e) The proposed project contributes to the specific objectives, needs and results of the programme.

2.2 Eligible Actions

Eligible actions under this call targets investment in agricultural holdings and may include, but are not limited to, investments addressing vineyard production.

Eligible actions will consist of the following on the basis of the following standard scale of unit costs and flat rate:

- Vineyard Development - €32,825 per Hectare for new vineyard establishment;
- Vineyard Renewal - €35,384 per Hectare for uprooting and replanting;
- Overheads at a rate of 7% of the total direct eligible costs in line with Article 83(2)(c) of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 and Article 54(a) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.

The minimum parcel size requirement for these eligible vineyard interventions must be on a continuous parcel of at least 0.112 hectares (1 tumolo), regardless of vine variety. This ensures a minimum scale for investment feasibility and avoids fragmentation.

Furthermore, **at application stage** beneficiaries are to satisfy the following requirements:

1. Consultancy Service - Beneficiaries must have onboard a consultant/viticulturist who is registered with the Farm Advisory Registration Board (FASB). The consultant/viticulturist will advise and aid the Beneficiary to ensure that the minimum technical specifications and responsibilities tied to this scheme are honoured.
2. Letter of Intent from a Winery - Beneficiaries must present a letter of intent from a licenced winery (a template can be found in Annex I).
 - a. The letter of intent with the Winery must clearly specify the:
 - i. Vine variety/ies.
 - ii. Compliance with DOK (Denominazzjoni ta' Origini Kontrollata) and IGT (Indikazzjoni Ĝeografika Tipika) requirements

Beneficiaries will be required to attend a 4 hour training module relevant to this intervention. Courses should be completed by the end of the project. Proof of attendance will be requested upon submission

of the payment claim, and failing to do so will lead to recoveries / non-payment of claims submitted. Training will be provided free of charge;

2.3 Ineligible Actions

The following actions shall not be eligible for support under this call for applications:

- Any actions that are not in conformity to the applicable environment, planning and agricultural legislation and/or policy and not in line with the scope of this intervention as outlined in Malta's CAP SP, shall be considered ineligible for funding.
- Actions which are proposed to be implemented on farm or land and which are not registered on the IACS on the name of the person applying.²

2.4 Eligible Applicants³

Support under the On-Farm Productive Investments Intervention is available to farmers, whether natural or legal persons (including Group of Farmers such as, *inter alia* partnerships and cooperatives), who

- are registered with the Agriculture Directorate within the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights database (IACS).
- Have a VAT Number and
- Are registered (in the case of individuals) with Jobs Plus as Farmers

Only registered individuals or entities will be eligible to apply for support using these standard scale of unit costs.

All applicants, being individuals, partnerships, or legal entities need to be registered on their name having their own FIC/profile on the IACS database and for investments concerning horticulture have the land being submitted as part of the application registered on their name with ARPA in the Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS).

Restrictive Investment Proposal

Applicant must operate farms which are efficient and economically viable defined as agricultural holdings with the below minimum threshold:

- Productive trees recognised as eligible by the Environmental Resources Authority (ERA) that can be planted, including Vineyards where the investment proposal is linked to the establishment of at least 1 tumolo of Vines , regardless of the size of the agricultural holding in terms of Standard Output (SO). In this case, the application would be deemed as satisfying the criteria for an efficient and economically viable agricultural holding and the applicant and/or application shall not be subject to further tests on SO eligibility. In such cases where the applicant is eligible for EAFRD on the basis of such projected investment, then the Managing

² Applicant must have right of use as recognized by MAFA

³ To clarify, an Agriculture Holding which would be deemed ineligible under a stand alone application, would not be deemed eligible if it were to submit an application along with a, regardless of the eligibility situation of the latter. Such submission i.e. ineligible and eligible applicants, will result in an entirely ineligible application.

Authority will restrict the type and scope of investment for which the project proposal (ancillary to vineyards) might be linked to⁴.

2.5 Eligible Expenditure

Eligible costs will consist of:

- Conversion to grape varieties that are recognised under DOK or IGT specifications, or which improve the market potential of the vineyard;
- Vineyard restructuring including:
 - Relocation of vineyards to more suitable plots and/or
 - Changes to planting patterns, row orientation, and training system to improve productivity, quality, or compliance;
- Replanting following compulsory uprooting ordered due to plant health or phytosanitary issues, provided this verified and documented by the consultant/viticulturist;
- Clearly demarcated extensions to vineyards in same parcels will be considered as new vineyards.

Applicants are to refer to National Eligibility Rules which is accessible from the fondi.eu website⁵.

Expenditure is considered to be eligible expenditure and therefore eligible for reimbursement **only** if it has been incurred **after** an application has been submitted to the Managing Authority and an acknowledgement is issued by the Managing Authority. Furthermore, no works or uprooting may start before the submission of the application.

Any costs incurred after the submission of the application shall be considered as eligible insofar as they are in line with the [National Eligibility Rules](#) and approved by the Managing Authority.

2.6 Ineligible Expenditure

The following costs shall be considered ineligible for the purpose of this investment:

- Actions that involve the restructuring or replanting only individual rows rather than full, continuous parcels;
- Actions that alter existing vineyard in a way that does not increase the surface area (example: filling the gaps by re-planting dead vines) and that do not extend the vineyard area;
- Actions that require a Planning Authority Permit and which permits to perform work (valid and executable) are not in hand at the time of application;
- Simple replacement investments;
- The purchase of agricultural production rights, payment entitlements, livestock, annual plants, and their planting;
- Project Management Costs;

⁴ This call is targeting vineyards, therefore the standard eligibility criteria for On-Farm Investments do not apply. Only the restrictive eligibility criteria apply.

⁵ https://fondi.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2021_2027_National-Eligibility-Rules.pdf

- Publicity and Dissemination which is obligatory by the programme;
- Second-hand machinery and/or equipment;
- Drainage works in connection with human domestic sewage;
- Investments to comply with Union standards, with exception of aid granted to young farmers within 24 months from the date of their setting-up;
- Other costs connected with the leasing contract, such as lessor’s margin, interest refinancing costs, overheads, and insurance charges;
- Expenditure/costs linked to interventions that are, at the time of application, directly (i.e. the specific investment) served by a breach notice by respective responsible authorities including the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) and the Planning Authority (PA);
- Contingencies and/or losses made by the Applicant;
- Statutory fines and penalties;
- In kind contributions;
- Canopies, excluding canopies for livestock housing;
- Vertical Green Walls;
- Purchase or lease of land;
- Purchase of Soil and Soil Improvement Interventions;
- Investments in structures, the primary purpose of which is marketing/sale of produce;
- Investments related to Equidae such as, but not limited to, horse stables;
- Investments resulting in net increase of irrigated area, where these are affecting a given body of groundwater or surface water;
- Investments in irrigation which are not consistent with the achievement and maintenance of good status of water bodies, as laid down in Article 4(1) of Directive 2000/60/EC, including expansion of irrigation affecting water bodies whose status has been defined as less than good in the relevant river basin management plan for reasons related to quantity;
- Purchase of livestock, as defined in Article 2(24) of Regulation (EU) No 2016/1012;
- Interest rate on debt, except in relation to grants given in the form of an interest rate subsidy or guarantee fee subsidy;
- Investments related to Equidae such as, but not limited to, horse stables;
- Investments related to renewable energy such as, but not limited to, PV Panels;

The list above is not exhaustive, and the MA may update this list from time-to-time. Where in doubt, it is advisable to speak to the Managing Authority.

VAT expenses incurred by beneficiaries shall not be eligible for reimbursement or contribution from the EU funds.

3.0 Project Details

- **Project Title:** Name your project in a way that it can be easily understood and captures the gist of your project. Must be within 15 words.
- **Project Duration:** Insert the number of months required to complete the proposed project. The maximum project duration is 15 months, covering two tree planting cycles. The actual project duration in months will be calculated from the date of the issue of the award letter.
- **The applicant:** Tick the box according to whether you are a full-time/part-time farmer
- **Nature of Activity/Business:** Tick if you are applying as an individual farmer, in partnership or as a legal entity.
- **Applicant's Information:** To include details of applicant – address, mobile number, email address and website (if applicable).
- **Project Leader:** To include details of project leader – address, mobile number, email address and position within the entity.
- **Details of Partnership:** To include details of partnership, if applicable.
- **VAT Status:** To include information regarding VAT status.
- **Nature of Activity/Business:** Tick the nature of the business.
- **Details of the contact person for the application:** In case a third party (such as consultant/advisor) is filling in this application and will be responsible for any queries in relation to the application, then the information of the contact person is to be entered here.

3.2 Sector and Type of Activity

- **Sector and Type of Activity:** Tick only the sector that is applicable to your activity and indicate if its conventional (C) or organic (O).

3.3 Technical Description

Proposal: This is a critical section of the application form. Provide a well-focused and coherent description of the central purpose of the proposed investment and alignment to the policy objectives⁶, listing all the investments being requested for funding in a clear manner (40 - 70 marks).

⁶ The proposed policy objectives contributes to economic sustainability, environmental sustainability (climate mitigation & adaptation/ conservation of biodiversity, conservation of soil, resource efficiency and animal welfare

Location(s) of Investment: The applicant is requested to submit the Parcel ID where the investment will be made.

3.4 Line Items & Budget

In this section the applicant needs to insert the component they will be investing in, Vineyard Development and/or Vineyard Renewal.

For each line item choose the type of investment, and under Unit select Ha (hectares) and insert the quantity proposed for that particular investment.

The expected Beneficiaries under this Call for are expected to practice the principles of good governance and sound financial management not only during implementation but also at application stage when drafting the proposed budget. The Project Selection Committee reserves the right to request clarifications on the budget presented by each applicant should it be deemed necessary to do so.

3.5 Supporting Documents⁷

A checklist of documents to be submitted with the Application is included with the online Application Form. The applicants will be advised further, during the evaluation process, with regards to the submission of any necessary clarifications/documents required.

Disclaimer: The submission of an application form and its subsequent acknowledgement does not imply that the application is being automatically accepted and/or rejected. The outcome of the evaluation of any individual application will be communicated to each applicant following an assessment carried out by the Project Selection Committee (PSC).

3.6 Declarations

The Applicant is requested to read through the statements in the declaration section and confirm that the Applicant will abide with the stipulated declarations. If the information is found to be false or deliberately or otherwise misleading, any EU funds awarded may be withdrawn and any funds paid may be recovered by the Paying Agency from the Applicant completing the application form. These obligations shall be considered binding upon receiving the award letter if the application is approved for co-financing. If the applicant does not accept all these declarations, the applicant will not be allowed to submit the application form.

⁷ All supporting documentation shall be on the name of the applicant.

3.7 Contact Details of Competent Authorities

Tax Compliance Certificates can be acquired by contacting the Commissioner for Revenue

Tel: 2296 2755

Email: certificates.cfr@gov.mt

OR

Using the E-ID online services

4.0 Assessment and selection

4.1 Validation of applications

The Project Selection Committee will undertake a validity check of all applications that are received. Should any required documentation be missing from the Application Form, the Project Selection Committee shall notify the Applicant through a notification letter. Any required documents that are found to be missing from the Application Form are to be submitted within the specified period from the date of the notification letter.

Only complete applications will be considered by the Project Selection Committee. Applications that remain incomplete after the specified notice period has elapsed will be rejected.

Should the applicant wish to re-submit an application, the process is considered a new one. In such cases, the effective application date would be that of the new submission.

4.2 Assessment and Selection of Applications

Applications for support that pass the admissibility check will proceed to the next step and shall be assessed according to the eligibility and selection criteria.

Selection criteria is designed to assess the fit and contribution of project proposals with the CAP-SP strategy, its target group and its objectives.

The Project Selection Committee may seek clarifications on the data presented, issue rectification procedure(s) for missing supporting documentation, and/or reject applications that do not satisfy the identified criteria.

Projects will be ranked according to marks and funds allocated to those projects which obtain the highest marks. In cases of over-demand for funding, other projects which obtain the pass mark, but which are not funded/selected will be placed on a reserve list according to marks obtained and funding offered if and when funds become available.

The Project Selection Committee (PSC) will award marks according to the criteria and rank projects according to the marks obtained. To qualify for selection, the proposal needs to obtain a total of at least 50% of the total marks of the general and intervention-specific selection criteria.

The voting members of the Project Selection Committee shall decide how the project proposal addresses the criteria and assign points according to the following selection criteria:

Selection criteria			
Criterion	Marks (max)	Sub-criteria	Guidance to applicants
Applicant	10 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Applicant is a Young Farmer (5 marks)⁸ • The Applicant is certified in-conversion or Organic Farmer (5 marks) 	No input is expected from the applicant in the application form. Check on these sub-criteria will be carried out through National databases.
Quality of operation proposal and alignment to the policy objectives	90 marks	<p>Clarity & Sequence – 70 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The central purpose of the investment is identified and demonstrates potential of improvements of the Applicant's agriculture activity. (40 marks). • The central purpose of the proposed investment is clear and complimentary from a technical point of view. It is well-focused and coherent when presenting its operational benefits (70 marks). 	The applicant is guided to provide a well-focused and coherent description of the central purpose of the proposed investment and alignment to the policy objectives, listing all the investments being requested for funding in a clear manner

⁸ Under 41 years of age

		<p>Description – 20 marks</p> <p>Adequate description of the purpose of the proposal and its alignment to the policy objectives (as may also be guided through the application process). The consideration shall be proportionate to the level of funding being requested.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed investment contributes to further farm economic sustainability (10 marks) • The proposed investment contributes to environmental sustainability (climate mitigation & adaptation/conservation of biodiversity, conservation of soil, resource efficiency, animal welfare) (10 marks) 	
Total Score: Pass mark	100 marks 50 marks	<i>Operations with the highest total score are prioritised.</i>	

The selection criteria for all interventions can be accessed at: FONDI.eu | 2021-2027 Eligibility & Selection: Rules & Criteria - FONDI.eu.

The PSC will also carry out checks on the quotation submitted with each application to ensure that the applicant and the supplier providing the quotation are not related in line with Commission Notice 2021/C 121/012 on *Guidance on the avoidance and management of conflicts of interest under the Financial Regulation*.

Furthermore, the Project Selection Committee reserves the right to carry out on the spot verifications to confirm that the investment for which funding has been applied for is not already in place and that the quotation(s) presented was obtained from suppliers or service providers who are not related to the applicant.

The Project Selection Committee reserves the right on a case-by-case basis to request that management verifications in respect of certain Grant Agreements are commensurate and proportionate to the investment requested, which may require additional supporting documentation to ensure that the investment put in place is in line with the investment approved. Such additional

checks/supporting documentation to trigger the final payment will be clearly outlined in the Grant Agreement.

4.3 Unsuccessful applicants

The Project Selection Committee will inform all applicants about the outcome of the selection process.

4.4 Appeals

Applicants who feel aggrieved by the outcome of the procedure have the right of appeal with the Project Selection Appeals Board (PSAB) within five (5) working days from the date of the letter of rejection by the PSC.

The same application cannot be considered as being under PSAB and PSC consideration concurrently. As stated above, only the application undergoing a PSAB procedure will be under consideration (by the PSAB).

4.5 Letter of Acceptance

The Project Selection Committee will issue a letter of acceptance to successful applicants informing them of the outcome the project selection process. Letters of acceptance may include conditions which have been raised by the Project Selection Committee which conditions need to be adhered to.

4.6 Grant Agreement

Applicants whose proposals for investments have been selected in accordance with the procedure described above, in terms of being eligible and having obtained the necessary scoring for selection, and furthermore, could be allocated the requisite budget for funding, shall be invited to enter into an agreement with the Managing Authority by signing the Grant Agreement. Selected applicants that do not come forward to sign the grant agreement within the stipulated timeframes will have the award withdrawn.

4.7 Change Requests

Change requests will be entertained by the MA in cases where the Beneficiary requests additional time to put the investment in place and to make it operational.

5.0 Contractual Obligations

Upon receiving the award letter, the Beneficiary becomes legally bound by certain provisions. The following sections provide information on some aspects of the contractual obligations of the Beneficiary.

5.1 Administrative checks on payments claims by the Paying Agency (ARPA)

Following the signature of the Grant Agreement and subject to the eligibility rules of the specific intervention, a Beneficiary may start to submit payment claims to the Paying Agency for processing, verification and ultimately payment authorisation.

Administrative checks on applications for support shall ensure the compliance of the operation with applicable obligations established by Union or national law or by the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan. Kindly note that the ARPA Payment Guidelines can be accessed through the ARPA website: <https://arpa.gov.mt/>

The Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency (ARPA) may, from time to time, issue further information and guidance.

5.2 Payment Triggers and Management Verifications

The following documents need to be presented by the Beneficiary to the Paying Agency in order to trigger payment. Every Beneficiary is asked to present two Claim for Reimbursement forms including other relevant documentation.

In the case of the Overheads component, Beneficiaries do not need to provide any documents to trigger this payment. All that is required, is to include the allocated amount on the Claim for Reimbursement. 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 EUR 15,000.

<u>Narrative</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Documents required from the Beneficiary to trigger reimbursement</u>
<u>Interim Payment</u>	40% of Grant Value inclusive of 7% overheads	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Claim for Reimbursement- Proof showing the purchase or order of vine plants
<u>Final Payment</u>	60% of Grant Value inclusive of 7% overheads	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Claim for Reimbursement- Proof of Training attendance- Proof of Registration within the National Vineyard Registry.- Compliance Report in line with system specification by the

		registered consultant/viticulturist as chosen by beneficiary
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Given that payments will be made based on pre-defined unit costs per hectare, physical verification of the actual vineyard area completed is critical. This can be achieved through a combination of tools, including geo-tagged photos (through BiedjaCam application, or as instructed by ARPA) and/or field inspections by the Paying Agency as may be required.

The area must correspond with the area approved in the application/Grant Agreement and must follow the system indicated (e.g. trellising method).

For replanting, verification should also confirm that the previous vineyard was uprooted and replaced with new certified vines, with documentation/confirmation from the Consultant submitted as supporting evidence.

In the case of new vineyards, confirmation of plantation layout and adherence to the stated density (e.g., at least 4,000 plants/ha) is required.

All verified hectares must match the assumptions embedded in the standard cost rate to qualify for payment. Should partial completion be detected, payments will be adjusted pro-rata, based on verified eligible hectares on the basis of documentation provided by the Agriculture Directorate.

Vineyards are to be registered by the respective beneficiaries with the National Vineyard Registry by the end of the project, before the submission of the Final Payment Claim.

A Compliance report in line with the system specification prepared by the Consultant/Viticulturist is to specify the below and submitted with the Final Payment Claim:

- Typology of vineyard (e.g. for red or white wine, traditional/bush) vs modern cultivation/trellised);
- Vine variety/ies in line with what was proposed within Letter of Intent at application stage;
- Rootstock to be used;
- Planting density and expected yield;
- Compliance with DOK (Denominazzjoni ta' Origini Kontrollata) and IGT (Indikazzjoni Geografika Tipika) requirements.

The Paying Agency will be issuing a standard template that is to be used as a Claim for Reimbursement by every Beneficiary under this scheme.

5.3 Controls and Penalties

The Maltese Authorities reserve the right to suspend the disbursement of grant fund or to recover any funds disbursed to the Beneficiary in any of the following circumstances:

- a) Non-compliance with the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement, including but not limited to failure to achieve operation's objectives, milestones, or financial reporting requirements;
- b) Mismanagement or financial irregularities, including but not limited to unauthorized use of funds, false declarations, or fraudulent activities;
- c) Breach of EU regulations, applicable laws, or any other relevant legal requirements governing the use of EU funds, including the National Eligibility rules, the Manual of procedures, and any specific guidelines issued by national authorities;
- d) Unauthorized expenditure or ineligible costs not in line with the approved operation/budget or outside the scope of the project;
- e) Suspicion of Fraud, Corruption, Conflict of Interest, Double Funding, or any other misconduct that puts at risk the EU financial interest, the fulfilment of the conditions triggering the payment of lump sums, unit costs, or flat rates, including, where required, the achievement of outputs and/or results.
- f) Actual, potential, or perceived reputational harm and/or unwarranted or unfavourable publicity to the Managing Authority, the Government of Malta, national and/or EU institutions, and/or EU funds.
- g) Any other justifiable reason deemed by the Managing Authority and/or ARPA to warrant suspension or recovery of funds provided that such actions are consistent with EU regulations and principles.

5.4 Documentation

Without prejudice to national legislation or practices that require a longer period for the retention of documents as well as to the rules governing State Aid, where applicable, all supporting documents related to a project supported by the Funds are to be kept, at the appropriate level, in an acceptable format, 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.

These documents should be kept in the format as indicated by the Managing Authority so that they can be made available as required by the relevant stakeholders including the Programme auditors, the European Commission and the Court of Auditors, etc. unless otherwise decided by the Managing Authority.

5.5 Durability of Investment⁹

For investments up to €50,000 the durability period obligations will extend to one (1) year from the final payment to the beneficiary. This obligation is tied to investments in infrastructure and/or to productive investments and is applied regardless of the size of the beneficiary. Beneficiaries must

⁹ It is being clarified that in line with the obligations under the CAP SP, a change in ownership of an item of infrastructure is **not possible**.

This means that the beneficiary has to maintain ownership of the assets purchased by EU funds and the beneficiary has to ensure that the acquired assets are kept in good condition during and after the implementation of the project. Breach of such obligation will lead to a full recovery of any support paid.

ensure that such investments are not subject to any of the following situations within this identified period:

- Cessation or transfer of a productive activity outside the NUTS level 2 region in which support was received.
- Change in ownership of an item of infrastructure which gives to a firm or body an undue advantage.
- Substantial change affecting the nature, objectives or implementation conditions which would result in undermining the original objectives of the concerned investments.

Investments will be subject to ex-post on-the-spot checks. Failure to comply with any obligation for the durability of investments may result in recoveries, in part or in full.

All project activities must be in place, operational and functional at the time payments are presented for processing.

5.6 Responsible Entities

Checks and controls can be done by any of the following authorities:

- a. The Managing Authority (MA) – Funds and Programme Division (FPD), within the Ministry responsible for EU funds
- b. The Paying Agency (PA) – Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency (ARPA), Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights (MAFA),
- c. The Certifying Body (CB) – Internal Audit and Investigations Department (IAID), Office of the Prime Minister (OPM),
- d. The National Audit Office (NAO) in view of the fact that public funds are being utilised for the implementation of the investment,
- e. The Food Safety and Security Authority (FSSA), within the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights (MAFA),
- f. The Audit Services of the European Commission (EC) and the European Court of Auditors (ECA) in view of the fact the investment is benefitting from European Union (EU) funds,
- g. The VAT Department to ensure that VAT Regulations are respected,
- h. And any other national or EU entity which has a legal right to carry out verifications on public funds awarded.

6.0 Compliance with Community Policy

Each Grant Agreement will endeavour to preserve the **Horizontal Principles** and respect the fundamental **Human rights** that underpin all EU-funded projects. These principles promote impartiality, openness, and accessibility for individuals with disabilities, fostering inclusiveness and equal opportunities for all participants involved in the projects.

Gender equality is a fundamental aspect of these principles recognizing the importance of empowering all genders to contribute meaningfully to the development and execution of each project.

To foster a **harmonious and sustainable environment** for all, EU-funded projects must abide by the **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union**, ensuring that the rights and freedom of all EU citizens are respected. Project activities, decisions, and actions must not violate or infringe upon the rights and dignity of individuals or groups, as defined by Maltese and international law, and wherever possible, promote the creation of an equal and just society.

The principle of **sustainable development** is of paramount importance, reflecting our commitment to meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Malta firmly believes in upholding the Union policy on the environment, as stipulated in Article 11 and Article 191 (1) Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. All projects are required to comply with environmental regulations. This includes fully respecting the Union environmental acquis and national legislation pertaining to environmental protection. Projects should aim to avoid or minimize adverse environmental, social, and economic impacts, striving to prevent significant harm to ecosystems, natural resources, cultural heritage, and human health.

In recognition of the crucial role played by **innovation** in driving economic growth and societal progress, this guiding principle is critical and incorporated into Malta's funding framework. By emphasizing and promoting this principle, the aim is to encourage and nurture innovative initiatives that showcase exceptional promise and potential. EU funded projects should aspire to support and promote innovative initiatives that exhibit exceptional potential, thereby ensuring the efficient and effective allocation of EU funds to projects that can truly make a difference in shaping Europe's future.

7.0 Overarching Commitments

7.1 Data Protection

By submitting the application, the applicant is giving his/her consent to have personal and project details published in line with the obligations in the relevant EU Regulations and other requests by relevant bodies.

Whilst abiding to the provisions set in the Data Protection Act regarding the handling of personal data, the Managing Authority and/or Paying Agency will retain the right to disclose, exchange or request information about any applicant, application, and agreement to or with other organisations or consultants which the Managing Authority and/or Paying Agency consider appropriate for administration, statistical, monitoring, evaluation and dissemination purposes.

7.2 Transparency

Because projects implemented under this Intervention involve expenditure of public money, there is public interest in how the money is spent. In this respect the Managing Authority will ensure that the principle of transparency is fully respected in the implementation of operations under Common Agricultural Policy – Strategic Plan 2023-2027. A list of Beneficiaries who receive payment is published to ensure maximum transparency.

7.3 Monitoring, Evaluation and Dissemination

From time to time, the Managing Authority and/or the Paying Agency, as well as other National and/or EU entities as may be identified by the Managing Authority, may conduct economic, environmental, or other evaluation of the intervention which may involve the beneficiary in surveys/interviews of various types. Managing Authority officials or consultants/evaluators engaged by the Managing Authority may contact beneficiaries as necessary. In applying for support under this intervention the beneficiary is deemed automatically as agreeing to cooperate with or take part in such studies, which are important for reviewing the effectiveness of the intervention as well as evidencing implementation of projects. The MA may also request cooperation from beneficiaries vis-à-vis promotion of the CAP SP, including use of pictures/videos taken from projects supported through this intervention.

7.4 Conflict of Interest

Checks and balances to ensure that situations that may give rise to actual and/or perceived conflict(s) of interest are vital in order to safeguard the ethical and transparent use of EU funds, fosters fair competition, builds trust, and ensures compliance with legal requirements, ultimately contributing to the success and legitimacy of EU-funded projects.

In line with Article 61 of the Financial Regulation (EU, Eurotom) 2018/1046 of 18th July 2018¹⁰, the Ministry responsible for EU Funds, together with ARPA, carry out the necessary verifications to ensure that no conflict of interest arises at any stage of a project's lifecycle. Should a conflict of interest be detected, the applicant/beneficiary will be notified to ensure that such instances do not prejudice the EU budget at large. The relevant authorities reserve the right to take any remedial actions that may be deemed necessary in such situations.

¹⁰ Financial Regulation (EU, Eurotom) 2018/1046 of 18th July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union.

7.5 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 the Force Majeure Board in writing including any relevant supporting documentation within fifteen working days from the date on which the beneficiary or the person entitled through him/her is in a position to do so.

8.0 Contact Details

For more information regarding this intervention, kindly contact the Managing Authority through the following contact information and by referring specifically to this Intervention.

Address: The Oaks Business Centre, Block B, Triq Farsons, Hamrun HMR 1321, Malta

Telephone Number: (+)356 2555 2555

E-mail: fondi.eu@gov.mt

Website: www.fondi.eu

Annex I – Letter of Intent Template

[Winery Name]
[Winery Address]

[Date]

[Farmer Name]
[Address]

Subject: Letter of Intent to Purchase Grapes

Dear [Farmer Name],

This is to confirm our intent to purchase grapes from your upcoming vineyard planting located at [Location] with parcel number [XXX XXXX]. This letter serves as a formal indication of our interest and commitment to establishing a long-term partnership to purchase grapes from the mentioned newly planted vineyard.

Based on our discussions and mutual understanding, [Winery Name] intends to purchase grapes from the [grape variety] vines you will be planting in [Month, Year] for the production of [DOK/IGT] wine according to the local regulations and production protocols falling under the Wine Act Cap 436.

The anticipated first harvest is expected in [Harvest Year], and we look forward to procuring the whole [DOK/IGT] quota, subject to quality and yield. The purchase price will be determined closer to harvest, based on prevailing market rates and mutual agreement.

Please note that this letter is not a legally binding contract but a statement of our genuine intent to collaborate and support your efforts in producing high-quality grapes for our winemaking operations.

Sincerely,

[Name]
[Title]
[Winery Name]

Annex II¹¹

Tabella 1: Kategorizzazzjoni tal-Azjendi tal-Ucuh tar-Raba'

Kategorija tal-ucuh tar-raba' <i>Crop Category</i>	Introjtu Annwali (€) <i>Annual Income (€)</i>		Żona (ettaru) <i>Area (Ha)</i>	Produzzjoni Standard (€) * <i>Standard Output* (€)</i>	
	Minimu <i>Minimum</i>	Massimu <i>Maximum</i>		Minimu <i>Minimum</i>	Massimu <i>Maximum</i>
Kategorija 1 <i>Category 1</i>	Ażjendi mhux kummerċjali <i>Non-Commercial holdings</i>			0 0	3,999 3,999
Kategorija 2 <i>Category 2</i>		11,104 <i>11,104</i>	<=1.5 <=1.5	4,000 4,000	14,000 14,000
Kategorija 3 <i>Category 3</i>	11,105 <i>11,105</i>	16,000 <i>16,000</i>	>1.5 <=5 >1.5 <=5	14,001 14,001	47,000 47,000
Kategorija 4 <i>Category 4</i>	16,001 <i>16,001</i>	21,525 <i>21,525</i>	>5 <=9 >5 <=9	47,001 47,001	84,000 84,000
Kategorija 5 <i>Category 5</i>	21,526 <i>21,526</i>		>9 >9	84,001 84,001	

Tabella 2: Kategorizzazzjoni tal-Azjendi tal-Bhejjem

Table 2: Categorisation of Livestock Holdings

Kategorija tal-Bhejjem <i>Livestock Category</i>	Introjtu Annwali (€) <i>Annual Income (€)</i>		Unità tal-Bhejjem (LSU) <i>Livestock Unit (LSU)</i>	Produzzjoni Standard * (€) <i>Standard Output* (€)</i>	
	Minimu <i>Minimum</i>	Massimu <i>Maximum</i>		Minimu <i>Minimum</i>	Massimu <i>Maximum</i>
Kategorija 1 <i>Category 1</i>	Ażjendi mhux kummerċjali <i>Non-Commercial holdings</i>			0 0	3,999 3,999
Kategorija 2 <i>Category 2</i>		11,104 <i>11,104</i>	<= 23 <= 23	4,000 4,000	44,000 44,000
Kategorija 3 <i>Category 3</i>	11,105 <i>11,105</i>	16,000 <i>16,000</i>	>23 <=28 >23 <=28	44,001 44,001	53,000 53,000
Kategorija 4 <i>Category 4</i>	16,001 <i>16,001</i>	21,525 <i>21,525</i>	>28 <= 33 >28 <= 33	53,001 63,999 53,001 63,999	64,000 64,000
Kategorija 5 <i>Category 5</i>	21,526 <i>21,526</i>		>33 >33	64,001 64,001	