

Technical Assistance Manual of Procedures

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MANAGING AUTHORITY (EAFRD)

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Rural Development Programme for Malta 2014-2020

Part financed by the European Union

Co-financing Rate:

75% European Union; 25% Government of Malta



***The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas***

1. Overview

Technical Assistance (TA) under the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (RDP) of the European Agricultural fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) 2014-2020 may finance Programme preparatory actions, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and control measures as described in Chapter 15.6 of the RDP 2014-2020 for Malta and in line with the principles of sound financial management outlined in Article 30 of Regulation (EU) No 966/2012. Additionally the above is in accordance with Chapter III, Article 51(1) of Regulation (EU) 1035/2013 regarding Funding Technical Assistance which also make reference to Regulation (EU) 1303/2013.

Furthermore it may also finance actions aimed at strengthening the administrative capacity of the stakeholders involved in this fund. TA may take the form of procurement contracts, expert fees, costs related to salaries, training, travel/subsistence, operational and publicity costs and/or administrative expenditure as defined in the eligibility rules¹ and according to the applicable co-financing rate. Costs necessary for the implementation of the RPD 2014-2020 incurred by the MA and PA and other bodies relevant to Malta's implementation system working under EAFRD with the exception of the CB as per article 8 of Regulation (EU) 1306/2013 are eligible for support within the limits specified in the eligibility guidelines. Each recipient of Technical Assistance support shall be responsible for ensuring that the activity is undertaken in line with the relevant rules and regulations of the Fund/Programme, including public procurement regulations². The MA shall undertake management verifications, while the PA will carry out verifications necessary prior to effecting payments on all actions financed under TA.

Technical Assistance is managed by the Managing Authority on a demand driven basis, while payments through TA will be effected by the Paying Agency. The Eligibility of the TA for this programme (2014-2020) as stated in Article 65(1) of Regulation (EU) 1303/2015; The eligibility of expenditure shall be determined on the basis of national rules, except where specific rules are laid down in, or on the basis of, this Regulation or the Fund-specific rules. Having said this the eligibility period runs from 1st January 2016 to 31 March 2020 (2023 with the N+3 rule).

2. General Principles and Guidance

The following are the main expenditures eligible to be supported by Technical Assistance³:

- I. Expenditure relating to the preparation of the programme, selection, appraisal, management and monitoring of actions;
- II. Expenditure related to audits and on the spot checks of actions or projects;
- III. Expenditure relating to evaluations of actions or projects;
- IV. Expenditure relating to information, dissemination and transparency in relation to actions;

¹ A more detailed and comprehensive list of eligible costs is defined in the Eligibility Guidelines Document.

² Public Procurement Regulations, 2016 (Legal notice 352/2016 and subsequent revisions/ new regulations)

³ Same as footnote 1

- V. Expenditure on the acquisition, installation and maintenance of computerised systems for the management, monitoring and evaluation of the EAFRD;
- VI. Expenditure on meetings of monitoring committees and sub-committees relating to the implementation of actions.
- VII. This expenditure may also include the costs of experts and other participants in these committees, where their presence is essential to the effective implementation of actions;
- VIII. Expenditure for the reinforcement of the administrative capacity for the implementation of the EAFRD.

3. Technical Assistance allocation

The TA allocation for EAFRD under the RDP 2014-2020 amounts to € 5,190,768 (Public Expenditure) i.e. 4% of the total Public allocation under the RDP2014-2020.⁴

4. Roles and Responsibilities in the utilisation of the TA

4.1. TA Management

The MA shall manage the TA on a demand-driven basis. The MA shall establish a procedure for submission of requests and their approval as well as control. An officer within the MA shall be assigned the task of TA Manager. The TA manager shall be responsible for the overall co-ordination and day-to-day management of the TA. The TA Manager, works closely under the supervision of Head RDP. The TA Manager:-

- Receives request form on IACS (M20 – Technical Assistance Form) from Applicants or duly fills TA request Form if MA is the direct beneficiary of TA;
- Carries out preliminary checks of the application and budget checks. Following these checks, the TA Manager discusses and clarifies issues with the Head of the RDP. When these checks have been exhausted, the latter delegate approves/rejects request.
- The system alerts the Applicant of the approval/rejection of the request/s for TA;
- Procurement in line with Public Procurement Regulations takes place (In case of staff costs, the necessary recruitment procedure as established by the Public Service Commission (PSC), should be followed);
- When the TA Manager receives the certified correct invoice from the applicant he performs necessary document checks for payment (these checks do not include checks related to public procurement compliance). This also applies for expenditure incurred by the Paying Agency (Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency, ARPA);
- Retains copy of documents on IACS and forwards necessary documentation for payment.
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4.2. The Applicant

Eligible Applicants for TA are those (primarily horizontal) stakeholders involved in the preparation, implementation and closure of the Programme. Potential Applicants include the MA, PA as well as any other organisation involved in the implementation of the EAFRD 2014-2020, with the exception of the CB as per Article 65 of Regulation (EU) 1306/2013

The normal procedure sees the Applicant submitting a request for TA funding using the M20 – Technical Assistance Form, via the SITI Agri system, ensuring that this is filled in correctly and that all the necessary documentation is provided. The application is evaluated by the TA Manager. Once a request is approved, the Applicant is responsible for ensuring the correct procurement process has been carried out, including the drafting of the tendering documents/call for quotations/recruitment calls (as the case may be) and to implement the action, in line with the rules and regulations of the Fund/Programme as well as in line with National rules. When the Applicant is the respective MA unit responsible for the TA, the procurement may in certain instances be undertaken by the TA Manager.

In cases where the TA expenditure has been incurred without the IACS system procedure outlined above, the applicant shall still submit such request retrospectively and approach sought accordingly (system approvals). Only then can ARPA proceed with the stated reimbursement procedure.

4.3. Payment Process

A request for reimbursement is drawn up by the relevant officer by duly filling a M20 Payment Claim Form, which shall include uploaded certified invoices and other supporting documentation, and submit it to MA seeking approval of the MA Director General.

Once processed by the MA and approved by the MA Director General, this Payment request is submitted to ARPA for payment. Original documentation is maintained by the applicant.

Subrogation requests, namely payments to assignees, can be made by all beneficiaries, where approved by the Paying Agency.

Figure 1 – Implementation/Payment Process

