

L-UFFIĊĊJU TAL-PRIM MINISTRU

MALTA

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Id-Divizjoni għall-Ippjanar u l-Koordinazzjoni tal-Prijoritajiet

Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division

MA Circular 02/2012

30th January, 2012

**To: Project Leaders / Contact Persons
Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund 2007-13 Stakeholders**

Compliance with the Government of Malta Password Policy

As part of this Division's ICT governance awareness we would like to remind the stakeholders about the Government of Malta Password Policy (CIMU P 0015:2003¹). This policy seeks to ensure that strong passwords are used, in that they are not easily compromised, and also seeks to establish rules for the creation, distribution, safeguarding, termination and reclamation of the Government User Authentication Mechanisms, and is applicable to all account holders. Your attention is again drawn to the declaration section on the Structural Funds Database 2007-13's user account application forms. This Division places considerable importance on user access.

The Structural Funds Database 2007-2013 (SFD 07-13) follows the latest MITA Password Standard². Strong passwords shall be hard to guess, having a combination of character types and not related to the user's name. Default passwords should be changed immediately after using it the first time and thereafter they should be changed on a regular basis. Passwords must never be written down, stored or shared with other persons.

The policy also stipulates that Heads of Government Entity, and/or Account Holders³ shall be subject to disciplinary action, should they abuse or misuse the provision of the Policy Password in

¹ Available at: https://www.mita.gov.mt/MediaCenter/PDFs/1_CIMU_P_0015_Password.pdf

² MITA Password Standard version 4.0, issued on 9th May 2011

³ Section 6 of the Policy stipulates that the Head of Government / Entity are to direct respective employees qualifying as Account Holders on the provisions found in the Policy and to enforce usage of Strong Passwords within own entity; whilst Account Holders are to comply with this Policy.

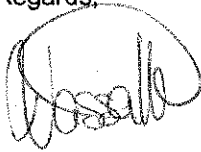
terms of the Data Protection Act⁴ and the Computer misuse provisions of the Criminal Code⁵.

Heads of Department are hereby reminded that user accounts are currently free of charge and access is given to duly authorised people on a need to know basis. Since there may be many users working on the same project, users are hereby reminded to communicate with other users since modifications of data by a user might have detrimental effect on others.

Heads of Department should take disciplinary action against officers who fail to abide by these instructions. Unlawful usage of the Government of Malta Structural Funds Database 2007-13 system may lead to serious proceedings being instituted against the person(s) involved as provided in National legislation.

The contents of this letter/circular are to be brought to the attention of all database users within your organisation.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Vassallo', enclosed within a hand-drawn oval.

Jonathan Vassallo
Head Managing Authority

⁴ Data Protection Act – Chapter 440

⁵ Criminal Code, Of Computer Misuse – Chapter 9, Sub-title V

Protect your password

Passwords Do's:

- Do have a minimum of eight characters in your password.
- Do include at least three of the following four character sets:
 - At least one lower case letter (e.g. a to z);
 - At least one upper case letter (e.g. A to Z);
 - At least one numeric digit (e.g. 0 to 9);
 - At least one special character (e.g. + = () & % ! ? > <).
- Do have a password which you can easily remember but hard to guess.
- Do change your password at least every 90 days.

Passwords Do Not's

- Do not reveal or share your password to anyone.
- Do not use the same password on multiple accounts.
- Do not enter passwords when others can observe what you are typing.
- Do not write down your passwords or store them on-line.
- Do not walk away from a shared computer without logging off.
- Do not include three or more consecutive characters from your login or full name.
- Do not choose a dictionary word in any language, slang, dialect, jargon, etc.
- Do not include common names of people or places, technical jargon, repeating or keyboard sequences (e.g. ASDFG).

Other considerations to take note of: -

- Always log out of SFD 07-13 when it is not in use.
- Lock your computer when it is not in use.
- Do not leave the database unattended if it is logged in or unless a password protected screen saver is in place.
- Change your password immediately if you suspect that others know your password.
- Inform the System Administrator of the change in the email address in order to be able to reset password if you forget it.

Further information is available from Malta Information Technology Agency (MITA)'s Security Awareness Campaign at <https://www.mita.gov.mt/page.aspx?pageid=114> (Retrieved on 25th January, 2012.)