



MINISTRY FOR
AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND ANIMAL RIGHTS
Animal Health and Welfare Department

Animal Welfare Fund Grant Support Scheme

**Funding Guidelines
2020 (Ad hoc COVID-19 call)**

agrifish.gov.mt/en/animalwelfare/Pages/home.aspx

Animal Welfare Fund – Grant Support Scheme Funding Guidelines 2020 (ad hoc COVID-19 call)

1.0 Introduction

01. The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights, on behalf of the Government, is offering financial support to non-government, not-for-profit organisations that improve the welfare of animals in recognition of the valid and effective effort and contribution they make in the sector. These include animal sanctuaries, organisations promoting responsible animal ownership and awareness and groups that provide animal support services.
02. This initiative fulfils the Government’s electoral manifesto that explicitly promised the setting-up of an Animal Welfare Fund to assist voluntary organisations that are active in this field. The **Animal Welfare Fund – Grant Support Scheme** has been purposely set-up to translate this into a reality.

2.0 Objectives

03. The **Animal Welfare Fund – Grant Support Scheme** aims to support non-Government, not-for-profit voluntary organisations to undertake finite animal welfare projects that have the potential to:
 - (i) improve the well-being of animals;
 - (ii) promote responsible ownership of animals and raise awareness of animal welfare responsibilities;
 - (iii) assist in progressing good animal management practices;
 - (iv) provide a platform from where to develop and foster closer cooperation between these organizations and the Animal Welfare and Promotion Services Directorate (AWPSD) within the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights;
 - (v) strengthen the network of animal welfare treatment, quality of care and rehabilitation services to the community and provide improved animal welfare facilities; and
 - (vi) enhance the provision of community education and similar programmes, including development of necessary material regarding animal welfare and care.

3.0 Priority Areas

04. The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights will set priority areas for funding each year. These priority areas will be established in consultation with the Animal Welfare Council and will be advertised each year as part of the application process.

05. Priority areas for grants in this ad hoc 2020 are related to the ongoing COVID-19 situation and are as follows¹:
- (i) improvements in animal sanctuaries and shelter services including refurbishment, upgrading of facilities and provision of new structures for animal accommodation of animals owned by COVID patients;
 - (ii) contribution towards specific expenses such as medicines and food for the keeping of animals at the respective sanctuaries/ shelters should pet owners are hospitalised;
 - (iii) projects that will ensure the welfare of animals during the ongoing COVID-19 situation;
 - (iv) other relevant areas may be considered with the approval of the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights upon the recommendation of the Animal Welfare Fund Committee.

4.0 Management and Assessment

06. The grant support scheme is managed by the Animal Welfare Fund Committee that is composed as follows:
- i. Director General of the Animal Health and Welfare Department as Chair;
 - ii. Director of the Animal Welfare Promotion and Services Directorate as member;
 - iii. Ministry's Director General of Strategy and Support as member;
 - iv. Chairperson of the Animal Welfare Council as member;
 - v. Representative of the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector as member;
 - vi. Veterinary officer from the Veterinary Regulation Directorate as advisor.
07. The Committee shall:
- (i) manage the Scheme on an ongoing basis in an efficient and effective manner in accordance with the established objectives and criteria;
 - (ii) issue schemes, application forms and set up requirements and procedures;
 - (iii) ensure full visibility of the Scheme including a fair, transparent and equitable selection process and further ascertain that due process is followed in compliance with all applicable rules and regulations;
 - (iv) have the prerogative to retain and not allocate a part of the Animal Welfare Fund for purpose of contingency;
 - (v) monitor the implementation of funded projects to ensure compliance with the grant conditions;
 - (vi) inform successful and unsuccessful applicants with the outcome of their application;
 - (vii) be assisted as necessary by the Animal Welfare Promotion and Services Directorate who shall also provide secretariat services.
08. The Committee:

¹ See Annex 1 for a further list of potentially fundable items.

- (i) shall assess applications against the objectives, parameters and criteria set-out herein and prioritise them accordingly;
- (ii) may request any clarifications from applicants for purposes of assessment;
- (iii) shall submit grant recommendations to the Minister for approval;
- (iv) shall, following Minister's approval, issue a Letter of Acceptance to the successful applicants giving them an appointed date and time to sign the grant agreement;
- (v) shall not finalise a grant agreement unless copies of any relevant permits have been provided by the applicant as necessary;
- (vi) shall authorise payments only where the Minister has approved the grant;
- (vii) may, in special circumstances, make recommendations to the Minister for any specific waiver of eligibility requirements.

09. Each application shall be assessed by the Committee against the following criteria:

- (i) conformity with the requirements of these guidelines and any additional one contained in the call for applications;
- (ii) the extent to which the project meets the objectives, parameters and criteria set out in the guidelines and in the call for applications;
- (iii) comprehensiveness of the project plan, soundness of budget and value for money;
- (iv) the amount of funds available under the Animal Welfare Fund;
- (v) the demonstrated need and support for the project;
- (vi) the demonstrated ability and capacity of the applicant to successfully and lawfully implement the project in a timely and effective manner;
- (vii) clarity of focus on achieving the declared outcomes in the most effective way;
- (viii) priority rating of funding as compared to other eligible applications.

5.0 General Parameters

10. The following general parameters are applicable:

- (i) Grants shall be granted to establishments/ not-for-profit voluntary organisations that are in conformity with requirements under Chapter 437 and Chapter 439 of the Maltese Law or else if such funds will allow that said establishment/ not-for-profit voluntary organisation will be able to align with the respective legislation;
- (ii) grants shall only be granted to applications that are in line with the requirements and particularly the identified priority areas;
- (iii) the maximum allocation for each project shall not exceed €15,000 (inclusive of VAT) but may be increased if deemed advisable by the Committee and following approval by the Minister;
- (iv) the grant shall not exceed 80% of the total estimated cost of the project (inclusive of VAT);
- (v) applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to support that proportion of the project that shall not be supported by the grant;
- (vi) no double financing is allowed. Projects that have already been granted Government or EU funds are not eligible under this scheme. New projects similar to other projects which have been allocated funds under this scheme can be accepted subject to certified completion of the previous project as agreed to by the Committee;

- (vii) applicants must have the necessary operational capacity, competencies and motivation to undertake and complete the project within the proposed time frame;
- (viii) projects must be covered by all necessary regulatory and other permits and must be carried out in full conformity with all applicable laws and permits, as appropriate;
- (ix) in the case of grants to undertake structural improvements, the beneficiary must provide evidence of ownership and/or right to use the property and must subsequently keep the structural improvements in good order for a minimum period of 3 years from completion;
- (x) the project completion date must not in any way exceed 6 months from the date of the grant agreement;
- (xi) 80% of the grant will be given to the beneficiary organization upon signing of the grant agreement and the balance of 20% will be given upon certified completion of the project as agreed by the Committee. For this purpose, the beneficiary shall, within one month following the completion of the project submit to the Committee a final progress report as well as a completion certificate including also documentary evidence and photographs to confirm that all project components have been successfully implemented. The documentary evidence should include original fiscal receipt and other original fiscal documents as appropriate. Original documents covering the amounts provided to the beneficiary for the project under this fund, will be kept by the committee;
- (xii) no funding shall be allowed for PA permits and architects fees;
- (xiii) funding shall only cover costs that are necessary for the implementation of the chosen project and, except where otherwise authorised by the Minister, included in the proposed budget for the project;
- (xiv) final payment will only be affected if it is confirmed that the NGO is still enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations and compliant with the Voluntary Organisation Act 2007 and its subsidiary legislation;
- (xv) funding shall not be granted to finance projects involving commercial elements;
- (xvi) eligible costs must be identifiable as specific costs directly linked to the performance and implementation of an approved project and can therefore be assigned to it directly;
- (xvii) no amount of the grant element may be awarded retrospectively for projects already completed;
- (xviii) grant funding may be awarded for a project which has already begun only where the applicant organization can demonstrate the need to start the project before the Project Funding Agreement is signed. In such cases, however, expenditure eligible for financing may not have been incurred in any event prior to the date of submission of the application;
- (xix) only one grant application per organisation is permitted, except in special circumstances as may be approved by the Minister;
- (xx) late applications cannot and will not be accepted;
- (xxi) incomplete applications will be deemed as invalid and thus will not be assessed;
- (xxii) if an organisation does not meet all requirements set out in the Grant Agreement, monies paid may be deemed as public debt and necessary measures may be taken to recover such debt due;
- (xxiii) any unspent funds of the approved grant amount can be used for another purpose that fits within the funding guidelines, subject to the approval of the Animal Welfare Fund

- Committee. Otherwise any unspent funds have to be returned back within one month of project completion failing which these will be considered as a public debt due to the Committee and on which commercial interest will be charged;
- (xxiv) should an organisation that has benefitted from a grant, within a period of 5 years from such grant, wish to dispose of any asset that had been purchased by such grant funds and had a value exceeding €2,000 (inclusive of VAT) at that time, the beneficiary must submit a written application to the Committee requesting consent to the disposal. The Committee shall have sole and final discretion on the matter.

6.0 Eligibility

11. Applicants must:

- (i) be non-government, not-for-profit voluntary organizations;
- (ii) be an organisation with primary focus on animal welfare issues;
- (iii) as at the date of the submission of their application for a grant, be enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organizations and must also be compliant with the Voluntary Organizations Act, 2007 and its subsidiary legislation. If not, even if eligible and approved by the committee, the application is kept in reserve and the agreement not signed until such time that the committee is informed that the pertinent voluntary organisation has become compliant. The application may be kept in reserve until next issue in which case it will not be considered anymore;
- (iv) not have been convicted of animal abuse;
- (v) not be seen to endorse, sanction or facilitate acts of unauthorised access to private property;
- (vi) submit their fully completed application within the established time limit;
- (vii) include in their application a detailed project plan and detailed budget including the amount of funding being applied for;
- (viii) be in line with the General Parameters and with the conditions of the call for applications for grants under the Animal Welfare Fund;
- (ix) include in their applications a set of the financial statements for the last financial year for which accounts have been closed or presented to the Commissioner for Voluntary Organizations;
- (x) provide with their application clear documentation showing their capability to implement the project.

12. The following (non-exclusive) list of costs shall not be considered as eligible costs:

- (i) return on capital;
- (ii) debt and debt service charges;
- (iii) provision for losses or potential future liabilities;
- (iv) interest owed or paid;
- (v) provisions for doubtful debts;
- (vi) exchange rate losses;
- (vii) costs declared by a beneficiary in connection with another activity or work programme receiving a grant from other National / European Financing Schemes;
- (viii) the insurance premium against risk of exchange rate losses;
- (ix) excessive or reckless expenditure;

- (x) gifts and presents;
- (xi) recreational activities;
- (xii) education campaigns that could be, wholly or partly, considered to be political in nature;
- (xiii) costs incurred in relation to activities not foreseen in the project or in modifications of the action for which the Committee's agreement was not given;
- (xiv) costs not entailing a cash flow for the beneficiary/co beneficiary;
- (xv) costs incurred for the production of communication material, including notice boards and websites, when such material does not mention that the action has received funding from the relevant funding programme;
- (xvi) costs in any budget heading over and above the amount foreseen in the budget;
- (xvii) indirect costs exceeding the percentage or value agreed in the grant agreement; and
- (xviii) indirect costs declared by any organisation receiving an operating grant from the EU budget.

7.0 Funding Agreement

13. Successful applicants shall enter into a Funding Agreement with the Committee (acting on behalf of Government).
14. The Funding Agreement shall be subject to the conditions laid down in the set guidelines and also any other conditions laid down in the call for applications. The Funding Agreement shall also include any other specific conditions and arrangements required to ensure proper governance and enforcement of the grant conditions.
15. In cases where the implementation of a project requires subcontracting or the award of procurement contracts, grant beneficiaries shall award the contract to the bidder who offers best value for money while taking care to avoid any conflict of interest.
16. The Committee shall have the right to review any documentation pertaining to the beneficiary organization with regard to sub-contracting and/or the award of procurement contracts and to take any appropriate action that it considers necessary in the event that the procedures that are mentioned above are found not to have been observed.
17. In accepting a grant, a beneficiary will be expected to:
 - (i) ensure that the project commences promptly;
 - (ii) submit progress reports when and as may be requested by the Committee;
 - (iii) provide due acknowledgement to the Animal Welfare Fund in all public and relevant program material relating to the approved project; and
 - (iv) ensure that all funds are expensed in line with the grant conditions.
18. The Committee reserves the right to rescind any Funding Agreement at any time in the event that any of the conditions set out in the agreement are not properly observed by the beneficiary organization.

8.0 Audits and Monitoring Visits and Recovery

19. Grant beneficiaries may be subjected to audit and monitoring visits by the Committee or its delegates at any time as deemed necessary.
20. Beneficiaries will be required to provide proof that the grant has been used correctly and in accordance with the provisions of the Funding Agreement.
21. Beneficiaries must retain all documentation appertaining to the funded project original fiscal invoices and receipts and submit them to the Committee or its delegate when and as requested.
22. If the beneficiary is found to have defaulted on the conditions of the grant, the Committee may take necessary action to recover all or any proportionate amount of the grant at its sole discretion. The beneficiary has to pay the amount due within 15 days from receipt of notice by the Committee.

9.0 How to apply

23. A Call for Applications will be issued that will be advertised in the media.
24. Applications must be submitted by the stipulated date and time as follows:
 - (i) Via email: animalwelfarefund.mafa@gov.mt
 - (ii) Via normal registered mail or by hand at:
Animal Welfare Fund Committee
c/o Animal Welfare and Promotion Services Directorate
Luqa Road, Qormi QRM9073
25. Applicants should make sure that they:
 - (i) are eligible for funding;
 - (ii) complete fully the application form;
 - (iii) submit all required documentation;
 - (iv) submit the application with supporting documentation by the stipulated deadline
26. Any further queries regarding this scheme and application process may be referred to the secretariat office via:
 1. E-mail to animalwelfarefund.mafas@gov.mt;
 2. Normal registered mail to: Animal Welfare Fund Committee, c/o Animal Welfare and Promotion, Services Directorate, Luqa Road, Qormi, QRM 9073; or
 3. Phone number 22924325 or 22924335.

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ANNEX 1 – List of potentially fundable items

The Animal Welfare Fund may be utilised to issue schemes for the funding of the following activities. The activities should be related to the current COVID-19 situation:

1.0 Projects of infrastructure nature

These include:

01. Upgrade of existing animal enclosures or construction of new enclosures to be able to accommodate more animals, especially those of owners which cannot take care of their respective pets/ animals because they are infected by COVID-19 and/or:
 - (i) construction of new animal enclosures (including temporary enclosures);
 - (ii) upgrading of external structures or internal surfaces to animal enclosures;
 - (iii) upgrading of sleeping areas or the adjoining exercise areas;
 - (iv) works necessary to increase or ensure adequate ventilation;
 - (v) purchase and installation of doors and gates;
 - (vi) purchase of kennels; and
 - (vii) other upgrades not mentioned above provided a justification for the need in relation to ameliorate animal welfare and assist in the current COVID-19 is clearly drawn up on the application form;
02. construction or upgrading of facilities for isolating ill or injured animals;
03. construction or maintenance to facilities for the preparation and storage of food/ equipment/consumables;
04. construction or maintenance of cleaning facilities including installation of water basins, disinfection basins, hot water systems etc;

2.0 Other Projects:

05. Equipment to cater for further intake of animals. These include:
 - (i) purchase of food and water receptacles appropriate to the species being kept;
 - (ii) refrigeration Equipment;
 - (iii) cleaning Equipment;
 - (iv) purchase of microchip readers;
 - (v) purchase of medicine cabinets;

06. Upgrades to increase safety and security of personnel and animals and other protective measures taken to respond to the COVID-19 emergency at the direction and/or guidance of public health officials. These can include among others:
 - (i) purchase of Personal Protective Equipment;
 - (ii) purchase of Capture or Restraining equipment, muzzles, etc.;
 - (iii) purchase of animal cages;
 - (iv) purchase of First Aid Kits for personnel and animals;
07. Expenses for medicines and food and transport of animals;
08. Animal rescue programs including purchase of relevant equipment and tools;
09. Adoption and fostering programmes
10. Ad hoc programmes to assist animal owners that have been affected by the COVID -19 situation eg walking of pets for those in quarantine, feeding of animals in establishments/ farms whose owners are in quarantine, training of personnel that would be handling the retrieval of animals from quarantine homes etc
11. Other expenses as indicated by the Animal Welfare Fund Committee and approved by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights.