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Guidelines

Financial Incentives for the Temporary Transfer of Agricultural Land Leased from the Lands Authority or Privately Owned to Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta



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DEFINITIONS (FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS SCHEME)

Agricultural Land: unused or underutilised land classified or designated for agricultural use that is suitable for growing crops.

Applicant: A person who submits an application under this scheme.

Application: A duly completed electronic application submitted to Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta in the prescribed form, together with all required supporting documentation.

Assessment: The process by which Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta evaluates applications, including administrative checks, scoring, validation, and on-the-spot inspections.

Beneficiary: An applicant whose application has been approved by Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta and who has entered into a Financial Incentive Agreement under this scheme.

Category One (1) Farmer: A non-commercial farmer as classified under the official categorisation of farmers adopted by the competent authorities.

Checks and Controls: All administrative, documentary, legal, and on-the-spot verifications carried out by Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta or other competent authorities to ensure compliance with these Guidelines and the proper use of public funds.

Financial Incentive: The incentive under this scheme, calculated per tumolo and disbursed annually, subject to compliance with the applicable conditions.

Financial Incentive Agreement: The formal agreement signed between Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta and the beneficiary setting out the rights, obligations, and conditions governing the financial incentive.

Minimum Eligible Area: The minimum surface area of agricultural land eligible under this scheme, being one (1) tumolo.

On-the-Spot Check: A physical inspection carried out on the agricultural land by Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta or other competent authorities to verify compliance with the scheme's requirements.

Parcel: A distinct and identifiable unit of agricultural land with clearly defined boundaries, submitted as a single commitment under an application.

Private Ownership: Agricultural land that is legally owned by the applicant, as proven by valid title documentation.

Scoring System: The 100-point evaluation framework applied per parcel to assess and rank applications in accordance with the objectives of the scheme.

Title Holder: Applicant who either hold a valid agricultural land lease from the lands Authority or who privately own agricultural land.

Tumolo: A traditional unit of land measurement used in Malta, equivalent to approximately 1,123 square metres.

Underutilised Agricultural Land: Agricultural land that is partially cultivated or cultivated at a level significantly below its productive capacity, as determined by Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta through administrative checks and/or site inspections.



Unused Agricultural Land: Agricultural land that has not been cultivated, planted, or actively used for agricultural production.

Young Farmer: A registered farmer who is less than forty-one (41) years of age and is actively engaged in agricultural activity, in accordance with applicable national rules.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

RAM: Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta

EU: European Union

GDPR: General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679)

S.L.: Subsidiary Legislation

INTRODUCTION

These Guidelines are intended to assist applicants in understanding the eligibility requirements, conditions, and procedures for applying for a financial incentive under this scheme administered by Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta (RAM).

Applicants are advised to familiarise themselves with these Guidelines prior to completing and submitting the application form. The following Guidelines, the application form and other documentation are available on the Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta's webpage at <https://ram.gov.mt/>

These Guidelines form an integral part of the scheme and shall be binding on all applicants and beneficiaries.

1 OBJECTIVES

1.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of this scheme is to bring unused or underutilised agricultural land back into productive use for the cultivation of food crops. The scheme seeks to increase the availability of agricultural land for food production by reducing land abandonment and underutilisation, while facilitating access to land for young farmers and other eligible farmer categories and promoting sustainable agricultural practices that contribute to long-term food security.

1.2 UNUSED OR UNDERUTILISED AGRICULTURAL LAND

For the purposes of this scheme Preference shall be given to applications involving unused or underutilised agricultural land. RAM reserves the right to prioritise such applications where demand for funds exceeds the available budget.

2 SCOPE OF THE SCHEME

This scheme is intended for non-commercial farmers therefore, falling under category one (1) of the categorisation of farmers who either hold a valid agricultural land lease from the Lands Authority or who privately own agricultural land. These farmers are invited to apply to temporarily transfer one (1) tumolo or more of agricultural land to Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta for a period of three (3) years. The land will be managed and administered by RAM and may subsequently be allocated to young farmers or farmers falling under category three (3), four (4) or five (5) of the categorisations of farmers, for the purpose of producing food crops over a three (3) year period.

Applications are to be submitted through the Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta's webpage <https://ram.gov.mt/temporary-transfer-of-agricultural-land-2/>.

An acknowledgement is automatically generated upon submission and does not constitute confirmation of completeness or eligibility. Incomplete applications or applications for which requested clarifications are not provided by RAM's stipulated deadline may be rejected. The Agency may periodically update and amend these Guidelines and may terminate the incentive at any date.

3 DURATION

This scheme shall be issued and come into effect upon its publication. Only applications that successfully satisfy all eligibility requirements and assessment criteria, and that are formally approved by Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta, shall proceed to the subsequent phases.

The scheme shall have a duration of three (3) years. This three-year period shall commence upon completion of all necessary checks, once the agricultural land has been allocated to a farmer, and once RAM has entered into a formal agreement with the title holder. Upon execution of such agreement, the financial incentive shall begin and will be disbursed over three (3) consecutive years, subject to the beneficiary's continued compliance with the eligibility criteria and conditions set out herein.

4 BUDGET

The budget available for the grant to the beneficiaries under this scheme is of three hundred and fifty thousand euro (€350,000). RAM reserves the right to close the scheme prior to full utilisation of the allocated funds.

5 LIABILITY

Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta may not be held responsible for any damages incurred directly or indirectly in connection to the implementation of this scheme.

6 ELIGIBILITY

6.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The eligible applicants for this scheme are farmers falling under Category One (1) classified as non-commercial who hold a valid agricultural land lease from the Lands Authority or privately own agricultural land and who are willing to temporarily transfer the agricultural land to Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta for a period of three (3) years.

Applicants shall:

1. Be a non-commercial farmer falling under category one (1) of the categorisation of farmers;
2. Have at least one tumolo of arable agricultural land either leased from the Lands Authority or privately owned which is suitable for cultivation of food crops; and
3. Enter into an agreement to temporarily transfer one tumolo or more of agricultural land for a period of three (3) years to Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta which may subsequently be allocated to young farmers or farmers falling under category three (3), four (4) or five (5) of the categorisation of farmers, for the purpose of producing food crops over a three (3) year period.

6.2 COMMITMENTS

Applicants shall provide:

1. All personal and contact details as required in the application form, including identification, contact information, and residential address details.
2. Full descriptive details of the agricultural land, including title, address, locality, and surface area.
3. Signed true copy of the identification document i.e. passport and/or identity card of the applicant/s.
4. Copy of the most recent receipt from the Lands Authority, confirming that the applicant has paid the lease for the agricultural land leased to them or if the agricultural land is privately owned, proof of title that the agricultural land is that of the applicant.
5. Copy of site plan issued by the Lands Registration Agency and/or Agricultural Directorate.
6. A sworn affidavit, signed before a Commissioner for Oaths or a Notary Public, confirming the applicant's legal ownership or leasehold rights over the agricultural land, including confirmation of all co-ownership, shared interests, or third-party, and declaring that all parties having a legal interest in the land have been duly identified and consent to the application, where applicable.

The Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta reserves the right to request additional information which is not included in these Guidelines at any stage of the application and during the three-year period.

Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta shall:

- Receive and process the applications submitted by applicants under this scheme
- Carry out all relevant administrative and documentary checks to ensure that the information and supporting documentation submitted are complete, correct, and compliant with the requirements of the scheme.
- Carry out the necessary checks and controls.
- Ensure that only applications which satisfy all eligibility requirements and successfully pass all required checks are formally approved and proceed to the subsequent phases of the scheme.

Upon completion of checks, the relevant parcel or parcels of agricultural land shall be entered into an official inventory maintained by Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta, managed and administered by RAM, and may be allocated, at RAM's discretion and in accordance with applicable rules, to young farmers or to farmers falling under Categories Three (3), Four (4), or Five (5) for agricultural production, particularly the cultivation of food crops.

An Applicant is eligible for the financial incentive once the land has been allocated. RAM shall enter into a formal agreement with the title holder, and upon execution of such agreement the financial incentive, shall commence and be disbursed over a period of three (3) consecutive years, subject to continued compliance with the eligibility criteria and conditions established herein.

Where the land is not allocated to an eligible farmer after three (3) allocation attempts, the applicant's request shall be deemed withdrawn and no financial incentive shall be payable, notwithstanding the applicant's eligibility, and removed from the official inventory.

7 ELIGIBLE COSTS AND PAYMENT CALCULATION

Beneficiaries are entitled to a financial incentive of one thousand five hundred euro (€1,500) per tumolo of agricultural land, distributed as a payment of five hundred euro (€500) per year over a three-year period. This incentive is intended to cover the full duration of the three (3) years.

The minimum eligible area for compensation is one (1) Tumolo of arable agricultural land, and beneficiaries with land that meets the criteria will receive the annual payment of five hundred euro (€500) for each tumolo of land, with the total amount being one thousand five hundred euro (€1,500) per tumolo over the three years.

Payments will be made directly to the beneficiary via bank transfer, with annual instalments of five hundred euro (€500) for each eligible Tumolo every year.

In the event that the applicant submits land comprising more than one parcel, each parcel constitutes a separate commitment, and a separate application must be submitted for each individual parcel. In the event that any parcel fails to comply with the established obligations, that parcel may be excluded from the commitment.

Payments will be calculated on a pro-rata basis according to the size of the eligible arable agricultural land submitted, provided that the minimum eligible area of one (1) tumolo of arable agricultural land (1,124 sqm) is met.

8 APPLICATIONS

8.1 SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

Applicants must submit an application form as found at <https://ram.gov.mt/temporary-transfer-of-agricultural-land-2/>. All Applications undergo validation and assessment in line with these Guidelines and applicable procedures. Applications may be submitted through the Rìzorsi Agrikoli Malta's webpage, by not later than 6th March 2026.

All applications must be duly completed and correctly submitted with the necessary supporting documentation. The applicant must submit all the commitments as indicated. Only applications that satisfy all eligibility requirements and are formally approved by Rìzorsi Agrikoli Malta will proceed to the subsequent phase. Applications which do not meet all the requirements provided for in these Guidelines may be deemed ineligible and, therefore, will not be considered.

Incomplete applications for which requested clarifications are not provided within the stipulated deadline may be rejected.

8.2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

An acknowledgement of the application is automatically generated upon submission.

The issuance of an acknowledgement email does not mean or imply that the applicant has submitted correctly all the necessary documentation. The application may be refused and returned to the applicant following the issuance of the acknowledgement email. Acknowledgement does not mean you are automatically eligible for the financial incentive.

9 ASSESSMENT, SCORING, AND VALIDATION

9.1 ASSESSMENT AND SCORING METHODOLOGY

All applications shall be assessed on the basis of a 100-point scoring system, applied per parcel of agricultural land. The purpose of this assessment is to identify agricultural land that best meets the objectives of the scheme, with particular emphasis on:

- Agricultural land that is unused or underutilised;
- Land that remains in good agronomic condition; and
- Land that can be effectively and rapidly converted to food crop production, thereby contributing to food security.

Each parcel submitted under an application shall be assessed and scored independently. There shall be no minimum qualifying score required for eligibility, provided that all eligibility criteria established under these Guidelines are satisfied. Where demand for funds exceeds the available budget, eligible parcels shall be ranked in descending order according to their final score, and funds shall be allocated starting from the highest-scoring parcels until the available budget is exhausted.

9.2 SCORING CRITERIA

9.2.1 Current Use Status of the Agricultural Land (Up to 40 Points)

This criterion evaluates the current and recent use of the agricultural land, with the objective of prioritising land that is unused or underutilised and therefore most aligned with the scheme's objectives.

<u>Section</u>	<u>Points</u>
Current Land Use Classification – up to 40 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 Points – Unused or underutilised. Either the land is unutilised or else being minimally used by owner. • 10 Points - Fodder only – field used for hay and animal feed. • 0 Point – Actively Commercial Cultivation

9.2.2 Agronomic Condition and Readiness of the Land (Up to 40 Points)

This criterion assesses whether the parcel is suitable for immediate or short-term agricultural use without the need for excessive rehabilitation or preparatory works. Evaluation focuses on the inherent agronomic quality of the land, including the presence of arable and workable soil with adequate depth, suitable texture, and the absence of rubble, contamination, or construction debris that would impede cultivation. Consideration is given to the availability of basic water resources sufficient to support agricultural activity, whether through natural sources or existing infrastructure. The parcel's topography is assessed to ensure it is generally level or suitably contoured for cultivation and mechanized operations, without excessive slopes or erosion risk. Additionally, the land should be free from physical obstructions such as rock outcrops, abandoned structures, or dense unmanaged vegetation that would limit practical agricultural use.

<u>Section</u>	<u>Points</u>
Arable & Workable Soil Condition – Depth, Texture, absence of rubble	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 Points – Excellent Arable Soil - Deep, fully workable soil (typically >30 cm), uniform texture, very few stones, no rubble or contamination, and clearly suitable for immediate crop production. • 12 Points – Good Soil - Generally workable soil with adequate depth, moderate stoniness, and overall good structure; may require minor preparation but remains suitable for cultivation. • 4 Points – Marginal Soil - Shallow or noticeably stony soil, with partial obstructions or uneven texture. Workability is limited, and cultivation may require additional effort or improvement. • 0 Points – Unsuitable Soil - Soil is rubble-filled, contaminated, extremely shallow, compacted, or otherwise unfit for agricultural use. Not arable under normal farming conditions.
Water Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 Points – Full Water Availability A fully functional water source is available on site, such as a reservoir, borehole, well, or established access to New Water. Water can be used immediately for irrigation without any repairs or upgrades. • 5 Points – Moderate Water Availability A water source is present but requires minor maintenance, repair, reactivation, or expansion. The available system may be limited in capacity or only partly functional but still provides a usable—though insufficient—supply for agricultural operations. • 0 Points – No Usable Water Source There is no accessible or functional water source, meaning no reservoir, well, borehole, or any viable alternative. Irrigation cannot be carried out without significant infrastructural works.

<p>Topography suitable for cultivation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 Points – Ideal Topography Land is flat or gently sloping, stable, and fully suitable for cultivation. Terraces (where present) are intact and offer no impediment to machinery or agricultural operations. • 5 Points – Generally Suitable Topography Land has a moderate slope, but remains safe, stable, and workable. Terraces are structurally sound and allow normal use of agricultural machinery with minimal limitations. • 3 Points – Challenging Topography Land features irregular or uneven terrain, with partially deteriorated or eroded terraces. Workability is reduced, and machinery operations may be limited or require caution. • 0 Points – Unsuitable Topography Land has extreme slopes, severely collapsed terraces, major erosion issues, or other structural conditions that make cultivation impractical or unsafe.
<p>Rubble Walls.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Points – Structurally Sound Rubble Walls Rubble walls are fully intact, structurally stable, continuous along parcel boundaries, and effectively support soil retention, erosion control, and land protection. • 1 Points – Partially Deteriorated Rubble Walls Rubble walls are present and generally functional but show signs of deterioration or discontinuity. Minor repairs are required to restore full structural and agronomic effectiveness. • 0 Point – Poor-Condition Rubble Walls Rubble walls are present but largely collapsed, overgrown, unstable, or ineffective, requiring significant rehabilitation to serve their protective and structural purpose.

9.2.3 Accessibility and Parcel Practicality (Up to 20 Points)

This criterion evaluates the extent to which the parcel is practically usable for agricultural operations, focusing on physical access, layout, and functional design. Assessment considers the availability and adequacy of vehicle and agricultural machinery access, including road frontage, internal access routes, and manoeuvrability. It also examines the parcel's shape, size, and continuity to determine whether the configuration supports efficient cultivation without excessive fragmentation or operational constraints

<u>Section</u>	<u>Points</u>
Vehicle/Machinery Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 Points – Full, Unrestricted Access - A clear roadway or agricultural track provides easy, unhindered entry for tractors and machinery, with no physical obstructions or safety concerns. • 7 Points – Generally Good Access - An access track or path is present and usable; vehicles can enter the parcel with some care, though minor unevenness or narrow points may be present. • 3 Points – Limited Access - Access is narrow, uneven, partially obstructed, or otherwise restrictive, making entry possible only with difficulty or smaller machinery. • 0 Points – No Viable Access - No safe or functional access route exists; no track is present, or conditions make entry unsafe or impracticable for agricultural vehicles.
Parcel Shape, continuity, and practical usability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Points – Ideal Shape and Continuity - The parcel has a regular, uninterrupted shape that supports efficient and uniform cultivation, with no physical fragmentation or impractical boundaries. • 2 Points – Generally Suitable Shape - The parcel is mostly regular but may include minor irregular edges or small unusable corners. Despite these limitations, it remains practical and workable for agricultural purposes. • 0 Points – Challenging or Unsuitable Shape - The parcel is severely irregular, fragmented, or discontinuous, with a layout that prevents efficient or practical cultivation, significantly limiting its usability for farming.
Electricity Availability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 points - Electricity supply is fully available on site, with an active meter and functional connection suitable for agricultural use. • 3 points -Electricity connection exists but requires minor reinstatement, upgrade, or reactivation • 0 points - No electricity supply available, and connection would require substantial infrastructure works.

10 CONTROLS, PENALTIES, AND SUSPENDING/WITHDRAWING THE INCENTIVE

10.1 CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS

Upon signing the Financial Incentive Agreement, the Beneficiary becomes legally bound by certain provisions. The following sections provide information on some aspects of the contractual obligations of the Beneficiary.

10.1.1 Non-Compliance

The incentive may be suspended, withdrawn, or recovered in full in cases of:

- Refusal to allow checks or inspections;
- Submission of false or misleading information;
- Failure to comply with obligations under these Guidelines;
- Persistent negligence or breach of contractual commitments.

10.1.2 Administrative checks

The checks shall include verification of:

- the eligibility of the applicant;
- adherence to the commitments of the scheme.

The Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta will perform several checks on the submitted applications. Checks include, but are not limited to, verification of the correctness and completeness of the information included in the application and site inspections.

In cases where the Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta, based on administrative checks notices an error in an application form after the closing date for submission of the application, and the error can be determined from the application and its supporting documentation, the Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta may decide to ask the applicant to amend the application accordingly within a given period.

10.1.3 On-the-spot checks

On-the-spot checks shall be carried out by the Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta or by any other competent authority, as required to ensure an effective management of risks. Incentives may be withdrawn/suspended or recovered in case of identified non-compliances throughout the period of three (3) years.

Applicants may be given advance notification (not exceeding one (1) to three (3) working days of the on-the-spot checks to ensure that the relevant documentation are made available by the beneficiary during the check. Nonetheless, the Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta reserves the right to carry out unannounced on-the spot checks without any notification to the applicant.

10.2 TERMINATION OF ALLOCATION AND SUSPENSION OF INCENTIVE

In the event that a farmer to whom the agricultural land has been allocated by Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta is terminated, withdraws, or otherwise ceases farming activities on the parcel within the three (3)-year commitment period, The financial incentive related to the affected parcel shall be terminated as from the date of termination or cessation.

11 DATA PROTECTION

The Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta carries out its functions in accordance with the applicable laws and in line with standing good practices.

In line with Article 13 of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (hereafter ‘GDPR’), the Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta is hereby providing you with the following information:

- The “Controllers” and the “Data Protection Officer” are the Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta within the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights which can be contacted on the email address ram.mafa@gov.mt
- The general purpose of processing your personal data is to implement the measures under the Common Agricultural Policy in accordance with Title III of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and related EU and National Law¹, more specific policies are dependent on the measures concerned and may be found specified further down;
- The recipient of your personal data is the Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta within the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights. The category of recipients of your personal data is public authorities including also Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies;
- Your personal data shall be retained for as long as legally required or reasonably necessary to satisfy the declared purposes and any legal obligations and, or claims that might possibly arise from your relationship with the Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta, or otherwise according to the Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta 's Data Retention Policy provided with this declaration;
- You have the right to request from the Controllers access to and rectification or erasure of personal data or restriction of processing of personal data concerning yourself or to object to processing as well as the right to data portability, according to law;
- You have the right to lodge a complaint with the Office of the Information and Data Protection Commissioner, or any other supervisory authority, if applicable in accordance with the Regulation.

The personal data you are providing to us is a contractual and, or legal requirement relating to your rights and obligations with respect to the controllers and their responsibilities.

By submitting this application/request you are declaring that you understand and accept that the controllers are to process personal data relating to you for the specific purpose of processing this application/request, in

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT:en:PDF>

accordance with law. In order for your application/request to be processed, you shall provide your personal data for the declared purposes and anything reasonably and, or legally necessary to satisfy said purposes. Failure to provide such data might result in the impossibility of processing your application/request, without prejudice to other consequences according to law.

The processing of personal data shall be conducted according to the GDPR and the Data Protection Act.

12 DISCLAIMER

The Rizorsi Agrikoli Malta reserves the right to amend from time-to-time certain criteria established by this Guidelines document. Such amendments may become applicable and enforced retrospectively, as from the date of application.

Potential applicants are requested to seek any clarifications deemed necessary prior to commitment.

13 CONTACT DETAILS

For more information regarding the scheme, kindly contact:

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