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GUIDELINES FOR THE AGRICULTURAL GREENHOUSE PLASTIC WASTE COLLECTION SCHEME

BACKGROUND OF THE SCHEME

Agricultural greenhouse operations play an important role in supporting local food production and the sustainability of Malta's agricultural sector. However, these activities generate significant quantities of plastic waste, including greenhouse plastic sheeting, mulch films, irrigation tubing and other plastic materials that require appropriate management and disposal.

To support farmers in managing this waste responsibly, Riżorsi Agrikoli Malta (RAM) has established the Agricultural Greenhouse Plastic Waste Collection Scheme. The Scheme provides an organised mechanism for the collection of eligible agricultural plastic waste generated through greenhouse farming activities, helping to reduce environmental impacts, promote good agricultural practices and encourage proper waste management within the sector.

These Guidelines set out the eligibility requirements, application procedures, waste preparation requirements and collection arrangements applicable under the Scheme. They are intended to assist farmers in understanding the conditions for participation and their responsibilities throughout the collection process.

Participation in the Scheme is subject to compliance with the eligibility criteria and operational requirements established by Riżorsi Agrikoli Malta. Through this initiative, RAM aims to facilitate the responsible management of agricultural plastic waste while contributing to a cleaner, more sustainable agricultural environment.

Through this initiative, Riżorsi Agrikoli Malta seeks to support the agricultural community in adopting good environmental practices while contributing to the sustainable management of agricultural plastic waste generated within Malta's greenhouse farming sector.

DEFINITIONS

"Agricultural Greenhouse Activities" means agricultural activities carried out within or in connection with an agricultural greenhouse, including the cultivation, production and management of crops and any associated activities that generate eligible agricultural plastic waste.

"Agricultural Plastic Waste" means plastic materials that have become waste as a result of agricultural activities and which are eligible for collection under the Scheme, including greenhouse plastic sheeting, plastic covering materials, agricultural mulch films, irrigation tubing and other agricultural plastic materials approved by RAM.

"Agricultural products" means products listed in Annex I to the Treaty, with the exception of fishery and aquaculture products covered by Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

"Applicant" means a person who submits an application to participate in the Scheme and who seeks to benefit from the collection service provided under the Scheme.

"Collection" means the organised collection of eligible agricultural plastic waste from the collection location identified or agreed upon and its transfer by the designated service provider for appropriate handling and management.

"Collection Service" means the service organised by RAM for the collection of eligible agricultural plastic waste from approved applicants through a designated service provider.

"Designated Service Provider" means the contractor engaged by RAM to provide the collection service under the Scheme and to undertake the relevant collection and handling activities.

"Eligible Agricultural Plastic Waste" means agricultural plastic waste that falls within the categories approved under the Scheme, has been generated from the applicant's eligible agricultural greenhouse activities, and satisfies the waste preparation, separation and other requirements established by RAM.

"Eligible Applicant" means an applicant who satisfies all applicable eligibility criteria established under the Scheme and provides the required information and

supporting documentation to the satisfaction of RAM and that qualify as micro or small and medium-sized agriculture undertakings.

"Farmer Categorisation Certificate" means the valid certificate issued by the competent authority confirming the applicant's applicable farmer categorisation.

"Farmer Registration Number" means the valid registration number assigned to the applicant by the Agriculture Directorate or other competent authority for the purposes of farmer registration.

"Non-Eligible Materials" means any material that does not fall within the categories of waste approved under the Scheme or that is expressly excluded from collection, including household waste, hazardous materials or hazardous waste, excessive quantities of soil or organic matter, other non-agricultural waste, or any other material that RAM or its designated service provider determines cannot be accepted under the Scheme.

Riżorsi Agrikoli Malta (RAM) means the entity responsible for the administration and implementation of the Agricultural Greenhouse Plastic Waste Collection Scheme.

"Scheme" means the Agricultural Greenhouse Plastic Waste Collection Scheme established and administered by Riżorsi Agrikoli Malta for the organised collection of eligible agricultural plastic waste generated through greenhouse farming activities.

"Single undertaking" means all enterprises having at least one of the following relationships with each other:

a. one enterprise has a majority of the shareholders' or members' voting rights in another enterprise;
b. one enterprise has the right to appoint or remove a majority of the members of the administrative, management or supervisory body of another enterprise;
c. one enterprise has the right to exercise a dominant influence over another enterprise pursuant to a contract entered into with that enterprise or to a provision in its memorandum or articles of association;
d. one enterprise, which is a shareholder in or member of another enterprise, controls alone, pursuant to an agreement with other shareholders in or members of that enterprise, a majority of shareholders' or members' voting rights in that enterprise.

Enterprises having any of the relationships referred to in points (a) to (d) of the first subparagraph through one or more other enterprises shall also be considered to be a single undertaking.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- The applicant must be a registered farmer with the Agriculture Directorate.
- The applicant must operate and actively use an agricultural greenhouse for agricultural activities.
- The greenhouse must be located on agricultural land that is duly registered by the competent authorities and indicated in the application form.
- The applicant must provide a valid Farmer Registration Number.
- The applicant must provide a valid Farmer Categorisation Certificate.
- The plastic waste must have been generated from the applicant's agricultural greenhouse activities.
- The waste must consist of eligible agricultural plastic waste, such as greenhouse plastic sheeting, plastic covering materials, mulch films, irrigation tubing and other plastic materials approved under the Scheme.
- The plastic waste must be reasonably accessible for collection by the designated service provider.
- The applicant must ensure that the plastic waste does not contain general household waste, hazardous materials, soil, excessive organic matter or other non-eligible materials.
- The applicant must provide accurate and complete information in the application form and submit all required supporting documentation as requested.
- The applicant must agree to comply with the collection arrangements and instructions communicated by Riżorsi Agrikoli Malta (RAM).
- The applicant must provide a valid contact number and remain available for communication regarding the scheduled collection date.
- Collection will be organised by RAM through its designated service provider, and the applicant must make the eligible plastic waste available at the location and on the date communicated by the Agency.

Eligibility for the Scheme is subject to the applicant satisfying all applicable eligibility criteria and providing the required supporting documentation. Applications meeting the eligibility requirements will be approved for collection, following which Riżorsi Agrikoli Malta will contact the applicant to communicate the scheduled collection date and the applicable collection arrangements.

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION AND COLLECTION ARRANGEMENTS

Riżorsi Agrikoli Malta (RAM) has established the Agricultural Greenhouse Plastic Waste Collection Scheme to support farmers in the responsible management of plastic waste generated through agricultural greenhouse activities.

The Scheme facilitates the organised collection, handling and appropriate management of eligible agricultural plastic waste arising from greenhouse cultivation. It aims to assist farmers in managing such waste in an environmentally responsible manner, reducing the potential impact of agricultural plastic waste on the environment and promoting good agricultural and waste-management practices.

The Scheme is intended exclusively for farmers who operate and actively use agricultural greenhouses for agricultural purposes and who satisfy all applicable eligibility requirements.

Agricultural greenhouse plastic waste may include, but is not limited to:

- Greenhouse plastic sheeting;
- Plastic covering materials;
- Agricultural mulch films;
- Irrigation tubing; and
- Other agricultural plastic materials approved under the Scheme.

Participation in the Scheme is subject to the applicant meeting the applicable eligibility requirements and complying with the collection arrangements and instructions issued by RAM.

STATE AID RULES AND OBLIGATIONS

This scheme will be implemented in line with Commission Regulation (EU) No 1408/2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid in the agriculture sector, as amended by Commission Regulation (EU) 2019/316 of 21 February 2019 amending Regulation (EU) No 1408/2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid in the agriculture sector (OJ 51 I/1, 22.2.2019), by Commission Regulation (EU) No 2023/2391 of 4 October 2023 amending Regulations (EU) No 717/2014, (EU) No 1407/2013, (EU) No 1408/2013 and (EU) No 360/2012 as regards de minimis aid for the processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products, and Regulation (EU) No 717/2014 as regards the total amount of de minimis aid granted to a single undertaking, its period of application and other matters (OJ L, 2023/2391, 05.10.2023), by Commission Regulation (EU) 2024/3118 of 10 December 2024 amending Regulation (EU) No 1408/2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid in the agriculture sector (OJ L, 2024/3118, 13.12.2024,) and by Commission Regulation of 2 October 2025 correcting Regulation (EU) No 1408/2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid in the agriculture sector (OJ L, 2025/1989, 3.10.2025), (the agricultural *de minimis* Regulation).

The total amount of *de minimis* aid granted to a single undertaking shall not exceed the amount of €50,000 over any period of three consecutive years.

This maximum threshold would include all State Aid granted under this aid scheme and any other State Aid measures implemented in line with the agricultural *de minimis* Regulation, including that received and/or applied for from any entity other than Riżorsi Agrikoli Malta. Any *de minimis* aid received in excess of the established threshold will have to be recovered, with interest, from the undertaking receiving the aid.

The *de minimis* declaration form indicating any other agricultural *de minimis* aid received and/or applied for over the applicable three-year period, must be filled in and submitted together with the application form.

Applicability of the Aid

Undertakings active in the primary production of agricultural products may be eligible for assistance under this scheme, with the exception of the following, as per Article 1 of the agricultural *de minimis* Regulation:

(a) aid the amount of which is fixed on the basis of the price or quantity of products put on the market;

(b) aid to export-related activities towards third countries or Member States, namely aid directly linked to the quantities exported, to the establishment and operation of a distribution network or to other current expenditure linked to the export activity;

(c) aid contingent upon the use of domestic over imported goods.

Where an undertaking is active in the primary production of agricultural products and is also active in one or more of the sectors or has other activities falling within the scope of Regulation (EU) 2023/2831, that Regulation shall apply to aid granted in respect of the latter sectors or activities, provided that the Member State concerned ensures, by appropriate means such as separation of activities or distinction of costs, that the primary production of agricultural products does not benefit from *de minimis* aid granted in accordance with that Regulation.

Furthermore, where an undertaking is active in the primary production of agricultural products as well as in the primary production of fishery and aquaculture products, Commission Regulation (EU) No 717/2014 shall apply to aid granted in respect of the latter sector, provided that the Member State concerned ensures, by appropriate means such as separation of activities or distinction of costs, that the primary production of agricultural products does not benefit from de minimis aid granted in accordance with that Regulation.

Cumulation

Applicant undertakings may not claim costs already supported through public sources, whether in part or in full, under this measure. Riżorsi Agrikoli Malta shall not provide any support under this scheme, should it transpire that the costs for plastic waste collection service had been supported through other measures.

Where an undertaking is active in the primary production of agricultural products and is also active in one or more of the sectors or has other activities falling within the scope of Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2831, *de minimis* aid granted for activities in the sector of agricultural production in accordance with the agricultural *de minimis* Regulation may be cumulated with *de minimis* aid granted in respect of the latter sector(s) or activities up to the relevant ceiling laid down in Article 3(2) of Regulation (EU) 2023/2831, provided that the Member State concerned ensures, by appropriate means, that the primary production of agricultural products does not benefit from *de minimis* aid granted in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2023/2831.

Furthermore, where an undertaking is active in the primary production of agricultural products as well as in the primary production of fishery and aquaculture products, *de minimis* aid granted for activities in the sector of agricultural production in accordance with the agricultural *de minimis* Regulation may be cumulated with *de minimis* aid for activities in the fishery and aquaculture sector in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 717/2014 up to the highest ceiling

laid down in either of those Regulations, provided that the Member State concerned ensures, by appropriate means, that the primary production of agricultural products does not benefit from *de minimis* aid granted in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 717/2014.

Publication in Central Register

In line with Article 6(1) of the agricultural *de minimis* Regulation, as of 1 January 2027, information on *de minimis* aid granted under this scheme shall be made publicly available in a central register.

The following information shall be made public within 20 working days following the grant of the aid:

- the identification of the beneficiary,
- the aid amount,
- the granting date,
- the aid instrument, and
- the sector involved on the basis of the statistical classification of economic activities in the Union ('NACE classification').

ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will be assessed by RAM against the applicable eligibility requirements of the Scheme.

Eligibility is subject to but not limited:

- The applicant satisfying all applicable eligibility criteria;
- The agricultural greenhouse and agricultural land meeting the relevant requirements;
- The applicant providing a valid Farmer Registration Number;
- The applicant providing a valid Farmer Categorisation Certificate;
- The applicant providing a duly filled in *de minimis* declaration form;
- The plastic waste being generated from eligible agricultural greenhouse activities;
- The waste being of an eligible type;
- The waste being appropriately separated from non-eligible materials; and
- The applicant providing all required information and supporting documentation.

RAM may request additional information or documentation where this is necessary to assess an application.

Submission of an application does not, in itself, guarantee approval or collection. Only applications that satisfy the applicable requirements will proceed to the collection stage.

What Happens After Approval?

Once an application has been assessed and approved for collection, Riżorsi Agrikoli Malta will contact the applicant. RAM will communicate the relevant collection arrangements, which may include:

- The scheduled collection date;
- The collection location;
- Instructions concerning the preparation and presentation of the waste; and
- Any other information necessary to facilitate the collection.

COLLECTION ARRANGEMENTS

Collection under the Scheme will be organised by Riżorsi Agrikoli Malta through its designated service provider.

The applicant must:

- Prepare and separate the eligible agricultural plastic waste before the scheduled collection;
- Ensure that the waste is free from non-eligible materials;
- Place or make the waste available at the location communicated or agreed with RAM;
- Ensure that the collection point is reasonably accessible to the designated service provider;
- Ensure that the waste is available on the scheduled collection date; and
- Follow any specific instructions issued by RAM or its designated service provider.

The applicant should not move the waste to a different location or make alternative collection arrangements without first communicating with RAM where such a change may affect the scheduled collection.

Preparing the Waste for Collection

To facilitate an efficient collection, farmers should ensure that agricultural greenhouse plastic waste is properly separated before the scheduled collection.
Farmers should:

- Separate eligible agricultural plastic waste from other waste streams;
- Remove household waste and other non-eligible materials;
- Remove hazardous materials;
- Avoid mixing the plastic waste with excessive quantities of soil or organic matter;
- Keep different waste types appropriately separated where instructed by RAM; and
- Follow any additional preparation requirements communicated by RAM or its designated service provider.

Proper preparation of the waste helps ensure that the collection can be carried out safely and efficiently.

Collection Date and Communication

Following approval of an application, RAM will contact the applicant to communicate the scheduled collection date and applicable arrangements. Applicants are therefore required to provide a valid contact number and remain available for communication. If an applicant is unable to make the waste available on the scheduled date, the applicant should contact RAM as soon as possible. Applicants should not assume that a collection will take place unless the collection has been confirmed by RAM.

Waste that is not eligible

Plastic waste presented for collection must be free from materials that may prevent its acceptance or proper handling.

The following must not be included with the agricultural plastic waste:

- General household waste;
- Hazardous materials or hazardous waste;
- Excessive quantities of soil;
- Excessive organic matter;
- Other non-agricultural waste;
- Other materials that are not eligible under the Scheme; or
- Any other material that RAM or its designated service provider determines cannot be accepted under the Scheme.

Farmers are responsible for ensuring that the waste is appropriately separated and prepared before collection.