



**GOVERNMENT
OF MALTA**

MINISTRY FOR AGRICULTURE,
FISHERIES AND ANIMAL RIGHTS
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIAT
FOR FISHERIES, AQUACULTURE
AND ANIMAL RIGHTS



Animal Welfare Fund Grant Support Scheme

Funding Guidelines

2024

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

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Objectives	3
3. Priority Areas.....	3
3.1 Priority Area 1	3
3.2 Priority Area 2	4
3.3 Priority Area 3	4
4. Management and Assessment.....	4
4.1 The Committee:	4
4.2 The Animal Welfare Directorate:	5
5. General Parameters.....	5
6. Eligibility.....	8
7. Reimbursement.....	9
8. Funding Agreement	10
9. Audits and Monitoring Visits and Recovery	10
10. How to apply	10
11. Appeals Procedure.....	11
Annexes.....	12
Annex 1: List of Potentially Fundable Items	12
Annex 2: Scoring Checklist – Animal Welfare Fund.....	14

1. Introduction

The Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries, and Animal Rights (MAFA), on behalf of the Government, is offering financial support to non-government, not-for-profit Voluntary Organisations (VOs) 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.

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. Objectives

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:

- a. improve the well-being of animals;
- b. promote responsible ownership of animals and raise awareness of animal welfare responsibilities;
- c. assist in progressing good animal management practices;
- d. strengthen the network of animal welfare treatment, quality of care and rehabilitation services to the community and provide improved animal welfare facilities; and
- e. enhance the provision of community education and similar programmes, including development of necessary material regarding animal welfare and care.

3. Priority Areas

The Ministry 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 Directorate and will be advertised each year as part of the application process.

Priority areas for grants in 2024 are as follows¹:

3.1 Priority Area 1

Education on care, research and outreach on animal welfare having a €25,000 budget. Each applicant may benefit from a maximum grant of €3,000.

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

3.2 Priority Area 2

Contribution towards specific expenses such as medical supplies, food and other items (e.g. litter) required for the care and treatment of stray animals having a €35,000 budget. Each applicant may benefit from a maximum grant of €5,000.

3.3 Priority Area 3

Training for rehoming services including transport costs to relocate animals abroad having a €25,000 budget. Each applicant may benefit from a maximum grant of €2,000.

4. Management and Assessment

The grant support scheme is managed by the Animal Welfare Directorate (AWD). A Committee will also be set up to approve or reject project proposals based on the recommendations of the Directorate. The Committee will be made up of four (4) members appointed by the Permanent Secretary MAFA. The Committee shall be assisted by a secretary to be appointed by the Director Animal Welfare.

4.1 The Committee:

- a. shall confirm the eligibility of the applications following verifications by the AWD;
- b. shall assess applications against the objectives, parameters and criteria set out herein and prioritise them accordingly, as per scoring sheet²;
- c. may request any clarifications from applicants for purposes of assessment which need to be submitted by the applicant within seven (7) working days.

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

- a. conformity with the requirements of these guidelines and any additional one contained in the call for applications;
- b. the extent to which the project meets the objectives, parameters and criteria set out in the guidelines and in the call for applications;
- c. comprehensiveness of the project plan, soundness of budget and value for money;
- d. the demonstrated need and support for the project;
- e. the demonstrated ability and capacity of the applicant to successfully and lawfully implement the project in a timely and effective manner;
- f. clarity of focus on achieving the declared outcomes in the most effective way;
- g. priority rating of funding as compared to other eligible applications in relation to the scoring.

² See Annex 2 for Scoring Sheet.

4.2 The Animal Welfare Directorate:

- a. shall manage the Scheme on an ongoing basis in an efficient and effective manner in accordance with the established objectives and criteria;
- b. shall issue schemes, application forms and set up requirements and procedures;
- c. shall 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;
- d. shall have the prerogative to retain and not allocate a part of the Animal Welfare Fund for purpose of contingency;
- e. shall monitor the implementation of funded projects to ensure compliance with the grant conditions;
- f. shall inform successful and unsuccessful applicants with the outcome of their application;
- g. shall verify eligibility and that all documents have been submitted and in case of missing documentation or any clarifications these need to be submitted by the applicant within seven (7) working days;
- h. shall issue a Letter of Acceptance to the successful applicants giving them an appointed date and time to sign the grant agreement;
- i. shall not finalise a grant agreement unless copies of any relevant permits have been provided by the applicant as necessary;
- j. shall cancel the Letter of Acceptance, if the applicant fails to provide the required regulatory permits;
- k. shall carry out the reimbursement process, receipt of payment claims, verifying supporting documents, performing on-the-spot checks and issuing final report.

5. General Parameters

The following general parameters are applicable:

- a. a total budget of €85,000 is being allocated for this scheme;
- b. all applications are to be submitted through the VO portal www.vofunding.org.mt;
- c. grants shall be granted to non-government organisations, 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;
- d. grants shall only be granted to applications that are in line with the requirements and particularly the identified priority areas;
- e. an eligible applicant may apply for all priority areas.
 - i) education on care research and outreach on animal welfare having a €25,000 budget. Each applicant may benefit from a maximum grant of €3,000;

- ii) contribution towards specific expenses such as medical supplies, food and other items (e.g. litter) required for the care and treatment of stray animals having a €35,000 budget. Each applicant may benefit from a maximum grant of €5,000;
 - iii) training for rehoming services (including transport) having a €25,000 budget. Each applicant may benefit from a maximum grant of €2,000.
- f. missing documentation shall be submitted within seven (7) working days from receipt of the communication by the AWD or the Committee;
- g. the maximum allocation for each eligible applicant shall not exceed €8,000 (inclusive of VAT);
- h. the grant shall not exceed 80% of the total estimated cost of the project (inclusive of VAT) except when a VO collaborates with at least one (1) other VO enrolled with the Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations under the Animal Welfare Sector. In such case, the applicant will get 90% of the total project costs;
- i. applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to support that proportion of the project that shall not be supported by the grant;
- j. no double financing is allowed. Applicants shall include with their online application a declaration that the project has not benefitted from any prior Government or EU funding under other programmes/schemes in the last three (3) years up to the date of application. Non-disclosure may constitute grounds for judicial proceedings against applicant;
- k. applicants must have the necessary operational capacity, competencies and motivation to undertake and complete the project within the proposed time frame;
- l. 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;
- m. the project completion date must not in any way exceed twelve (12) months from the date of the grant agreement. The AWD may authorise an extension to this limit, of not more than 1 month following a request by the beneficiary, at least three (3) months prior to the closing date of the grant agreement;
- n. an advance payment 30% of the grant will be given to the beneficiary organisation upon signing of the grant agreement and the remaining 50% shall be given upon presentation of receipt and the final 20% to be paid upon certified completion of the project as agreed by the AWD. For this purpose, the beneficiary shall, within one month following the completion of the project submit to the AWD a final progress report 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. Copies of original may be accepted provided that they are presented to AWD and certified true copy of the originals by the AWD. Copies of documents covering the amounts provided to the beneficiary for the project under this fund, shall be kept by the AWD. The beneficiary VO shall keep any copies of the original documents for a period of five (5) years from completion of the project and may be subject for verification purposes.
- o. no funding shall be allowed for any permits;

- p. funding shall only cover costs that are necessary for the implementation of the chosen project and, except where otherwise authorised by the AWD, included in the proposed budget for the project;
- q. final payment shall only be affected if it is confirmed that the NGO is still enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations and compliant with the Voluntary Organisations Act (Chapter 492) and its subsidiary legislations;
- r. funding shall not be granted to finance projects involving commercial elements;
- s. 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;
- t. no amount of the grant element may be awarded retrospectively for projects and/or part of projects already completed;
- u. 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;
- v. only one grant application per organisation is permitted. In the case whereby a joint application submitted all VOs included in the joint submission cannot submit further applications either jointly or severally;
- w. in the case where a joint application is submitted the lead NGO must be clearly identified and be overall responsible for the implementation of the project and for submitting all relevant documentation to the AWD;
- x. late applications cannot and will not be accepted;
- y. incomplete applications will be deemed as invalid and thus will not be assessed;
- z. applicants are to always use the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights logo to be provided by the AWD to promote that the project was part financed by the Directorate;
- aa. applicants are to inform AWD before any activities financed under the project are held;
- bb. MAFA can participate in any activities held by the applicant and will have the right to do promotional stands;
- cc. cat feeders making use of the project are to be registered in the register established under the Cat Feeders Regulations;
- dd. cats and dogs receiving medical treatment should be microchipped on the NGO/sanctuary;
- ee. 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;
- ff. any unspent funds up to 25% of a priority area of the approved grant amount can be used for another purpose that fits within the funding guidelines. 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 AWD and on which commercial interest will be charged;

6. Eligibility

1. Applicants must:
 - a. be non-government, not-for-profit voluntary organisation;
 - b. be an organisation with primary focus on animal welfare issues;
 - c. as at the date of the submission of their application for a grant, be enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations and must also be compliant with the Voluntary Organisations Act (Chapter 492) and its subsidiary legislation.;
 - d. not have been convicted of animal abuse;
 - e. not be seen to endorse, sanction or facilitate acts of unauthorised access to private property;
 - f. submit their fully completed application on the online application form on the webpage www.vofunding.org.mt or from link from MAFA Webpage (within the established time limit) after registering with the VO funding portal;
 - g. include in their online application a detailed project plan and detailed budget including the amount of funding being applied for;
 - h. be in line with the General Parameters and with the conditions of the call for applications for grants under the Animal Welfare Fund;
 - i. include in their online 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 Organisations;
 - j. provide with their online application clear documentation showing their capability to implement the project;
 - k. a list of number of volunteers/ employees registered with the NGOs;
 - l. a list of the number of microchipped animals currently kept with the NGO;
 - m. a list of the number of animals that found a home in 2023;
 - n. any movement of animals for rehoming abroad must be carried in line with the Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES) as per Regulation (EU) 2017/625 and Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1715;
 - o. include with their online application a declaration that the project has not benefitted from any prior Government or EU funding under other programs/schemes in the last three years up to the date of application. Non-disclosure may constitute grounds for judicial proceedings against applicant; and
 - p. include with their online application a copy of all applicable regulatory permits.
2. The following (non-exclusive) list of costs shall **not** be considered as eligible costs:
 - a. return on capital;
 - b. debt and debt service charges;
 - c. provision for losses or potential future liabilities;

- d. interest owed or paid;
- e. provisions for doubtful debts;
- f. exchange rate losses;
- g. costs declared by a beneficiary in connection with another activity or work programme receiving a grant from other National/European Financing Schemes;
- h. the insurance premium against risk of exchange rate losses;
- i. excessive or reckless expenditure;
- j. gifts and presents;
- k. recreational activities;
- l. education campaigns that could be, wholly or partly, considered to be political in nature;
- m. costs incurred in relation to activities not foreseen in the project or in modifications of the action for which the AWD's agreement was not given;
- n. costs not entailing a cash flow for the beneficiary/co-beneficiary;
- o. neutering services are not included for cats and dogs for funding since such services are funded under other schemes but neutering of other animal species may be considered;
- p. 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 Animal Welfare Fund;
- q. costs in any budget heading over and above the amount foreseen in the budget;
- r. indirect costs exceeding the percentage or value agreed in the grant agreement; and
- s. indirect costs declared by any organisation receiving an operating grant from the EU budget.

7. Reimbursement

1. A claim form together with a hard copy of the invoice, and a fiscal receipt should be presented to AWD, listing **only** the items related to project. Any invoices presented which include items that do not fall under the project or outside the contracting period will be considered ineligible.
2. Invoices together with their fiscal receipts should be presented in chronological order, outlining which part of the project the invoice is funding. This is to be presented in a form of report.
3. Invoices should be addressed to the NGO or addressed to a person representing the NGO, clearly outlining it. Words to be used include: "to Mr./Ms. _____ on behalf of name of NGO".
4. A hard copy of all supporting documentation should also be presented to AWD.
5. Untruthful information will lead to a loss of funding.

8. Funding Agreement

1. Successful applicants shall enter into a Funding Agreement with the AWD (acting on behalf of Government).
2. 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.
3. In accepting a grant, a beneficiary will be expected to:
 - a. ensure that the project commences promptly;
 - b. submit progress reports when and as may be requested by the AWD;
 - c. provide due acknowledgement to the Animal Welfare Fund in all public and relevant program material relating to the approved project; and
 - d. ensure that all funds are expensed in line with the grant conditions.
4. The AWD 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 organisation.

9. Audits and Monitoring Visits and Recovery

1. Grant beneficiaries may be subjected to audit and monitoring visits by the AWD or its delegates or any other national audit institution at any time as deemed necessary.
2. Beneficiaries will be required to provide proof that the grant has been used correctly and in accordance with the provisions of the Funding Agreement.
3. Beneficiaries must retain all documentation up to five (5) years from completion of project appertaining to the funded project original fiscal invoices and receipts and submit them to the AWD or its delegate when and as requested.
4. If the beneficiary is found to have defaulted on the conditions of the grant, the AWD 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 one month from receipt of notice by the AWD.

10. How to apply

1. A Call for Applications will be issued that will be advertised in the media.
2. Only online applications are accepted. Applicants are to be registered with the VO Funding Portal. Online applications are accessible through the webpage www.vofunding.org.mt or from MAFA webpage link.
3. Applications need to be submitted by 19 July 2024.
4. Applicants should make sure that they:

- a. are eligible for funding;
 - b. complete fully the application form;
 - c. submit all required documentation;
 - d. submit the application with supporting documentation by the stipulated deadline.
5. Any further queries regarding this scheme and application process may be referred to the secretariat office via:
- a. e-mail to awschemes.mafa@gov.mt;
 - b. normal registered mail to: Animal Welfare Fund Grant Support Scheme, c/o Animal Welfare Directorate, Qormi Road, Luqa, QRM 9041; or
 - c. phone number 22924135.

11. Appeals Procedure

Appeals in relation to the submitted projects can be filed the Malta Arbitration Centre through the following link www.arbitration.mt.

Annexes

Annex 1: List of Potentially Fundable Items

The Animal Welfare Fund Grant Support Scheme may be utilised for the funding of the following activities:

Priority 1 - Education on care research and outreach on animal welfare (€25,000 budget, maximum grant of €3,000 per applicant)

1. Educational Workshops and Seminars: Conducting workshops and seminars to educate the public on responsible pet ownership and animal welfare. This can include sessions on proper care, nutrition, behaviour training, and the importance of spaying/neutering.
2. Awareness Campaigns: Developing and implementing campaigns to raise awareness about specific animal welfare issues, such as animal cruelty, current animal protecting laws and penalties when legislation is breached. This can involve creating educational materials, organising public events, or running social media campaigns.
3. School Outreach Programmes: Collaborating with local schools to deliver animal-focused educational programmes, including presentations, interactive activities, and educational materials. The aim is to instil compassion and respect for animals among children and promote responsible pet ownership.
4. Animal Care Workshops for Volunteers: Organising training sessions and workshops for volunteers interested in animal care. Topics can include handling and feeding techniques, understanding animal behaviour, basic medical care.
5. Community Engagement Initiatives: Establishing community engagement programs to involve local residents in animal welfare activities. This can involve organising adoption drives and pet health check-up camps.

Priority 2 - Contribution towards specific expenses such as medical supplies and food (€35,000 budget, maximum grant of €5,000 per applicant)

1. Medical supplies: Funding for essential medical supplies, vaccines, medications and other items (e.g. litter) required for the care and treatment of stray animals. Neutering services for cats and dog are not included under this scheme but neutering of other animal species may be considered.
2. Nutritional Support: Providing funds for high-quality animal feed, specialized diets for injured or sick animals, and supplements to ensure their overall well-being. This could also cover the cost of formula milk for orphaned or abandoned animals.

Priority 3 - Training for rehoming services, including transport costs to relocate animals abroad (€25,000 budget, maximum grant of €2,000 per applicant)

1. Adoption Events and Outreach: Supporting adoption events where NGOs can showcase their animals to potential adopters. This can include funding for venue rental, transportation, marketing materials, and adoption counselling services.
2. Animal Transportation: Assisting NGOs with the cost of animal transportation services to relocate animals abroad (outside of Malta). Any animal relocated abroad must be transported in line with Chapter 437 and subsidiary legislation falling thereunder. This can include covering the fees associated with third-party animal transport services.
3. Adoption Counselling and Training: Providing funds for the training of staff or volunteers to provide adoption counselling services. This ensures that potential adopters receive guidance on choosing the right pet and understanding their responsibilities. Funding can also be used for the engagement of an animal behaviouralist to train animals before being adopted.
4. Foster Care Programmes: Supporting the establishment or expansion of foster care programmes, including training for foster caregivers, necessary supplies, and veterinary care for animals in foster homes. Fostering will be limited to the three (3)-month kitten period.
5. Rehoming Materials: Creating and distributing adoption-related materials, such as brochures, posters, and online profiles, to increase the visibility and chances of successful adoptions.

Annex 2: Scoring Checklist – Animal Welfare Fund

Criterion	Maximum Points	Scoring
Number of VO partners involved in the project together with the applicant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 5 points • 2 10 points • 3 15 points 	15	
Number of priority areas being targeted under the project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 5 points • 2 10 points • 3 15 points 	15	
Priority Area 1: Education on care research and outreach on animal welfare		
How many people will be impacted/benefitted from the project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 - 50 5 points • 51 - 100 10 points • 101 - 200 15 points • 201+ 20 points 	20	
Priority Area 2: Specific expenses such as medical supplies, vaccines, medications and other items (e.g. litter) required for the care and treatment of stray animals		
How many animals will benefit from the scheme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 - 50 10 points • 50 - 100 20 points • 101+ 30 points 	30	
Priority Area 3: Training for rehoming, including transport costs to relocate animals abroad		
Number of animals that will find a home through the project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 - 5 1 point • 6 - 10 2 points • 11 - 15 3 points • 16 - 20 4 points • 21- 50+ 5 points 	5	
Fostering kittens during bottle feeding period: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 - 50 5 points • 51 - 100 10 points • 101+ 15 points 	15	
Total	100	