public service

Quality Service Charter

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Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency (ARPA)
Luqa Road
Qormi

ARPA
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL PAYMENTS AGENCY

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1. PURPOSE

The services we provide are governed by a Quality Service Charter that serves to inform our customers of the level of service that they should expect to receive. This reflects our commitment, and that of the Malta Public Service, to the delivery of a Service of Excellence by embracing the 4 Pillars of the Quality Model upon which the Public Service is based:

Voice: We listen to the customers' voice and are open to their criticism regarding the service we offer and to their ideas as to how we can improve our service to them. We consider the ideas received from our customers, and strengthen the scheme of ideas forwarded by our employees;

Design: We develop policies and processes which reach the levels expected by our customers;

Delivery: We deliver a service which is timely, of a high standard, easily accessible, and which can reach the customer with ease; and

Accountability: This is intrinsic to a service which guarantees honesty towards the customer. Accountability also means loyalty towards the customer making use of our services, which translates into, and is manifested in these same basic principles we want to uphold.

2. WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

Our Mission

The Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency's mission is to serve as a customer focused organisation delivering a quality service which includes the timely processing of payments and receipts, ensuring compliance with applicable EU rules and regulations, and disseminating relevant information to the farming community.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

All our actions are guided and bound by **5 Criteria** of Service Quality as follows:

Reliability: We are committed to ensure that the services we provide are in line to what is promised. We will provide accurate information which the customer may request to be in writing. Our services are consistent and committed to the customers' needs.

Empathy: We are committed to provide services which are tailored to our customers' needs and offered with care and individualised attention. We will strive to communicate in a language which is free from technical jargon, and will ensure that our services are accessible to everyone.

Assurance: Our staff is knowledgeable and courteous. We are committed to provide a professional service which the customers can trust.

Responsiveness: We provide our services in a timely manner and without any unnecessary delays. We are committed to respond to customers' requests, problems, or complaints.

Tangibles: Our offices offer a clean and safe environment where our services can be sought conveniently and safely.

4. AGRICULTURE AND RURAL PAYMENTS AGENCY CUSTOMERS

The customers for the services governed by this charter are individuals residing in the Maltese Islands, primarily being farmers and other rural and agricultural stakeholders/beneficiaries, benefitting from support under the schemes funded through the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Maltese Government.

5. SERVICE COMMITMENT

We will ensure that all timeframes that are in our control will be strictly adhered to. When the service requested is dependent on other departments or entities, we are committed to follow up on it ourselves so that you will receive the final reply in time.

Communication	Specific, straightforward, and free of jargon or technical terms. All information will be provided in both Maltese and English. Correspondence sent to us in Maltese will be answered in Maltese whilst all other correspondence will be answered in English.
Premises	Complete access for all abilities and regular safety certification of the premises by competent bodies.
Request for information through website, email, telephone, social media, traditional mail	A final reply within 3 working days.
Request for service	Kindly refer to **Appendix 1** for list of services.
Phone Calls	Shall be answered within 3 rings on working days.
Acknowledgements	1 working day from receipt of request for information or application for service. This may be omitted if service or follow-up query is provided/made with the same timeframe. During the application campaign, an acknowledgement for those application printouts submitted by post or directly by the farmer will be sent by post within 1 week.
Appointments	Replies to requests for appointments will be provided within 1 working day, with the appointment date being set within 3 working days from date of request. When attending your appointment, you should not expect waiting time. We will respect the time allotted to you. If you arrive late, we reserve the right to reschedule your appointment.
Queueing time (if applicable)	We will greet you on arrival and guide you to your requested service. You will be directed to the officer who will serve you. Waiting time will be of approximately 10 minutes under normal circumstances.

Online Information	The information on our communication channels will be kept up-to-date. If you have access to the internet, you can find relevant information on our: **Website**: https://arpa.gov.mt/
Payment Methods	Bank transfers are the method of payment. Charges do not apply to our regular services.

In addition, the service-specific turnaround time (this is the time taken to process an application), eligibility criteria, and application requirements as described in Section 10 of this document shall apply.

6. HOW TO REACH US

Once an application or enquiry is lodged with us, we will be responsible to assess, follow it up and keep you updated so as to make sure that you receive a definite reply..

Our assistance may be sought through any of the following channels at the specified time:

A. Our Offices

- **Malta**
  Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency,
  Pitkali Markets,
  Ta' Qali L/O Attard

- **Gozo**
  Agricultural and Rural Payments Agency
  Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries & Food Supply
  Da Paola, Level 1,
  Fortunato Mizzi Street, Victoria

B. Opening Hours

- **Malta**
  1st October – 15th June:
  Monday – Thursday: 07:00 – 12:30
  Friday: 11:00 – 15:00

  16th June – 30th September:
  Monday – Friday: 07:00 – 11:30

- **Gozo**
  Monday to Friday
  07:00 am – 12:30pm

C. By Telephone
+356 2292 6148

D. Email
arpa.maff@gov.mt

E. On our website
https://arpa.gov.mt

F. Mobile Apps:
From maltapps one may also access ARPA's App, that is, BiedjaCam (for further information on the use, refer to the user manuals on ARPA's website https://arpa.gov.mt/en/mobile-app-information/)

7. WE ARE AT YOUR SERVICE

Our commitment is to assist you in providing all the necessary information and documents to be given the related service.

We will ensure you:

- Give us information on time, that is both complete and accurate. When an incomplete application is received, we will inform you of what is further required and assist you to obtain all the required documents and complete it correctly;
- Take the time to read applications carefully so that you can help us give you the service on time;
- Provide feedback to us to improve our service. Our service is provided by a dedicated team of professionals. This does not mean that we do not accept your feedback so that we can better our service. You can do this by using the channels indicated in Section 8 below.
- Communicate with us clearly and concisely in either Maltese or English;
- Treat our staff with the courtesy and respect as they are obliged to treat you.

Our website features all required applications and lists the documents needed with each application.

8. FEEDBACK & COMPLAINTS

We are committed to a Service of Excellence and strive to bring about a continuous improvement of our Service to you. We guarantee your anonymity, and your feedback will help us to improve our Services.

If you believe that we have made an error and/ or that our staff have acted improperly, or without the due level of care and attention, please contact us.

Feedback and complaints may be submitted through the following channels:

Agricultural and Rural Payments Agency (ARPA)

Personally:	Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency, Pitkali Markets, Ta' Qali L/O Attard or at Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Supply, Da Paola, Level 1, Fortunato Mizzi Street, Victoria
By Phone:	+356 2292 6148
By Post:	Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency, Pitkali Markets, Ta' Qali L/O Attard
By Email:	arpa.maff@gov.mt
Online:	by feedback form on ARPA's website (https://arpa.gov.mt/en/contact/)

Rate the Public Service, downloadable through maltapps directory or web-based on https://qualityofservice.gov.mt/en/pages/rtps

Servizz.gov

- Online: by accessing the Servizz.gov site and clicking on the 'Information Request' here:- https://www.servizz.gov.mt/en/InformationRequest
- By Phone: **153**

When making a complaint you should:

- Quote any reference number that you may have been given in relation to the transaction that you are complaining about;

- Specify what the problem/case is; and
- Provide any additional information that may help us resolve your complaint.

When addressing complaints, we will:
- Guarantee your confidentiality;
- Refer your case to the **Customer Care** and send you an acknowledgement within 1 working day;
- Provide you with a unique reference number so that you can check the status of your complaints at any time.

As a normal procedure, all acknowledgements will be given to the beneficiaries on the same day of the request for information or application of Service.

- Carry out an investigation on the problem/case and conclude this as speedily as possible but by not later than:
  - 5 working days (in cases where we can conclude the case ourselves) or
  - 10 working days (in cases where we would need to obtain feedback from other departments or entities) from receipt of the complaints and all requested relevant information.
- Inform you in writing about the outcome of our investigation into our complaints by not later than 2 working days from the conclusion of the investigation.

Following closure of your complaint, we commit ourselves to take any remedial action where applicable and planned corrective action to avoid repetition where necessary so that you will not encounter the same or similar experience.

QUALITY OF SERVICE DIRECTORATE WITHIN P&SD

In the circumstance where the expected level of support was not given through the above channels, you may report to the Quality of Service Directorate within the People & Standards Division by sending an email on qualityofservice-opm@gov.mt.

9. COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

With the aim of a Service of Excellence and continuous improvement in mind, this Quality Service Charter will be reviewed as necessary, but in any case, at least once every 12 months to measure our performance in terms of the standards set out in this Charter as well as how we meet your expectations.

The review process will be based on:
- Government policy
- Operational data (e.g. services offered, service delivery, etc.)
- Benchmarking
- Feedback
- Complaints
- Surveys
- Quality Service Assessments
- Mystery Shopper Exercises

Quality of Service standards relative to the Services provided will be monitored and measured. The results of the internal review and the monitoring process will be used as a basis for improving our Service.

APPENDIX 1

10. APPENDIX 1

We will ensure that all timeframes that are in our control will be strictly adhered to. When the service requested is dependent on other departments or entities, we are committed to follow up on it ourselves so that you will receive the final reply on time.

Service	Eligibility	Compliance Requirements	Application Options	Service Delivery Timeline
Registration of bank account to receive financial assistance under EU funded schemes (for local payments).	All applicants receiving financial assistance under the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and/or the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). Eligibility criteria: Applicants holding a local bank account.	Supporting documents required: • Bank Payment Form – signed and stamped by Bank official **URL**: https://www.servizz.gov.mt/en/Pages/Environment_-Energy_-Agriculture-and-Fisheries/#Agriculture/Agriculture/WEB235/default.aspx	Medium through which application may be submitted: • At ARPA's Front Office. • By post at Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency, Pitkali Markets, Ta' Qali L/O Attard	Submission and vetting of application: 1 working day. Delivery of Service: 2 working days. **Note**: *Timelines are based on the premise that the information provided in the form is correct and complete.*
Registration of bank account to receive financial assistance under EU funded schemes (for overseas payments).	All applicants receiving financial assistance under the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and/or the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). Eligibility criteria: Applicants holding an overseas bank account.	Supporting documents required: • Nil **URL**: https://servizz.gov.mt/en/Pages/Environment_-Energy_-Agriculture-and-Fisheries/Agriculture/Agriculture/WEB242/default.aspx	Medium through which application may be submitted: • At ARPA's Front Office. • By post at Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency, Pitkali Markets, Ta' Qali L/O Attard	Submission and vetting of Application: 1 working day. Delivery of Service: 2 working days. **Note**: *Timelines are based on the premise that the information provided in the form is correct and complete.*

Access to the Farmers' Registry through Biedjacam.	All farmers registered according to the Legal Notice 94 of 2015. Eligibility criteria: • Applicants must be cultivating at least 0.1124 hectares of land.	Supporting documents required: • Android phone: Play store, Apple: Apple store **URL**: https://arpa.gov.mt/en/mobile-app-information/	Medium through which application may be submitted: • Assistance can be given at ARPA's Front Office. • By phone on 22926148	Immediate upon downloading the mobile application.
Registration of co-cultivator.	All farmers registered according to Legal Notice 94 of 2015.	Supporting documents required: • Co-cultivator form **URL**: https://servizz.gov.mt/en/Pages/Environment_-Energy_-Agriculture-and-Fisheries/Agriculture/Agriculture/WEB2087/default.aspx	Medium through which application may be submitted: • At ARPA's Front Office.	In cases where parcel registration is existent, the registration for co-cultivator is immediate upon submission of form.
Registration/De-Registration of SMS Service Provided by the Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency (ARPA).	All farmers registered according to Legal Notice 94 of 2015.	Supporting documents required: • Nil **URL**: https://servizz.gov.mt/en/Pages/Environment_-Energy_-Agriculture-and-Fisheries/Agriculture/Agriculture/WEB258/default.aspx	Medium through which application may be submitted: • At ARPA's Front Office. • By post at Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency, Pitkali Markets, Ta' Qali L/O Attard	Immediate upon submission of application.

Requests for information in relation to EU and nationally funded schemes and subsidies administered by ARPA	All farmers registered according to Legal Notice 94 of 2015.	N/A	Medium through which application may be submitted: • Assistance can be given at ARPA's Front Office. • By phone on 22926148	Immediately upon request.
Consent by Heir of Deceased Beneficiary to transfer pending financial assistance.	Heirs of deceased beneficiaries of funding schemes under EAGF and/or EAFRD.	Supporting documents required: • Consent Form endorsed by the Notary. **URL**: https://servizz.gov.mt/en/Pages/Environment_-Energy_-Agriculture-and-Fisheries/Agriculture/Agriculture/WEB230/default.aspx	Medium through which application may be submitted: • At ARPA's Front Office.	Submission and vetting of Application: 2 working days. Assessment and Approval of Application: 2 working days. Delivery of Service: 1 working day. The above timeframes are subject to possible standstill periods whilst the client awaits documentation from his/her appointed notary. **Note**: *Timelines are based on the premise that the information provided in the form is correct and complete.*
Acceptance of debts issued by the Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency (ARPA).	Beneficiaries under EAGF and/or EAFRD funding schemes who have been identified as debtors by ARPA.	Supporting documents required: • Nil **URL**: https://servizz.gov.mt/en/Pages/Environment_-Energy_-Agriculture-and-Fisheries/Agriculture/Agriculture/WEB1960/default.aspx	Medium through which application may be submitted: • At ARPA's Front Office.	Submission and vetting of Application: 1 working day. Delivery of Service: 2 working days.

Objections to reductions or penalties imposed by the Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency (ARPA).	Beneficiaries under EAGF and/or EAFRD funding schemes who have been identified as debtors by ARPA. Eligibility criteria: Objection to be lodged within 15 working days of debt notification.	Supporting documents required: • Various, determined on a case-by-case basis. **URL**: https://servizz.gov.mt/en/Pages/Environment_-Energy_-Agriculture-and-Fisheries/Agriculture/Agriculture/WEB252/default.aspx	Medium through which application may be submitted: • At ARPA's Front Office.	Submission and vetting of Application: 2 working days. Assessment and processing of Application: 60 working days, which includes: possible meeting/s with the Board (involving a 3 week notification period), review and reporting by the relevant Authorising Unit and conclusion of the case by the Board. Objection cases may require further investigation of evidence presented upon submission or after the Board meeting with the beneficiary, which, therefore, may prolong the process in view that this would require communication with third parties. A progress notification to the applicant will be sent within 15 working days from the start of the period mentioned above. Notification of Board Decision to Applicant: 6 working days.

Force Majeure Cases Request	Beneficiaries under EAGF and/or EAFRD funding schemes who have been identified as debtors by ARPA. Force Majeure request to be lodged within 15 working days from date on which the applicant is in a position to do so.	Supporting documents required: Various, determined on a case-by-case basis. **URL**: https://servizz.gov.mt/en/Pages/Environment_-Energy_-Agriculture-and-Fisheries/Agriculture/Agriculture/WEB243/default.aspx	Medium through which application may be submitted: • At ARPA's Front Office.	Submission and vetting of Application: 2 working days. Assessment and processing of Application: 35 working days, which includes a possible meeting with the Board (involving a 3 week notification period), review and reporting by the relevant Authorising Unit and conclusion by the Board. A progress notification to the applicant will be sent within 15 working days from the start of the period mentioned above. Notification of Board Decision to Applicant: 6 working days.
Registration of bank account to receive financial assistance under EU funded Schemes (E-banks)	The Bank Payment Form may be used by applicants whose bank account is not held with a Maltese Financial institution. The application must provide details of a bank account that is held in their name. Joint accounts are acceptable only in the case of married couples or couples who have entered into a civil union.	Supporting documents required: • Bank statement within the previous 6 months, showing clearly the Bank Name, Logo, Account Holder name and address, and Issue date of the bank Statement **URL**: https://www.servizz.gov.mt/en/Pages/Environment_-Energy_-Agriculture-and-Fisheries/Agriculture/Agriculture/WEB-04218/default.aspx	A medium through which application may be submitted: • At ARPA's Front Office	Submission and vetting of application: 2 working days. Delivery of Service: 2 working days.

Land at the disposal of farmer form	All registered farmers who seek to either: • Register parcel/s and claim subsidy funds. • Switch already registered parcels to claim subsidy funds. • Modify boundaries that would result in an increase in area of more than 100 sqm. Both the transferor and the transferee are required to fill the form in cases of transfers of parcels that were registered in the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS) after the 31st of December 2017. If the parcel was registered before the 31st of December 2017 only the transferee is required to fill the form.	Supporting documents required: • A site plan issued by the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS), or a site plan approved by an architect **URL**: https://www.servizz.gov.mt/en/Pages/Environment_-Energy_-Agriculture-and-Fisheries/Agriculture/Agriculture/WEB-04121/default.aspx	Medium through which application may be submitted: • At ARPA's Front Office	Immediate upon submission of a Request for the registration or transfer of a parcel