

**STRATEGY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHOOL SCHEME IN MALTA
FROM 2023/2024 TO 2028/2029 SCHOOL YEAR**

DATE OF ADOPTION: 09/05/2023

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1. ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION

Article 23(8) of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 (hereafter, the basic act) and Article 2(1)(a) of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/39 (hereafter, implementing regulation)

National	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Scheme is administered by the Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency who shall collaborate with the National School Support Services within the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation as well as with the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Department within the Ministry for Health and Active Ageing.
Regional	<input type="checkbox"/>	

2. NEEDS AND RESULTS TO BE ACHIEVED

2.1. Identified needs

Through the evaluation of the School Scheme for School Years 2017/2018 to 2021/2022 in Malta, it transpired that the School Scheme is positively viewed by parents, teachers, heads of schools and stakeholders, with the latter also perceiving the Scheme to be fulfilling its overall objective of raising children's awareness of the importance of a healthy and balanced diet in their life.

In a wider context, the majority of parents are aware of the recommended intake of milk, fruit and vegetables however, the accessibility of fast food and other unhealthy options and fast-food entities' considerable advertising and promotional budgets invariably are detrimental to the establishment of a healthy and balanced diet given the fast-paced lifestyle the majority of households live. Indeed, this has seen an increase in childhood obesity.

Having said that, research indicates that the milk component of the School Scheme is more successful and consumption patterns are more in line with the recommended daily intake.

Overall, whilst parents are aware of the recommended daily intake of fruit and vegetables, children's actual daily consumption of fruit and vegetables is still below the recommended daily intake and hence, this needs to be tackled in the new School Scheme Strategy.

In this regard, the educational aspect of the School Scheme shall be further emphasized while incorporating both short- and medium-term goals.

- Article 23(8) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(b) of the implementing regulation

The priority that needs to be addressed by this Strategy is the persisting low consumption of fruit, vegetables, and milk by children in Malta.

2.2. Objectives and indicators

Article 23(8) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(c) of the implementing regulation

General objective(s)	Impact indicator(s)	Specific objective(s)	Result Indicator(s)	Output Indicator(s)
<i>Statistically significant* increase in the share of fruit, vegetables and milk in children's diets to achieve healthy eating habits.</i>	<i>Statistically significant* increase in consumption of fruit, vegetables and milk by children by the end of the six-year period.</i>	<i>Statistically significant* increase the consumption of fruit, vegetables and milk by children in school.</i>	50% of children participating in the school scheme per school year on total number of children in the target group.	Number of children participating in the school scheme per school year.
			50% of schools participating in the school scheme per school year on total number of schools in the target group.	Number of schools participating in the school scheme per school year.
	<i>Statistically significant* increase in the answers indicating increased knowledge relating to healthy eating habits, by the end of the six-year period.</i>			Average consumption of school fruit and vegetables/milk per child and per school year (quantity or portions)
		<i>Statistically significant* increase of knowledge by children in schools about the variety of agricultural products and about healthy eating habits.</i>	10% of children involved in accompanying Educational.	Number of children involved in Educational measures per school year. Expenditure on educational measures.

*A statistically significant increase is being taken to mean an upward variation that is higher than that attributable to probability and/or error, and that is higher than the natural background variation.

2.3. Baseline

Article 23(8) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(d) of the implementing regulation

Data and results of the evaluation exercise carried out in February 2023 shall be used as basis against which the achievement of the identified objectives will be measured. In particular, new data relating to awareness, intake, preference and attitude as well as lifestyle habits shall be collected and compared with the comparable data in the same evaluation exercise.

3. BUDGET

3.1. Union aid for the school scheme

Article 23a of the basic act and Article 2(1)(e) of the implementing regulation

EU aid for the school scheme (in EUR)	Period 1/8/2023 to 31/7/2029		
	School fruit and vegetables	School milk	Common elements if applicable
Distribution of school fruit and vegetables/school milk	€1,740,000	€433,500	
Accompanying educational measures		€434,700	
Monitoring, evaluation, publicity ⁴		€289,800	
Total	€1,740,000	€1,158,000	
Overall total	€2,898,000		

3.2. National aid granted, in addition to Union aid, to finance the school scheme

Article 23a(6) of the basic act and Article 2(2)(d) of the implementing regulation

No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
If yes, amount (in national currency)	Fruit/vegetables		Milk/milk products
		Milk/milk products other than Annex V	Annex V products
Supply/distribution	€2,983,032	€607,500	€0

Accompanying educational measures	€651,071		
Monitoring, evaluation, publicity	€4,237,818		
Total	€4,888,889		

The above financial estimate is based on workings which has been partially approved for scholastic years 2023/2024 until 2025/2026.

National aid shall be provided in accordance with domestic legislation for the whole duration of the Strategy. It shall serve to broaden the scope of the scheme. In particular, National Aid shall also serve to finance the consumption of fruit, vegetable and milk portions by school teaching staff (Teachers, LSA's, and Kindergarten Assistants). Malta believes this to be important as school staff can help set a good example for children to follow, thus increasing the efficacy of this initiative. National aid shall also be utilised to supply portions to students over the age of 16 years which are attending Educational Resource Centres.

3.3. Existing national schemes	
Article 23a(5) of the basic act and Article 2(2)(e) of the implementing regulation	
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>If yes (=existing national schemes extended or made more effective through Union aid under the school scheme), please indicate the arrangements to ensure added value of the school scheme through^h:</i>	
– Extension of the target group	<input type="checkbox"/>
– Extension of the range of products	<input type="checkbox"/>
– Increased frequency or duration of distribution of products	<input type="checkbox"/>
– Enhanced educational measures (increased number or frequency or duration or target group of those measures)	<input type="checkbox"/>
– Other: please specify (e.g. if products originally not free of charge and that are provided free of charge)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment/explanatory text	

4. TARGET GROUP/S

Article 23(8) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(f) of the implementing regulation

School level	Age range of children (years)	School fruit and vegetables	School milk
Nurseries	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pre-schools	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Primary	3-11*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Secondary	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Comments

- i. Children who are older than 11 years but are still attending Primary School will still participate in the Scheme.
- ii. Students with individual educational needs attending Resource Centres shall also participate in the scheme.
- iii. Students who attend Skola Sajf and are between the age of 11 and 16 years shall also participate in the scheme.

5. LIST OF PRODUCTS DISTRIBUTED UNDER THE SCHOOL SCHEME

Article 23(9) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(g) of the implementing regulation

5.1. Fruit and vegetables

5.1.1. Fresh fruit and vegetables and fresh products of the banana sector - Article 23(3)(a) of the basic act

Apricots, cherries, peaches, nectarines, plums	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Carrots, turnips, salad beetroot, salsify, celeriac, radishes and other edible roots	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Apples, pears, quinces	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cabbages, cauliflowers and other edible brassicas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Bananas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Berries	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cucumbers, gherkins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Figs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lettuces, chicory and other leaf vegetables	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Grapes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lentils, peas, other pulses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Melons, watermelons	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tomatoes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Citrus fruit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other vegetables: please specify	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tropical fruit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sweet peppers, broad beans, green beans, beetroot, pumpkins, basil, mint, oregano, marjoram, rosemary, sage	
Other fruit: please specify <i>strawberries</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
.....			

Average diversity of fresh fruit products envisaged by the strategy, per establishment for one school year:		Average diversity of fresh vegetable products envisaged by the strategy, per establishment for one school year:	
1-6 products	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1-3 products	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7-14 products	<input type="checkbox"/>	3-6 products	<input type="checkbox"/>
> 14	<input type="checkbox"/>	7-10	<input type="checkbox"/>
		> 10	<input type="checkbox"/>

Throughout the implementation of the National Strategy, changes to the above list may be made to include other fruit or vegetables in Annex I, part IX of EU Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013. The Commission shall be informed, in the event of such happening, as per Article 2 (4) of EU Regulation (EU) 2017/40 through an amendment of the strategy.

5.1.2. Processed fruit and vegetable products – Article 23(4)(a) of the basic act

Products distributed under the school scheme		Added salt			Added fat			Comments (optional)
		No	Yes		No	Yes		
Fruit juices	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Fruit purées, compotes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>If yes, please indicate the limited quantity</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>If yes, please indicate the limited quantity</i>	
Jams, marmalades	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Dried fruits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Vegetable juices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Other: please specify	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>			
.....								

5.2. Milk and milk products

5.2.1. Milk - Article 23(3)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013

Drinking milk and lactose-free versions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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5.2.2. Milk products - Article 23(4)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013¹¹

Products distributed under the school scheme		Added salt			Added fat			Comments (optional)
		No	Yes		No	Yes		
Cheese and curd	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>If yes, please indicate the limited quantity</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>If yes, please indicate the limited quantity</i>	
Plain yoghurt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Fermented or acidified milk products without added sugar, flavouring, fruits, nuts or cocoa	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>			

5.2.3. Milk products - Annex V to Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013

Products to be distributed under the school scheme		Added salt			Added fat			Added sugar
		No	Yes		No	Yes		
Category I (milk component $\geq 90\%$). Fermented milk products without fruit juice, naturally flavoured	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>If yes, please indicate the limited quantity</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>If yes, please indicate the limited quantity</i>	%
Category I (milk component $\geq 90\%$). Fermented milk products with fruit juice, naturally flavoured or non-flavoured	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		%
Category I (milk component $\geq 90\%$). Milk-based drinks with cocoa, with fruit juice or naturally flavoured	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		%
Category II (milk component $\geq 75\%$). Fermented or non-fermented milk products with fruit, naturally flavoured or non-flavoured	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		%

5.3. Prioritisation of fresh fruit and vegetables and drinking milk

Article 23(3) of the basic act

On a minimum of a yearly basis, children shall be given one portion of fruit and vegetables as well as one portion of fresh milk. This will be done through activities with animators to create an experience they would remember.

Moreover, a supply and distribution of 6 portions per month will supplement the awareness campaign to further emphasise the objectives of the School Scheme.

5.4. Scheme products & other agricultural products in the educational measures

Article 23(7) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(g) of the implementing regulation

Scheme products		
Yes		No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Please list the products:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other agricultural products		
Yes		No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Please list the products:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

5.5. Criteria for the choice of products distributed under the school scheme and any priorities for the choice of those products

Article 23(11) of the basic act and Article 2(2)(a) of the implementing regulation

Health considerations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Environmental considerations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Seasonality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Variety of products	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Availability of local or regional produce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Any comments – including e.g. on the required quality of products	

Any priority/ies for the choice of products:	
Local or regional purchasing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Any comments	
Organic products	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any comments	
Short supply chains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Any comments	
Environmental benefits (please specify: <i>e.g. food miles, packaging ...</i>)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Any comments	
Products recognised under the quality schemes established by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any comments	
Fair-trade	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any comments	
Other, please specify:	

6. ACCOMPANYING EDUCATIONAL MEASURES

Article 23(10) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(j) of the implementing regulation

Title	Objective	Topics	Description
Roadshow workshops	Help children experience the key processes of agricultural production and food preparation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organic food tastes good 2. Teasing taste buds 3. Food & Health 4. Sustainable development (reducing food waste) 	Age-appropriate theme-based interactive games & activities shall be carried out in clusters promoting healthy nutritional habits regarding the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables and fresh milk derived from sustainable agriculture based on the identified topics.
Educational Visits	Make children aware of the key principles of agricultural production	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Growing Process 2. The Types of fruit and vegetables grown in Malta 3. The Production of Milk 	Such visits aim to make children aware of some of the basics of agriculture, such as the growing process, the types of fruit and vegetables grown in Malta and the production of milk. These activities shall include demonstrations of the planting process, product harvesting and other on-the-farm jobs. Such visits will be administered by the Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency.

7. ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

7.1. Price of school fruit and vegetables/milk

Article 2(2) of Delegated Regulation 2017/40.

The School fruit and vegetables as well as the School milk shall be made available free of charge to the end beneficiaries.

7.2. Frequency and duration of distribution of school fruit and vegetables/milk and of accompanying educational measures

Article 23(8) of the basic act and Article 2(2)(b) of the implementing regulation

Envisaged frequency of distribution:

	School fruit and vegetables	School milk
Once per week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Twice per week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Three times per week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Four times per week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daily	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other : please specify	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Any comments: The distribution of fruit and vegetables and milk shall be done through the roadshows in schools which will be held at a minimum of once per scholastic year. The fruit and vegetable component will be further supplemented with 6 portions per month throughout the scholastic year.

Envisaged duration of distribution:

	School fruit and vegetables	School milk
≤ 2 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
> 2 and ≤ 4 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
> 4 and ≤ 12 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
> 12 and ≤ 24 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
> 24 and ≤ 36 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Entire school year	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Any comment: Entire School Year shall include:

30 weeks – Scholastic Year

8 weeks – Summer School (Skola Sajf)

Envisaged duration of accompanying educational measures during the school year:

Every educational establishment shall participate in the accompanying educational Measures.

7.3. Timing of distribution of school fruit and vegetables/milk

Article 23(8) – and 23a(8) of the basic act in relation to the provision of other meals – of the basic act and Article 2(2)(b) of the implementing regulation

Envisaged timing of distribution during the day (*please tick one or more of the checkboxes below*):

	School fruit and vegetables	School milk
Morning/morning break(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Lunchtime	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Afternoon/afternoon break(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

7.4. Distribution of milk products in Annex V to Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013

Article 23(5) of the basic act, Article 5(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1370/2013 ('the fixing regulation'), Article 2(2)(f) of the implementing regulation

No

Yes

7.5. Selection of suppliers

Article 23(8) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(l) of the implementing regulation

In respect of the project management of the roadshows, a public call for tenders shall be issued, in line with public procurement regulations.

Finally, with respect to publicity, the Agency shall procure different goods and services as highlighted in Section 6 in accordance with the applicable public procurement regulations.

7.6. Eligible costs

7.6.1. Reimbursement rules Article 23(8) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(i) of the implementing regulation

The costs incurred under the school scheme shall be reimbursed on a system based on invoices i.e., a cost-based system.

The reasonableness of costs, in line with Article 2(1)(i) of Regulation 2017/39 as submitted by the Contractors for the provision of fruit and vegetables on one hand and, for the provision of milk on the other shall be ascertained during the competitive tendering process where the most financially advantageous, technically compliant offer shall be selected. The same applies for costs relating to accompanying educational measures and for costs relating to information, monitoring and evaluation activities.

7.7. Involvement of authorities and stakeholders

Article 23(6) and (9) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(k) of the implementing regulation

7.6.2. Eligibility of certain costs

Article 23(8) of the basic act and Article 2(2)(b) of the implementing regulation

The overall price of the tender for the school fruit and vegetables and the school milk supplied under the school scheme includes the supply and transportation costs.

The new School Scheme in Malta will be administered at national level by the Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency (ARPA) within the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights (MAFA). It will be administered with the cooperation of the National School Support Services within the Ministry for Education, Youth, Sport, Research and Innovation, as part of the Government of Malta. The Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Department have also been consulted on the various aspects of this strategy.

The demarcation of roles and responsibilities between the Ministries and the entities involved in the Scheme shall be established in a written cooperation agreement signed by representatives of each entity.

The respective roles shall be divided as follows:

Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights (MAFA)

The Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency within MAFA is responsible for the overall management, control and monitoring of the scheme, including procurement and payment procedures.

Ministry for Education, Youth, Sport, Research and Innovation (MEYR)

The Projects and Initiatives Section, National School Support Services, within MEYR is responsible for liaising with the educational establishments. The Home Economics Seminar Centre within the Department of Curriculum Research, Innovation and Lifelong Learning, Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes, is responsible for promoting the new School Scheme in school *curricula*. The HESC also co-ordinates and facilitates age-appropriate, interactive, educational activities to promote the health benefits associated with the consumption of fruit, vegetables and milk as part of a healthy diet.

Ministry for Health and Active Aging

The Ministry for Health and Active Aging plays a consultative role to the New School Scheme in the school curriculum. The Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate within the Superintendence of Public Health certifies that children are receiving top quality healthy products and plays a very active role in the dissemination of information as regards health benefits in the consumption of fruit, vegetables and milk as part of a healthy diet.

Other stakeholders

The active involvement of private, public sector and civil society is encouraged to ensure the success of the New School Scheme. In more specific terms, ideas on improving the administration of the scheme shall be solicited also from parents' and teachers' associations as well as from the participating contractors.

8.7. Authorities and stakeholders involved

			Complete Name	Involved in Planning	Involved in Implementation	Involved in Monitoring	Involved in Evaluation	Other (if yes, please specify)
Public authority/ Private stakeholder	Agriculture	Authority	Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights (MAFA)	<u>Yes/No</u>	<u>Yes/No</u>	<u>Yes/No</u>	<u>Yes/No</u>	
		Stakeholder		Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	
	Health and Nutrition	Authority	Ministry for Health and Active Ageing (MHA)	<u>Yes/No</u>	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	
		Stakeholder		Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	
	Education	Authority	Ministry for Education, Youth, Sport, Research and Innovation (MEYR)	<u>Yes/No</u>	<u>Yes/No</u>	Yes/No	Yes/No	
		Stakeholder		Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	
	Other	Authority		Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	
		Stakeholder	The active involvement of private, public sector and civil society is encouraged to ensure the success of the new School Scheme. In more specific terms, ideas on improving the administration of the scheme shall be solicited also from parents' and teachers' associations as well as from the participating contractors.	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	<u>Yes/No</u>	

7.8. Information and publicity

Article 23a(8) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(m) of the implementing regulation

The Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency shall ensure that the new School Scheme is adequately publicised in order to ensure sufficient awareness and to comply with the publicity and visibility requirements of the applicable Regulations.

In order to ensure the efficient use of the available financial resources, the Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency shall combine together the publicity and educational measures for school fruit and vegetables, and the school milk. The Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency shall procure and distribute posters bearing the official scheme Logo among all participating schools. The poster shall feature a mascot designed by School children in a competition held for this purpose during the Skolasajf summer school programme of 2017. The Agency shall also ensure that the new Scheme's poster shall be put up in a visible and prominent place at the main entrance of each participating school. This poster shall bear the official artwork of the scheme together with the emblem of the European Union and of the Republic of Malta illustrating that the new School Scheme is financed by the European Union and by the Republic of Malta, as the case may be.

The Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency shall also procure a roll-up banner with the official artwork of the Scheme and emblems. This shall be used in all educational and publicity events to be undertaken.

Moreover, throughout the implementation of this Strategy, the Agency shall discuss and evaluate ways on how to better disseminate the message being promoted by this initiative in a more efficient and effective manner. This dissemination will target children, parents and guardians. To this end, the Agency shall set up the scheme webpage hosted on the Agency's website, including promotional and educational material on the scheme. The Agency shall also procure the services of an animator for use in all events.

The Agency shall also procure and distribute various promotional material.

All educational and promotional material distributed as part of the new School Scheme shall be branded with the appropriate artwork and emblems.

7.9. Administrative and on-the-spot checks

Article 2(2)(g) of the implementing regulation

Administrative Controls

Administrative checks shall be carried out by the Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency on all requests for payment. The request shall be accompanied by a copy of invoices which will be clearly itemised. These supporting documents shall be checked for accuracy.

On-the-spot Controls

The administrative controls highlighted above shall be complemented by on-the-spot checks. These on-the-spot checks shall be carried out on a pre-payment basis by the Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency at the Contractor's premises, to ascertain adherence with tender conditions and the provisions of the relevant regulations.

Controls are also carried out within the premises of the participating educational establishments to ensure that schools are fulfilling their role with regards to the distribution and participation in accompanying measures. Selection and control of the Contractor's premises and the participating schools will be made on the basis of a risk analysis in accordance with Article 10 of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/39 of 03 November 2016 on rules for the application of Regulation (EU) 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regards to Union aid for the supply of fruit and vegetables, and milk in educational establishments.

7.10. Monitoring and evaluation

Article 2(2)(g) of the implementing regulation

Monitoring shall be carried out in order to provide information on progress in programme implementation, in accordance with Article 8 of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/39. The Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency shall carry out this exercise with the participating schools on an annual basis in line with Article 9 of Regulation 2017/40.

This monitoring shall include checks on how participating schools are encouraging and promoting the consumption of fruit and vegetables, and milk amongst children. Checks shall also be carried out on the effectiveness of the accompanying measures and the relative response by children through their participation. When non-compliance or shortcomings are detected, *ad hoc* remedial actions shall be taken, in order to address such shortcomings.

The results of this monitoring exercise will be notified by 31 January following the end of the school year concerned in line with the applicable Regulations.

Moreover, the Competent Authority shall, at the end of the six-year period, undertake to prepare an evaluation report containing the results of the evaluation exercise as provided for in Article 8 of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/39.