

**STRATEGY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHOOL SCHEME IN MALTA  
FROM 2017/2018 TO 2022/2023 SCHOOL YEAR**

**DATE: 25/07/2017, AMENDED ON 20/05/2021<sup>1</sup>**

---

<sup>1</sup> Amendments, following consultations with stakeholders, on distribution of school milk for scholastic year 2020/2021.

## Contents

|        |  |    |
|--------|--|----|
| 1.     | ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL .....   | 4  |
| 2.     | NEEDS AND RESULTS TO BE ACHIEVED .....   | 5  |
| 2.1.   | Identified needs .....   | 5  |
| 2.2.   | Objectives and indicators .....  | 5  |
| 2.3.   | Baseline .....   | 7  |
| 3.     | BUDGET.....  | 8  |
| 3.1.   | Union aid for the school scheme .....  | 8  |
| 3.2.   | National aid granted, in addition to Union aid, to finance the school scheme .....   | 9  |
| 3.3.   | Existing national schemes .....  | 10 |
| 4.     | TARGET GROUP/S .....   | 11 |
| 5.     | LIST OF PRODUCTS DISTRIBUTED UNDER THE SCHOOL SCHEME.....  | 11 |
| 5.1.   | Fruit and vegetables.....  | 11 |
| 5.1.1. | Fresh fruit and vegetables - Article 23(3)a of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 .....  | 11 |
| 5.1.2. | Processed fruit and vegetables – Article 23(4)a of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 .....  | 13 |
| 5.2.   | Milk and milk products .....   | 14 |
| 5.2.1. | Milk - Article 23(3)b of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 .....  | 14 |
| 5.2.2. | Milk products - Article 23(4)b of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 .....   | 14 |
| 5.2.3. | Milk products - Annex V to Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 .....  | 15 |
| 5.2.4. | Prioritisation of fresh fruit and vegetables and drinking milk.....  | 16 |
| 5.3.   | Other agricultural products in the educational measures .....  | 16 |
| 5.4.   | Criteria for the choice of products distributed under the school scheme and any priorities for the choice of those products..... | 16 |
| 6.     | ACCOMPANYING EDUCATIONAL MEASURES .....  | 17 |
| 7.     | ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION.....   | 19 |
| 7.1.   | Price of school fruit and vegetables/milk .....  | 19 |
| 7.2.   | Frequency and duration of distribution of school fruit and vegetables/milk and of accompanying educational measures .....        | 20 |
| 7.3.   | Timing of distribution of school fruit and vegetables/milk.....  | 21 |
| 7.4.   | Distribution of milk products in Annex V to Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 .....   | 22 |
| 7.5.   | Selection of suppliers .....   | 23 |
| 7.6.   | Eligible costs .....   | 23 |
| 7.6.1. | Reimbursement rules .....  | 23 |

|        |   |    |
|--------|---|----|
| 7.6.2. | Eligibility of certain costs.....                 | 23 |
| 7.7.   | Involvement of authorities and stakeholders ..... | 23 |
| 7.8.   | Information and publicity .....                   | 25 |
| 7.9.   | Administrative and on-the-spot checks .....       | 25 |

**1. ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL**

Article 23(8) of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 as amended by Regulation (EU) 2016/791 (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 Malta Ministry for Education and with the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Department within the Malta Ministry for Health. |
| Regional | <input type="checkbox"/>            |   |

## **2. NEEDS AND RESULTS TO BE ACHIEVED**

### **2.1. Identified needs**

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

#### **The Objectives of the New School Scheme for Malta**

In line with the Maltese government's goals, the new School Scheme shall consolidate the framework improving children's health and quality of life in Malta and in Gozo.

The overall objective of the new School Scheme in Malta is to organise and implement a focused national campaign aimed at increasing the awareness of the need to substantially increase the share of fruit, vegetables and milk in children's diets as they are growing up and when their eating and drinking habits are still being formed. This would represent an investment in the future, by helping to avoid or reduce health expenditure resulting from childhood obesity and other ailments caused by a poor diet.

This shall be achieved primarily by providing school children with regular portions of fruit, vegetables and milk for their consumption and by promoting, with the use of various educational and publicity measures, the consumption of such products.

The expected result is a substantial increase in the awareness of the benefits of the increased consumption of fruit, vegetables and milk, as well as the nurturing of healthy eating and drinking habits among school children, habits which are expected to be extended to their homes. In reaching such goals, this scheme will contribute to long-term health benefits.

The new School Scheme in Malta shall be accessible to all children attending state and non-state schools administered or recognised by the competent authorities in Malta i.e. the Ministry for Education between the ages of 3 and 11 years of age during Scholastic year and 3-16 years during Skola Sajf<sup>2</sup>. Within the Ministry for Education there are three types of schools, namely primary schools, secondary schools and Education Resource Centres. Children who are older than 11 years but are still attending Primary School will still be eligible to participate in the Scheme. Students with individual educational needs attending Resource Centres shall also be eligible to participate in the scheme. Resource Centres are considered as an educational establishment as they are dedicated to children with serious disabilities, usually children suffering from a mental illness that prevents them from

---

<sup>2</sup> Skolasajf is a nationwide project organised by the Foundation for Educational Services (FES), offering non-compulsory education during the summer months (eight weeks). Children between 3 and 16 years of age may attend a programme of themed activities, set out according to official guidelines issued by the FES. It takes place at the school premises and resource centres.

attending mainstream schools. Students' ages at the Resource Centres vary from 4 years to 22 years and in certain cases over 22 years of age as well.

### **Scholastic Year 2020/2021**

The progress of the COVID-19 pandemic in Malta during the year 2020 resulted in the suspension of physical attendance in schools from March until the end of school year 2019/2020. The ongoing distribution of school fruit, vegetables and milk supplies consequently also had to be suspended. Schools were allowed to resume in School Year 2020/2021 with a hybrid system of physical attendance and online learning, subject to a strict protocol which limits the entry in schools to pupils, educators and essential staff and allows only essential items inside, and subject to ongoing risk of return to fully remote learning linked to the rate of national contagion.

Following consultations with the relevant stakeholders, an agreement was reached that the objectives of the school milk scheme could best continue to be met while respecting the overriding imperative for minimizing any risks to public health, through a system of off-premises distribution by introducing a new voucher-based system as follows commencing from January 2021:

- the weekly portion of milk was increased from 250ml to 500ml per child between the ages of 3 to 11 per week and students attending Resource Centres;
- applications by parents/guardians were submitted through a voluntary online participation form whereby details of each pupil as well as postal instructions to ensure the delivery at the correct address;
- the registrations were checked by the Paying Agency which is carrying out all the necessary eligibility checks;
- eligible children who applied for the scheme were provided through a registered postal envelope/pack with sets of 12 colour-coded vouchers by post covering 3 months, intended to supply a portion each week in line with the school milk scheme's previous frequency. Another set of vouchers may be issued at a later stage for subsequent periods depending upon budgetary availability and execution. and
- vouchers were redeemable in all retail outlets in Malta.
- ARPA carried out the necessary checks to determine the proportion of students in distance-learning which will be financed through the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and the proportion of students attending schools physically will be reimbursed exclusively through National funds.

In order to achieve the objectives set out in the National Strategy, the pack sent to students also contained a letter to the pupil outlining the functioning of the scheme. In addition, a pamphlet was included in order to be able to set out the key educational and health promotion messages which the scheme aims to achieve, for a healthy diet as part of the fight against childhood obesity. This pamphlet provided information about the School Milk Scheme's objectives and the new voucher system which was adopted, important nutritional information based on recognised dietary guidelines as well as information about the importance of the link between food and farming, as supported by the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. The pamphlet also marked this as an EAGF co-financed scheme, in line with publicity requirements.

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

\* 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 2017 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.

With respect to the milk component of the Scheme, new data shall also be collected. Like the Fruit and Vegetable component, this data shall describe awareness, intake, preference and attitude. This data shall then be compared with existing statistics relating to milk consumption in Malta.

### 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 1/8/2017 to 31/7/2023 |             |                               |
|---|------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
|   | School fruit and vegetables  | School milk | Common elements if applicable |
| Distribution of school fruit and vegetables/school milk | € 1810038                    | € 868500    |                               |
| Accompanying educational measures                       |                              |             | €146844                       |
| Monitoring, evaluation, publicity                       |                              |             | € 279600                      |
| Total   |                              |             | € 426444                      |
| Overall total   | € 3104982*                   |             |                               |

\*Note : Malta envisages requesting additional resources should such resources be available during the five years following the 2017-2018 scholastic year.



**3.2. National aid granted, in addition to Union aid, to finance the school scheme<sup>3</sup>**

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

|                                       |                                     |                                       |                  |                        |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| <b>No</b>                             | <input type="checkbox"/>            |                                       |                  |                        |
| <b>Yes</b>                            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                                       |                  |                        |
| If yes, amount (in national currency) | <b>Fruit/vegetables</b>             | <b>Milk/milk products</b>             |                  | <b>Common Elements</b> |
|                                       |                                     | Milk/milk products other than Annex V | Annex V products |                        |
| Supply/distribution                   | €1507962                            | €1295100                              | €0               |                        |
| Accompanying educational measures     |                                     |                                       |                  | €0                     |
| Monitoring, evaluation, publicity     |                                     |                                       |                  | €0                     |
| Total                                 | <b>€2803062</b>                     |                                       |                  | <b>€0</b>              |

Comment/explanatory text (eg. name of the national aid, legal basis, duration). *In the event that national aid is granted to finance common elements, please add a column (common elements) to report it.*

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.

For Scholastic Year 2020/2021, National aid shall serve to finance the consumption of milk portions of students physically attending school and shall also be utilised to supply portions to students attending Resource Centres with individual or special educational needs.

<sup>3</sup> National or regional level

### 3.3. Existing national schemes

Article 23a(5) of the basic act and Article 2(2)e of the implementing regulation

No



Yes



*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<sup>4</sup>:*

– Extension of the target group



– Extension of the range of products



– Increased frequency or duration of distribution of products



– Enhanced educational measures (increased number or frequency or duration or target group of those measures)



– Other: please specify (eg. if products originally not free of charge and that are provided free of charge) ....



Comment/explanatory text

---

<sup>4</sup> One or more

#### 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 | 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. Not applicable for Scholastic Year 2020/2021.

#### 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 - Article 23(3)a of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013

|  |                                     |   |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Apricots, cherries, peaches, nectarines, plums   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Carrots   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Apples   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Cabbages, cauliflowers and other edible brassicas   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Bananas  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |   |                                     |
| Berries  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Cucumbers,  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Figs   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Lettuces and spinach  | <input 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, green beans, beetroot, pumpkins; basil, mint, oregano/marjoram, rosemary, sage | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Other fruit: please specify <i>strawberries*</i> | <input checked="" 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 vegetables – Article 23(4)a of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013

| 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"/>            |                          |   |                     |
| Vegetable soups                              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |   | <input checked="" 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"/> |
|--|-------------------------------------|

### 5.2.2. Milk products - Article 23(4)b of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013

| 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"/> |                          |   |                     |

\*During Scholastic Year 2020/2021, lactose-free version was not available.

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"/> |   | %           |

#### 5.2.4. Prioritisation of fresh fruit and vegetables and drinking milk

Article 23(3) of the basic act

*On a weekly basis the children shall be given one portion of fruit and vegetables as well as one portion of fresh milk. The ratio of fresh fruit and vegetable portions given in relation to fresh soups shall be as follows:*

| Ratios                                  | Fruit Menu | Vegetable Menu | Fresh Menu soup |
|---|------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Skolasajf - July till September         | 2          | 1              | 1               |
| Scholastic year October - end November  | 2          | 0              | 2               |
| Scholastic year December - end February | 2          | 2              | 0               |
| Scholastic year March - end June        | 2          | 1              | 1               |

#### 5.3. Other agricultural products in the educational measures

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

| Yes                      |                          | No |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Please list the products | X  |

#### 5.4. 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 type="checkbox"/>            |
| Seasonality                               | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Variety of products                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Availability of local or regional produce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |



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

## 6. ACCOMPANYING EDUCATIONAL MEASURES

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

| <b>Title</b>                         | <b>Objective</b>   | <b>Content</b>   |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>School Educational Programmes</b> | <i>Make children aware of the nutritional advantages of consuming fresh fruit, vegetables and milk. s.</i> | <b>School Educational Programmes:</b> Kinder 2, Year 2 and Year 5 pupils shall continue to be invited to participate in the “ <i>Hamsa Llum...Kul minna Kuljum</i> ”, “ <i>Milk Power</i> ” and “ <i>Duq il-Qawsalla</i> ” programmes facilitated by the home-economics support teachers at the The Home Economics Seminar Centre within the Department of Curriculum Research, Innovation and Lifelong Learning, Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes and in schools. These programmes seek to build sound healthy eating habits in children through the promotion of the daily consumption of fruit, vegetables, and milk. |
| <b>Educational Visits:</b>           | <i>Make children aware of the key principles of agricultural production</i>                                | <b>Educational Visits:</b> Such visits aim to make children aware of some of the basics of agriculture, such as the <i>growing process, the types of fruit and vegetables grown in Malta</i> 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.  |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Hands-on Kitchen Experience:</b></p> | <p><i>Help children experience the key processes of agricultural production and food preparation.</i></p> | <p><b>Hands-on Kitchen Experience:</b> In addition to the other accompanying educational measures described above, school children will be given the opportunity to actively experience hands-on farming through school kitchen. Such activities will provide school children with the necessary basic knowledge on the growing process of fruit and vegetables and their nutritional and culinary attributes. It is believed that through such an exercise, school children will appreciate more the agricultural products that they will be consuming.</p> |
|--|---|--|

## **7. ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

### **7.1. Price of school fruit and vegetables/milk**

Article 24(6) of the basic act and Article 2(1)h of the implementing regulation

The school fruit and vegetables and 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" 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 <sup>5</sup> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

Any comments: Deliveries which have not been distributed during the first part of the scholastic year will be delivered once contract is awarded till the end of June of the same scholastic year. For Scholastic Year 2020/2021, distribution of the portions commenced as from January 2021.

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)\*

<sup>5</sup> Eg. Distribution once every two weeks

\*Duration for Scholastic Year 2020/2021 commenced as from January 2021 and is envisaged to continue throughout the Scholastic Year depending upon budgetary availability and execution

Envisaged duration of accompanying educational measures during the school year:

(please indicate the number of hours or shortly explain/comment)

Every School shall participate in at least one accompanying educational measure (this applies as well to the Skola Sajf). It shall be ensured that the duration of the event is adequate for the end to be achieved. Not applicable for Scholastic Year 2020/2021 due to strict health protocols.

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

Article 23(8) – and 23a(8) if supply 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 type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Afternoon/afternoon break(s) | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

Comments: Not applicable for Scholastic Year 2020/2021.

**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 the fixing regulation (No 1370/2013), 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 supply and delivery of fruit and milk, a public call for tenders will be issued, in line with public procurement regulations. The tenders for the supply and delivery of fruit and vegetables will be kept separate from the tenders issued for the supply and delivery of milk.

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

In Scholastic Year 2020/2021, the Agency contracted the milk supplier under the relevant procurement procedure by an off-premises system.

## **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.

*If the strategy sets maximum prices to be paid by beneficiaries for the products, materials and services under the school scheme please indicate the fair, equitable and verifiable calculation method used for their establishment (Article 2(2)c 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 transport costs. Not applicable for Scholastic Year 2020/2021.

## **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

The New School Scheme in Malta will be administered at the national level by the Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency (ARPA) within the Ministry for Agriculture,

Fisheries, Food and Animal Rights (MAFA). It will be administered with the cooperation of the National School Support Services within the Ministry for Education, part of the Government of Malta. The Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Department have also been consulted on the various aspects of this strategy.

Moreover, the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Department have also vetted and approved the list of products that will be distributed.

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, Food 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

The Projects and Initiatives Section, National School Support Services, within MFED 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

The Ministry for Health 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.



## **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 and shall be designed by schoolchildren 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 procure television spots for the broadcasting of promotional content, and set up and launch a 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 such as lunchboxes, milk cups, colouring books, sticker-books, calendars, pencil-cases, string back-packs, rulers, water bottles, and keychains.

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

*Please describe shortly the management and control system that will ensure compliance with the requirements under the school scheme (eg. who is responsible for the administrative checks and the on-the spot checks).*

### *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 and the respective delivery notes received by the school duly signed and stamped by the

participating schools. These supporting documents shall be checked for accuracy and cross checked with the invoices submitted by the schools.

For Scholastic Year 2020/2021, the original vouchers are presented together with a request for payment form and the invoice for each payment period.

#### *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.

\*Not applicable for Scholastic Year 2020/2021 due to the voucher-based system.

#### **7.10. Monitoring and evaluation**

Article 2(2)g of the implementing regulation

*Please describe shortly the arrangements for annual monitoring (eg. is the activity outsourced? What are the provisions for the reporting obligations by beneficiaries? Are there monitoring committees?) and for evaluation of the school scheme.*

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. This shall be submitted to the European Commission not later than 01 March 2023.