

Call for Project Proposals issued by the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, to be financed under the Aquaculture Fund, as established under S.L. 425.12

Call Year: 2026 - Ongoing Call

Submission Dates: Submissions of new project proposals shall only be accepted during the following days: The submission periods for Yr 2026 shall be between the 23rd and 30th March and 22nd and 30th September.

Mode of Submission: Project proposals shall be submitted by hand to the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, situated at the Agriculture Research and Innovation Hub, Marsa, Malta. The project proposal shall be addressed to the Aquaculture Fund Board. Prior to submitting the application, first one should make an appointment by phoning on 22926884.

Scope of Fund:

The Aquaculture Fund brings with it opportunities to improve further the environment credentials of the aquaculture sector in Malta. The fund has to ensure that aquaculture in Malta moves towards an Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture (EAA) which is a strategy for the integration of the activity within the wider ecosystem such that it promotes sustainable development, equity, and resilience of interlinked social-ecological systems (FAO 2010¹), with focus on the promotion and protection of the environment. The Fund shall be used to finance projects, programs and schemes related to, and costs intended to achieve and manage the promotion and protection of the environment, as well as works which may be needed for that purpose or to remedy any harm caused to the environment, in line with the EAA.

¹ FAO. Aquaculture development. 4. Ecosystem approach to aquaculture. *FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries*. No. 5, Suppl. 4. Rome, FAO. 2010. 53p.

Qualifying Proposals:

The main aim of this funding scheme is to launch small projects and activities that promote the sustainable development of the aquaculture and fisheries sector in Malta in line with the Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture and Fisheries, with a focus on the promotion and protection of the environment. Other themes include but are not limited to: protection and conservation of biodiversity, waste management and reduction of waste generation, promotion of energy efficiency encouraging greater use of renewable energy sources, encouraging educational, promotional, research and development studies, programmes, projects and other activities in the field of environmental protection, energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources with a specific focus on aquaculture sector in Malta and the environmental degradation and harm the activity causes within Malta.

In order for a proposal to qualify based on the Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture, the qualifying proposals should be based on at least one of the following three key principles:

Principle 1 :

Aquaculture development and management should take account of the full range of ecosystem functions and services and should not threaten the sustained delivery of these to society.

Developing aquaculture in the context of ecosystem functions and (at least operationally), estimating some assimilative and production carrying capacities, and adapting farming practices accordingly. The mix of ecosystem services will depend on wider management practices and the trade-off among different services must be acknowledged. This is especially important in the case of ecosystem functions that are unique, essential or threatened to ensure their preservation.

Eligible proposals here would include:

- Making Aquaculture management practices more environmentally friendly.
- Reducing the impact that aquaculture operations may have on the environment.
- Ecosystem analysis including fish bio diversities around aquaculture zones.

Principle 2 :

Aquaculture should improve human well-being and equity for all relevant stakeholders.

This principle seeks to ensure that aquaculture provides equitable opportunities for development and equitable sharing of its benefits. This includes ensuring that it does not result in any undue detriment for any groups within society, especially the most vulnerable. Both food security and safety are to be promoted as key components of well-being.

Eligible proposals here would include:

- Develop aquaculture practices that improve food security and local supply with environmental awareness such as organic aquaculture practices.
- Identify new economic niches that could be developed in the aquaculture industry to maximise job opportunities.
- Explore and develop innovative tourism activities with the realm of fisheries and aquaculture.

Principle 3 :

Aquaculture should be developed in the context of other sectors, policies and goals.

This principle recognizes the interactions between aquaculture and the larger system, in particular, the influence of the surrounding natural and social environments on aquaculture practices and results. This principle also acknowledges the opportunity of coupling aquaculture activities with other production sectors to promote materials and energy recycling and better use of resources in general.

Eligible proposals here would include:

- Aquaculture policies and strategies that safeguard the environment.
- Improve technologies within the aquaculture sector that would enhance the protection of the environment.
- Improve the environmental aspects of sectors that are related to aquaculture, especially in the marine and coastal related sectors.

Non-Qualifying Proposals:

The following will be not qualifying for funding under this funding scheme:

- a) Acquisition of property, land or title (including rent, emphyteusis etc.).
- b) Extension to existing immovable property.

Eligible Fund Beneficiaries:

- Organisations being part of the public administration in accordance with the Public Administration Act;
- Students registered with a licensed and accredited further and higher education institution as recognised by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority;
- Voluntary Organisations registered in accordance with the Voluntary Organisations Act.

Note: Applicants deemed as performing an economic activity shall be subject to state aid rules and all respective procedures.

Application and Funding Process:

Applications should be submitted as proposals that define the scope of the project and contribution to one or more of the criteria enlisted together with CV of main applicant. Successful applications will benefit from a grant of up to €10,000 for their projects with 20% given as advance payment, followed by 30% after the first six months, and the remaining 50% will be provided once the project is finalized according to the proposal. In order for the DFA to process the 30% payment, a detailed report specifying the progress made shall be provided. The same applies for the remaining 50% payment, where a detailed report shall also be presented to the DFA, clearly highlighting that all project actions were successfully concluded and that all project KPI's were achieved. Projects must be finalized within 24 months from the date of acceptance. If the total project value is under €10,000, eligible applicants shall be entitled to the project value amount and not the entire eligible sum.

Selection Process - Aquaculture Fund Board:

A Board shall be set up by the Minister, to carry out the verification and selection process. Proposals received shall be assessed according to the terms of the fund to determine whether project submissions shall be approved or refused. The Board shall be composed of a Chairperson, Four Members and a Secretary. *Note: The decision of the Aquaculture Fund Board is final and is not subject to appeal. However, it is subject to an administrative review in terms of Article 469A of Chapter 12 of the Laws of Malta.* The Aquaculture Fund Board reserves the right to request for clarifications, rectifications or any relevant supporting documentation throughout the project proposal evaluation process.

Guidelines and Application Form

Title of the Operation:

Non-Technical Summary / Description of the Operation:

Duration of Operation:

In the box below, please indicate the duration of the operation, together with its start and end date.

Start Date:

End Date:

Duration in Months:

Total Project Cost:

To list down the total project cost in Euro: _____

Applicant Details:

Full Name of the Organisation
(if applicable)

Postal Address

Post Code

VAT number
(if any / if applicable)

VO Number
(if applicable)

Project Leader

Position within the
Organisation

ID Card Number

Phone number

E-mail address

Website address
(if any / if applicable)

Beneficiary Status:

Organisations being part of the public administration in accordance with the Public Administration Act;	☐
Students registered with a licensed and accredited further and higher education institution as recognised by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority;	☐
Voluntary Organisations registered in accordance with the Voluntary Organisations Act.	☐

Project Objectives:**Note:** Tick where applicable

<i>Principles</i>	<i>Specific Objective</i>	
1 – Aquaculture development and management should take account of the full range of ecosystem functions and services and should not threaten the sustained delivery of these to society.	1 - Aquaculture policies and strategies that safeguard the environment.	☐
	2 - Reducing the impact that aquaculture operations may have on the environment.	☐
	3 – Ecosystem analysis including fish bio diversities around aquaculture zones.	☐
2 – Aquaculture should improve human well-being and equity for all relevant stakeholders.	1 – Develop aquaculture practices that improve food security and local supply with environmental awareness such as organic aquaculture practices.	☐
	2 – Identify new economic niches that could be developed in the aquaculture industry to maximise job opportunities.	☐
	3 – Explore and develop innovative tourism activities with the realm of fisheries and aquaculture.	☐
3 – Aquaculture should be developed in the context of other sectors, policies and goals	1 – Aquaculture policies and strategies that safeguard the environment.	☐
	2 – Improve technologies within the aquaculture sector that would enhance the protection of the environment.	☐
	3 – Improve the environmental aspects of sectors that are related to aquaculture, especially in the marine and coastal related sectors.	☐

Detailed Project Description:

Note: This section should highlight the challenges that the project is intended to address and also should give an explanation regarding why this operation is needed. Any supporting documentation or research to justify the undertaking of this operation should be mentioned and summarised under this section.

Envisaged Positive Contributions:

One shall declare and write down in the following section the positive contributions envisaged to the aquaculture sector, the environment, scientific research and, or the economy of Malta while it is being implemented and, or once the project is completed, as well as the public benefit to the people of Malta in general.

Output Indicators:

State how the success of this project shall be defined, quantified and subsequently measured, ensuring that the project reached its projected targets.

Financial Details:

Estimated Budget Breakdown (all figures must be quoted in Euro (€) Excluding VAT). In the table below, please provide a breakdown of activities and their respective costs to be executed by the beneficiary as part of this project.

List of Activities	Amount (€)
	€
	€
	€
	€
	€
	€
	€
Estimated Budget Total:	€

If necessary, additional rows may be added.

Documentation that needs to be submitted with this application:

- a) A copy of the ID Card of the Project Leader;
- b) Curriculum Vitae of the Project Leader;
- c) A copy of the VO Certificate (In case of Voluntary Organisations);
- d) A detailed project plan and a Feasibility Study shall be submitted. The detailed Project plan shall clearly describe how the project will be implemented, have a list of resources required, including timelines, costs involved and positive contributions projected. The feasibility study on the other hand shall provide a clear financial indication stipulating how the Funds in question shall be utilised to maximise their value vis a vis output whilst still retain the initiative financially feasible hence covering all costs pertaining to this initiative. Two separate documents shall be provided. Both documents should be signed by the Project Leader;
- e) A signed declaration stating that the beneficiary is not benefitting from any other form of aid to finance this initiative, via any other project or initiative financed both from National or EU Funding;

Note:

- The application form and all supporting documentation shall be presented in spiral bound format.
- The application shall also be submitted scanned in pdf format and saved in a pen drive. The pen drive is non-returnable.

Failure to submit the above documentation shall result in the application being considered as ineligible and hence will be rejected.

Declaration:

By signing at the bottom of this application form you are agreeing/confirming that:

- I declare that I am submitting this Application Form in the capacity of the applicant/claimant.
- I hereby certify that all statements contained in this Application Form are correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that knowingly making a false declaration is tantamount to a criminal offence.
- I understand that should the information provided in relation to this Application Form cease to be correct, or if there are any changes in the information provided in the Application Form, it is my responsibility to advise the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture immediately.
- I confirm that the establishment I will be working with is operating in conformity with all the applicable established local and international legislation/regulations as defined by law.
- I understand that the project shall be implemented in line with the conditions as set out in this application form.
- I understand that if my application is incomplete or unclear, the Aquaculture Fund Board and also the responsible Director, reserve the right to request for more information even if such is not mandatory according to the guidelines of this call.
- I declare that I agree with all Terms and Conditions of this Application Form,
- I understand and agree that the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture may suspend or discontinue all support if there is no compliance.
- I confirm that I have not benefitted from any previous funding related to the project which I am submitting with this application form.
- I also declare that by submitting this application, I am hereby giving my consent for the publication of information related to the organisation and the operation.
- I acknowledge that the application may be subject to regular monitoring/auditing/evaluations and undertake to keep adequate records for this purpose.

Confirmation of Receipt of Project Application

Project Funding through Aquaculture Fund established in terms of S.L. 425.12

Call Year: 2026

Date of Application submission:

Time of Application submission

___ / ___ / 2026

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Confirmation: It is being confirmed that the application was submitted with the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture. The application shall only be considered as accepted once a Letter of Acceptance is issued.

Further Comments (If Applicable):

Name and Surname of the Public Official that received the Application:

Signature: