

NATIONAL RURAL NETWORK MALTA

EDITION 18 APRIL 2020

Further Announcements and Pre-Announcements of Measures

MEASURE 3.1 - 'SUPPORT FOR NEW PARTICIPATION QUALITY SCHEMES'

The final batch of applications under sub-measure 3.1 will be received until June 12, 2020. No applications will be received after this date unless otherwise notified by the Managing Authority.

MEASURE 6.4 - 'SUPPORT FOR INVESTMENTS IN CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NON- AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES'

The final batch of applications under sub-measure 6.4 will be received until June 12, 2020. No applications will be received after this date unless otherwise notified by the Managing Authority.

Covid-19 Situation - Simplification Measures

1. Procedure for the receipt of applications during the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak

Prospective applicants are to note that given the evolving nature of the COVID-19 outbreak, only soft copies sent via email to rdd.mfea@gov.mt will be accepted; no hard copy of applications, whether submitted by mail, by hand or any other means, will be accepted until further notice. Likewise, no pen-drives, cd's etc will be accepted. This applies to submissions at both the Front Offices in Malta and Gozo as well as the Managing Authority Offices in St. Venera. Only applications that successfully reach the working mailbox rdd.mfea@gov.mt by the close of deadline will be considered. It remains the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the

application was successfully delivered.

Prospective applicants are strongly advised to avoid submitting applications on the last days of the batch, in order to ensure that technical hitches of any sort do not hinder the successful receipt of applications.

Applicants are to ensure that applications are sent in one compressed zipped folder, with each documentation clearly labelled.



Rural Development Programme for Malta 2014-2020

Part financed by the European Union
Co-financing Rate:
75% European Union; 25% Government of Malta



*The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas*

2. Obligatory documentation in applications

Any documentation previously listed in Measure guidelines and respective application forms as 'Obligatory' will, unless otherwise notified, be considered as 'Required' documentation. Hence, submitted applications (please refer to (1) above for more information) with missing 'Obligatory documentation' will be deemed admissible. The applicants will be advised further, during the evaluation process, with regards to the submission of any necessary documentation.

Completion of **Section 5** and **Section 6** of the

Application Form remain obligatory when submitting Application Form.

3. Extension in deadline of contracts

For reasons where an extension to the project deadline is required in view of the COVID-19 crisis, please note that there is no need to download the change request template. In such cases,

an email sent to rdd.mfea@gov.mt specifying (i) a date up till when you are requesting an extension and (ii) in what ways the COVID-19 crisis is impacting your project implementation shall suffice. In the same email please state your name (or the name of the organization in case of legal entities) as well as the measure number of the sub-measure your project is benefiting from (e.g. M4.1, M4.2, M4.3, M4.4, M6.4 etc.).

The MA will continue to monitor this evolving situation and will keep all informed, as necessary, in future updates. If you have additional questions please check our website www.eufunds.gov.mt or contact us on rdd.mfea@gov.mt

MEASURE 4.1 - 'SUPPORT FOR INVESTMENTS IN AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS'

The final batch of applications under sub-measure 4.1 will be received until April 30, 2020. No applications will be received after this date unless otherwise notified by the Managing Authority.

MEASURE 4.2 - 'SUPPORT FOR INVESTMENTS IN PROCESSING/MARKETING AND/OR DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS'

The final batch of applications under sub-measure 4.2 will be received until April 30, 2020. No applications will be received after this date unless otherwise notified by the Managing Authority.

MEASURE 4.4 - 'SUPPORT FOR NON-PRODUCTIVE INVESTMENTS'

The final batch of applications under sub-measure 4.4 will be received until April 30, 2020. No applications will be received after this date unless otherwise notified by the Managing Authority.

MEASURE 16 - COOPERATION (INCLUDING M16.2, 16.4 AND 16.6)

The final batch of applications under sub-measures 16.2, 16.4 and 16.6 will be received until April 30, 2020. No applications will be received after this date unless otherwise notified by the Managing Authority.



Good Practices Projects

UPGRADING OF EXISTING SHEEP FARM FACILITIES AND OPENING OF FARM SHOP

PROJECT DURATION - 2018 - 2020

TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET - €70,000

**BENEFICIARY - EMANUEL AGIUS
LOCATION: HAŻ-ŻEBBUĠ, MALTA**

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

This project is about a young farmer taking over his father's enterprise; a sheep farm which produces local cheese. The aim is to pass on local traditions from the older generation whilst incorporating new and innovative ideas from the young generation.

The main aim is to increase the productivity and profitability of the farm

- by investing in the necessary machinery and equipment
- generate renewable energy through the setting up of solar panels
- setting up of farm shop
- being able to carry lab testing and nutritional value of the products
- investing in new marketing methods to increase the profitability of the farm.

The end goal is to increase production by 300% in 3 years.

CONTEXT

The sheep were initially registered under the father's beneficiary; a 59 years old farmer close to retirement. Cheese was produced in a not ideal setup with the cheese being sold from farm gate with limited marketing. The farm lacked an adequate milking parlour, this resulted in excessive time wasted to milk the sheep whilst



the lack of specialised equipment for processing meant the farm produced a low volume of cheese resulting in low yields, less profit and a lack of funds to make the required investments.

This project was crucial in order to provide the farm with the necessary capital to modernise the

business and be able to re-invent itself under new management (young farmer). Without the support of this Measure the young farmer would never have been able to obtain the necessary capital it required in order to become more efficient, profitable and competitive in today's market.

OBJECTIVES

- Generational renewal
- Continued tradition of sheep farming and cheese production
- Increase farm profitability
- Target niche markets which focus on quality products
- Setting up of farm shop so customers can buy directly from the farm
- Showcase their product where customers can watch the product being made at the shop
- Reduce the Carbon emissions footprint of the farm
- Laboratory testing of the product
- Nutritional value testing
- Labelling, design and printing
- Introduce new products to the market (sheep milk ice-cream)





ACTIVITIES

Complete Thus Far

The processing room has now been completed. With the completion of the processing room the farm can now handle a larger quantity of milk and create cheese of higher quality. The new processing room also allows the creation of newer products such as their renowned sheep ice cream. The beneficiary continued to explain how they are the first local business to produce this product in the country.

The farm shop has been partially completed and is now open to the public. The beneficiary is now able to sell directly to the public in a more formal and customer friendly setting. This will attract customers who are interested in buying genuine local products directly from the farmer. Customers will also have the opportunity to watch the cheese being made while they shop.





What's next?

The beneficiary is currently in the process of designing the new milking parlour which will be able to increase the efficiency of milking the sheep. This will make the farm much more efficient since it will reduce milking times and allow for time spent on other activities.

Research is currently being carried out to procure a generator. This is of vital importance since if there is a sudden loss of electricity this would cost the farmer significant amounts of loss of product. Having a generator would guarantee that the products remain fresh and do not spoil. The beneficiary explained that he is currently speaking with an engineer to ensure that he gets the right generator to suit his needs.

The farmer will also soon be installing the Solar voltaic Panels to

reduce his CO2 carbon footprint and has plans to attend training abroad on specialised cheese manufacturing.

Results

- Increased the size of his herd for higher milk production
- Completed the processing room to improve both quality and quantity of cheese produced
- Farmer is now producing new and innovative products such as sheep ice cream
- Farm shop is partially completed
- Increase in the number of customers
- Currently designing milking parlour



Further information

[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/VZWENPF](https://tinyurl.com/vzwenpf)

[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/SBUCUFX](https://tinyurl.com/sbucufx)

MCAST

THROUGH THE RDP'S MEASURE 1.1, THE MALTA COLLEGE OF ARTS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (MCAST) STARTED OFFERING TRAINING TO FARMERS WHO BENEFITED FROM AGRI-ENVIRONMENT-CLIMATE MEASURES (AECM).



Each farmer is being given 20 hours of training- 10 hours of which are common between all farmers whilst the content of the other 10 hours varies depending on the AECM the farmer benefitted from. Thus the farmers are being engaged in a training opportunity to pass on knowledge and competences that would make them better able to use the funds won to strengthen and improve their enterprise.

The 10 hours common between all farmers offer an extensive insight into different farming and business management practices. Cross-compliance are addressed as these constitute essential criteria related to the environment, food safety, animal and plant health, animal welfare and others that farmers are well reminded on how to adhere to. This short course also provides an overview of measures that farmers can implement to develop a high-quality reputation in order to sustain competitiveness and profitability of their business activity.

Farmers who benefited from the AECM on the control of weeds in orchards and vineyards by mechanical, instead of chemical methods are attending a 10-hour course focusing on how herbicide use can be reduced, the various aspects of mechanical de-weeding, the equipment that is generally used and the troubleshooting of said equipment. The use of inter-row cropping as an innovative way

to reduce weed competition is also being discussed.

Farmers who benefited from the AECM related to the maintenance of recommended tree species and integration and maintenance of autochthonous Maltese species are sitting for 10 hours of training covering subjects related to the damage caused by invasive species, soil threats, soil erosion and the incorrect pruning of trees. Soil-related topics are also covered in the 10-hour training being given to farmers who benefited from the AECM on the mitigation of soil erosion, enhancing organic matter and mitigating compaction through the introduction of a soil management plan. This short course also covers practices that enhance organic matter and the major components of a good soil management plan.

A short 10-hour course is also being provided to cover the basic aspects of apiculture, pollination and the environmental importance of pollinators. In this course, being attended by farmers that benefited from the AECM related to the introduction of bee boxes on holdings, numerous other subjects are also covered including the advantages of utilizing the Maltese bee on the apiculture farm, bee product extraction and the potential for organic apiculture.

The environmental implications of Plant Protection Products and the importance of implementing

an Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPMP) are the major topics covered in a course targeting farmers that benefited from the AECM related to the execution of an IPMP in vineyards and orchards. The pest management evaluations, decisions and controls associated with Integrated Pest Management plans are discussed to equip the farmer with knowledge to better understand the environmental importance of his practices and relevant actions.

Finally, for farmers that benefited from the AECM related to the integration and maintenance of the Maltese Black Chicken and the Maltese Ox, a course is being offered that is giving the participants an overview of poultry and oxen production and how the basic requirements of these animals are met on the farm. This is being followed by a general discussion on how to breed these animals to maintain genetic diversity and the opportunity to use these species' unique characteristics to enhance market value.

Delivered by experts in the respective subject matter, these courses are equipping participants with the needed tools to make the best use of the funds they have been awarded. Training and education empower farmers to apply knowledge in the best interest of their enterprise- MCAST is making sure that this is done in the most adequate way possible.

Taking care of our trees

WORKING WITH TREES IS NOT FOR THE UNINITIATED, IT IS A DELICATE PRACTICE WHICH IS ESSENTIAL TO MAINTAINING PROPER TREE HEALTH AND WHEN CARRIES OUT INCORRECTLY OFTEN RESULT IN DAMAGE TO THE TREE ITSELF.

To mitigate malpractice ERA has released a set of guidelines titled 'Guidelines on Works Involving Trees', which are intended to be followed by all those who conduct work on trees.

By means of these guidelines, ERA aims to encourage better practices among enthusiasts, to educate prospective tree specialists, and to raise awareness among the general public on the appropriate handling of trees.

These guidelines, which are accompanied by clear images indicating how procedures such as pruning and transplanting should be done, are presented in the form of a downloadable booklet. The methods suggested by ERA

are available in both Maltese and English, and lead to interventions that safeguard trees and the environment holistically.

In addition to this, ERA has established the minimum requirements needed in order to be licenced as a person who can handle trees. A Licenced Tree Specialist Course is also currently being carried out by MCAST, and those handling trees must have completed this course or an equivalent holding the necessary qualifications. ERA is promoting this course to ensure widespread good practice and will be refunding the costs of the course to a good number of participants who successfully obtain a licence.

One of the most common practices or works on trees is pruning; the practice of cutting away branches, offshoots and suckers (thin branches) from a tree. Pruning happens for three primary reasons: people's safety, the tree's health and aesthetics. Branches may be at risk of falling



Pistacia lentiscus Habit



Prunus dulcis Habit

Crataegus monogyna Fruits



and potentially causing injury. Tree health is extremely important, especially when parts of the tree have become infested or suffer from disease. Meanwhile, aesthetics are imperative in order to have properly-shaped canopies that promote suitable microclimates.

Sadly, pruning is, at times, carried out incorrectly, resulting in damage that can even be lifelong. Excessive pruning and bad timing are primary examples of bad practices when it comes to this. Trees that pose a danger to the public are pruned after the person conducting works gains approval by ERA, which can be done through



Crataegus monogyna Fruits



Cercis siliquastrum Fruit



Laurus nobilis Flowers



Quercus ilex Fruit



Tetraclinis articulata Habit



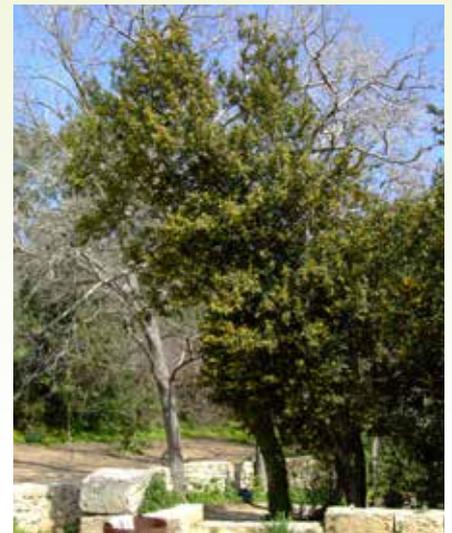
Prunus persica Flowers



Punica granatum Habit



Quercus ilex Habit



Laurus nobilis Habit

a specific system set in place for situations that can be considered as an 'emergency'. Once pruning is completed, those working on trees must inspect the tree regularly for a year, removing any water shoots which sprout from the stub as necessary.

Transplanting, meanwhile, is the process in which tree experts move a tree from one location and replant it in another. While transplanting is possible, it might not be advisable, as in certain cases some types of trees are unlikely to survive

the process. The rate of success for transplantations depends on various factors including the age of the tree, health status and site-specific constraints. Once a tree is transplanted, aftercare is vital.

A transplanted tree must be regularly monitored for growth, appropriately watered and fertilised until it is clear that transplanting has been successful. This must be carried on for three years. When transplanting is unsuccessful, or a transplanted tree dies, the permit holder must compensate

by planting a number of new trees, calculated according to a specific formula. Compensatory planting is compulsory for all protected trees that are transplanted. ERA may also request compensatory planting for non-protected trees when it feels this is necessary.

A DIGITAL VERSION OF ERA'S 'GUIDELINES ON WORKS INVOLVING TREES' MAY BE FOUND AT ERA.ORG.MT UNDER THE 'NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES' SECTION.

NRN

NATIONAL RURAL NETWORK COMMITTEE (NRNC) MEETING

HELD ON THE 22ND NOVEMBER 2019

THE NATIONAL RURAL NETWORK MALTA (NRNM) IS A NETWORK FORMED FOR THE PURPOSE OF CREATING A PLATFORM THROUGH WHICH, VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS OPERATING IN RURAL AREAS AND IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR CAN BECOME INVOLVED IN THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR MALTA 2014-2020.

The National Rural Network Committee (NRNC) Meeting was held on the 22nd November 2019. The (NRNC) which is created as part of the NRNM meets to discuss issues pertaining to the RDP. Currently, the NRNC consists of 20 members who come from various sectors including representatives from the agricultural sector, relevant Government Departments and authorities. Representatives for Social inclusion, gender equality and non-discrimination, the University of Malta and the 3 Local Action Groups (LAGS) which are part of the LEADER are also part of the NRNC.

The meeting commenced with a brief introduction by the Chair Person of the NRNC. The MA gave a presentation on the current state of play of all measures of the RDP, open measures and remaining budgets. The Network Support Unit (NSU) then went through the workplan for the upcoming 2 years of the NRNM. The role of the NSU is that of a secretariat of the NRNM; it provides the technical support required for the running of the NRNM and all related activities.

The working plan for 2020-2021 introduced the two main thematic areas being Communication and promotion of the programme and simplification.

The Managing Authority along with the assistance of the NRN will be embarking on a pilot project to completely digitalise the whole application process of one of the Measures of the RDP. This will provide an increase in simplification and improved audit trails since everything would be recorded online.

The NRNM with collaboration of the Managing Authority carries out a wide variety of events including but not limited to:

- Publishing of a Newsletter on a regular basis
- Assist in the Annual event every year which is carried out by the MA
- Information Sessions on specific Measures of the RDP
- Disseminate leaflets and magazines published by the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) and The Agricultural European Innovation Partnership (EIP-AGRI) mostly in soft copy but also in printed version where available
- Procurement of other publishing material

In the upcoming two years the NRN aims to further increase the public awareness as well as provide more information to potential beneficiaries of the programme by ensuring the continuation of the

events which are currently being carried out on a yearly basis. The NRN has also plans for a series of short videos to show case best project examples from RDP Funded projects. The end of the session was followed by a standing networking lunch where the participants had further networking opportunities.

The NSU can be contacted via telephone on: 22001137 or email: Bradley.agius@gov.mt. More information on the NRNM can be found on <https://eufunds.gov.mt/en/EU%20Funds%20Programmes/European%20Agricultural%20Fund/Pages/National-Rural-Network-2014-2020.aspx>

One can also subscribe for more information on the RDP 2014-2020 and the NRNM on the following link <http://www.eufundsmalta.gov.mt/newsletter/subscribe>

