

# Citizens' Summary for Implementation Year 2019 - Rural Development Programme 2014-2020

## Introduction

Malta's Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020 covers the entire territory of the Maltese Islands. It was formally adopted by the European Commission on 24 November 2015, outlining Malta's priorities for the Programme. The Programme has a budget of € 129 million of public money that is available for the 7-year period 2014-2020 (€ 97 million from the EU budget (EAFRD) and € 32 million of national co-funding).

2019 was characterised by the launch of various measures, raising awareness with the various stakeholders to improve uptake, the implementation of a number of projects as well as the introduction of necessary programme modifications which were successfully adopted by the European Commission on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020. In the main, these modifications were related to streamlining the RDP measures, clarification of the technical text such as that linked to prospective beneficiaries, and the introduction of SCOs under M2.1 aimed at supporting farmers to benefit from advisory services, amongst others. The changes are described in detail under Section 1.1 of the revised RDP adopted in January 2020 – Version 5.2.

The Managing Authority within the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and the Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency within the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Right continued accepting applications and payment claims, respectively, in relation to sub-measures launched in 2019 and previous years.

## Progress Achieved

### *Measures Launched*

In 2019, the Managing Authority launched the following sub-measures:

Sub-Measure	Objective	Closing Date
1.1	Support for vocational training and skills acquisition actions.	January 2019
2.1	Support to help benefitting from the use of advisory services.	July 2019
3.1	Support for new participation in quality schemes.	February, June & October 2019
4.1	Support for investment in agricultural holdings.	February, June & October 2019

4.2	Support for investment in infrastructural related to development, modernisation or adaption of agricultural forestry.	February & July 2020
4.4	Support for non-productive investments linked to the achievement of agri-environment-climate objectives.	April, July, October & November 2019
6.1	Business start-up aid for young farmers.	March 2019
6.4	Support for investment in creation and development of non-agricultural activities.	September & October 2019
10.2	Support for conservation and sustainable use and development of genetic resources in agriculture.	July & September 2019
16.2	Support for pilot projects and for the development of new products, practices, processes and technologies.	July & November 2019
16.4	Support for horizontal and vertical co-operation among supply chain actors for the establishment and development of short supply chains and local markets and for promotion activities in a local context relating to the development of short supply chains and local markets.	July & November 2019
16.6	Support for cooperation among supply chain actors for sustainable provisions of biomass and use in food and energy production and industrial processes.	July & November 2019
19.2	Implementation of operations under the CLLD Strategy	Numerous calls were launched by the different LAGs throughout 2019

### ***Received Applications***

Following the launch of the sub-measures listed above the Managing Authority continued receiving applications through an open rolling system with set cut-off dates. Through this procedure, measures remain open unless otherwise notified by the MA. This procedure applies to investment projects. Land-based measures were processed, as usual, through the payment claims submitted on an annual basis.

Throughout 2019, in total, the MA received applications amounting to circa €38 million, distributed as follows:

<b>Sub-Measure (SM)</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Amount requested (€)</b>	<b>% of total SM Budget</b>
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<b>1.1</b>	Support for vocational training and skills acquisition actions.	€285,000	8%
<b>3.1</b>	Support for new participation in quality schemes.	€684,238	96%
<b>4.1</b>	Support for investment in agricultural holdings.	€10,337,154.47	55%
<b>4.2</b>	Support for investment in infrastructural related to development, modernisation or adaption of agricultural forestry.	€2,374,269	51%
<b>4.4</b>	Support for non-productive investments linked to the achievement of agri-environment-climate objectives.	13,998,894	62%
<b>6.1</b>	Business start-up aid for young farmers.	2,800,000	65%
<b>6.4</b>	Support for investment in creation and development of non-agricultural activities.	1,075,433	33%
<b>10.2</b>	Support for conservation and sustainable use and development of genetic resources in agriculture.	€868,632	87%
<b>16.2</b>	Support for pilot projects and for the development of new products, practices, processes and technologies.	€5,925,049.29	198%

### ***Committed and Realised Amounts***

Meanwhile, the committed and realised expenditure during 2019 was distributed as follows:

<b>Priority/ Focus Area</b>	<b>Priority Description</b>	<b>Committed Expenditure 2019</b>	<b>Realised Expenditure 2019</b>
P1/FA1A	Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas	285,000.00	0
P2/FA2A	Enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and the sustainable management of forests	1,026,115.62	2,413,653.90
P2/FA2B		4,200,000.00	2,184,000.00
P3/FA3A	Promoting food chain organisations, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture	5,253,278	473,980.93
P4/FA4A	Restoring, preserving and enhancing eco-systems related to agriculture and forestry	7,899,309.83	5,389,120.49
P4/FA4B			
P4/FA4C			

P5/FA5A	Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, good and forestry	6,893,842.81	9,456,369.77
P5/FA5C		9,147.25	0
P5/FA5D		14,316.22	225.00
P5/FA5E		1,381,602.37	1,495,792.22
P6/FA6B	Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas	635,179.71	269,671.18
P6/FA6C		0	269,671.18

The above commitments contribute towards a Programme budget commitment rate of more than 70% as at end 2019 (and 93% as at end May 2020).

### ***Progress Across the Measures***

The implementation of the RDP measures gathered momentum through the launch of most measures, with 29 out of the 34 RDP measures having been launched to date and with some being considered for possible revisions in the RDP in the near future. To ensure an efficient implementation of the RDP and to ensure that the objectives of the programme are reached the MA undertakes continuous monitoring and holds regular bilateral meetings with beneficiaries as well as with LAG's in ensuring that project and strategy targets are met.

Progress has been reached for M1.1 with the commitment of €285,000 to the MCAST project directed towards the delivery of courses to farmers in relation to AECMs. Measure 4, through its sub-measures 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 investing in agricultural holdings and rural areas through productive and non-productive investments, registered good progress. For M4.1 and M4.2, the MA carried on receiving projects under the open rolling call system to support projects. For M4.1, commitments were registered for FA2A and FA5A, whilst for M4.2 the contribution is earmarked towards FA3A. M4.3, which supports investment projects in relation to the treatment of sewage effluent for agricultural land and the upgrading of roads, also progressed in terms of implementation and an additional commitment of €6.5 million was registered. M4.4, supporting projects such as investment in the construction and upgrading of rubble walls, also registered a progress with 42 beneficiaries supported in 2019. Measure 6.1, through a commitment of €2.4 million supported 35 young farmers in implementing their business plan in 2019. The land-based measures, covering agri-environment measures, organic farming and areas facing natural constraints continued with a steady implementation phase.

Throughout 2019, considerable progress was also registered in the implementation of Local Development Strategies by the three Local Action Groups supported under the RDP under M19.

### **Challenges**

#### ***Implementation Delays***

The good economic climate with a booming economy experienced in 2019 had a direct impact on the implementation of the programme as it has become extremely difficult to find contractors to implement small scale projects. With the rise in building projects, the contractors were having numerous projects lined up and were therefore not immediately available to start work. As a result, contractors were putting their priorities on large scale projects rather than small ones impacting directly on the delayed implementation of operations funded under the RDP since the majority of these are of a small nature.

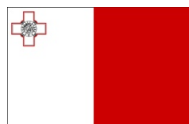
### ***Take up***

Despite the launch of most of the calls, for some measures no applications were received. In this regard, the MA is currently considering the possible revision of a number of sub measures in the RDP in the near future.

### **Communication**

As in previous years, the MA also held several information sessions concerning different RDP measures that were launched or were in the process of being launched throughout the year. These sessions, held both in Malta and Gozo, are carried out to ensure awareness amongst potential applicants and are attended by numerous farmers, farmers' representatives, land managers, and other private individuals and entities. During 2019, information leaflets concerning various sub measures were developed and disseminated amongst farmers at various events. To widen the dissemination of the information, the leaflets were also distributed to various Local Councils and other public entities across Malta and Gozo. The MA also sent out SMSs to potential applicants upon launching the sub measures in order to inform these of latest developments and opportunities.

Acting as a hub for all RDP related information and news, the EU funds website [www.eufundsmalta.gov.mt](http://www.eufundsmalta.gov.mt) was used as the main communication channel between the Managing Authority and its stakeholders, informing them of the latest pre-announcements, calls, newsletters, events, circulars, guidance notes and other useful resources. These publications, information sessions and website all contributed towards the MA's efforts of further increasing awareness and reaching out to stakeholders via different channels of communication in order to reach the NRN's aims/functions.



#### **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***