



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

Annual implementation report

Malta - Rural Development Programme (National)

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1. KEY INFORMATION ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME AND ITS PRIORITIES

1.a) Financial Data

See annexed documents

1.b) Common and programme-specific indicators and quantified target values

1.b1) Overview table

Focus Area 1A						
Target indicator name	Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
T1: percentage of expenditure under Articles 14, 15 and 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 in relation to the total expenditure for the RDP (focus area 1A)	2014-2019					8.19
	2014-2018					
	2014-2017					
	2014-2016					
	2014-2015					

Focus Area 1B						
Target indicator name	Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
T2: Total number of cooperation operations supported under the cooperation measure (Article 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013) (groups, networks/clusters, pilot projects...) (focus area 1B)	2014-2019					4.00
	2014-2018					
	2014-2017					
	2014-2016					
	2014-2015					

Focus Area 1C						
Target indicator name	Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
T3: Total number of participants trained under Article 14 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 (focus area 1C)	2014-2019					7,200.00
	2014-2018					
	2014-2017					
	2014-2016					
	2014-2015					

Focus Area 2A							
Target indicator name		Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
T4: percentage of agricultural holdings with RDP support for investments in restructuring or modernisation (focus area 2A)		2014-2019	0.52	56.17	0.52	56.17	0.93
		2014-2018	0.44	47.53	0.38	41.05	
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
Measure	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023
M02	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	200,000.00
M04	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	23,878,582.00	113.22	11,530,324.05	54.67	21,090,010.00
M06	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,925,000.00
Total	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	23,878,582.00	102.86	11,530,324.05	49.67	23,215,010.00

Focus Area 2B							
Target indicator name		Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
T5: percentage of agricultural holdings with RDP supported business development plan/investments for young farmers (focus area 2B)		2014-2019	0.48	100.24	0.48	100.24	0.48
		2014-2018	0.15	31.33	0.15	31.33	
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
Measure	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023
M02	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	200,000.00
M04	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	759,597.00
M06	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	4,200,000.00	97.67	3,304,000.00	76.84	4,300,000.00
Total	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	4,200,000.00	79.85	3,304,000.00	62.82	5,259,597.00

Focus Area 3A							
Target indicator name		Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
T6: percentage of agricultural holdings receiving support for participating in quality schemes, local markets and short supply circuits, and producer groups/organisations (focus area 3A)		2014-2019					1.56
		2014-2018					
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
Nr of operations supported under M4.2 contributing to FA3A (M4.2) (operations)		2014-2019			15.00	60.00	25.00
		2014-2018					
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
Measure	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023
M03	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,100,000.00
M04	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	5,641,044.48	75.68	473,980.93	6.36	7,453,538.00
M16	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	625,000.00
Total	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	5,641,044.48	61.46	473,980.93	5.16	9,178,538.00

Priority P4							
Target indicator name		Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
T12: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts to improve soil management and/or prevent soil erosion (focus area 4C)		2014-2019			7.46	250.42	2.98
		2014-2018			5.45	182.94	
		2014-2017			2.00	67.14	
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
T10: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts to improve water management (focus area 4B)		2014-2019			4.57	153.41	2.98
		2014-2018			4.12	138.30	
		2014-2017			2.00	67.14	
		2014-2016			1.32	44.31	
		2014-2015					
T9: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts supporting biodiversity and/or landscapes (focus area 4A)		2014-2019			15.50	243.42	6.37
		2014-2018			13.48	211.69	
		2014-2017			9.62	151.08	
		2014-2016			9.78	153.59	
		2014-2015					
Measure	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023
M01	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	285,000.00	16.19	0.00	0.00	1,760,000.00
M02	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,050,000.00
M04	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	17,957,426.87	72.09	7,867,289.57	31.58	24,908,690.00
M08	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,750,000.00
M10	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	3,813,206.49	55.93	2,303,992.61	33.79	6,817,953.00
M11	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	10,279.83	5.14	2,357.72	1.18	200,000.00
M13	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	11,824,155.82	98.53	8,033,413.70	66.95	12,000,000.00
M16	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,750,000.00
Total	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	33,890,069.01	67.46	18,207,053.60	36.24	50,236,643.00

Focus Area 5A							
Target indicator name		Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
T14: percentage of irrigated land switching to more efficient irrigation system (focus area 5A)		2014-2019			0.73	13.41	5.44
		2014-2018					
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
Measure	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023
M01	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	1,760,000.00
M02	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	350,000.00
M04	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	17,855,178.81	97.31	14,972,229.79	81.60	18,348,157.00
M16	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	250,000.00
Total	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	17,855,178.81	86.22	14,972,229.79	72.30	20,708,157.00

Focus Area 5B							
Target indicator name		Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
T15: Total investment for energy efficiency (€) (focus area 5B)		2014-2019					759,597.00
		2014-2018					
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
Measure	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023
M01	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	440,000.00
M02	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	350,000.00
M04	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	379,798.00
Total	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,169,798.00

Focus Area 5C							
Target indicator name		Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
T16: Total investment in renewable energy production (€) (focus area 5C)		2014-2019	1.00	0.00			3,038,387.00
		2014-2018					
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
Measure	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023
M04	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	9,147.25	0.60	0.00	0.00	1,519,194.00
M16	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	600,000.00
Total	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	9,147.25	0.43	0.00	0.00	2,119,194.00

Focus Area 5D							
Target indicator name		Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
T17: percentage of LU concerned by investments in live-stock management in view of reducing GHG and/or ammonia emissions (focus area 5D)		2014-2019					16.09
		2014-2018					
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
Measure	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023
M01	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	220,000.00
M02	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	350,000.00
M04	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	14,316.22	1.37	225.00	0.02	1,044,446.00
Total	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	14,316.22	0.89	225.00	0.01	1,614,446.00

Focus Area 5E							
Target indicator name		Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
T19: percentage of agricultural and forest land under management contracts contributing to carbon sequestration and conservation (focus area 5E)		2014-2019			4.00	75.30	5.31
		2014-2018			2.06	38.78	
		2014-2017			0.31	5.84	
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
Measure	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023
M08	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,750,000.00
M10	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	1,676,007.83	920.65	938,599.60	515.58	182,047.00
Total	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	1,676,007.83	86.75	938,599.60	48.58	1,932,047.00

Focus Area 6A							
Target indicator name		Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
T20: Jobs created in supported projects (focus area 6A)		2014-2019					35.00
		2014-2018					
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
Measure	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023
M06	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,925,000.00
M16	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	250,000.00
Total	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,175,000.00

Focus Area 6B							
Target indicator name		Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
T23: Jobs created in supported projects (Leader) (focus area 6B)		2014-2019					10.00
		2014-2018					
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
T22: percentage of rural population benefiting from improved services/infrastructures (focus area 6B)		2014-2019					0.00
		2014-2018					
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
T21: percentage of rural population covered by local development strategies (focus area 6B)		2014-2019			105.75	105.79	99.97
		2014-2018			105.75	105.79	
		2014-2017			99.97	100.00	
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
Measure	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023
M16	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	250,000.00
M19	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	6,816,179.71	104.86	1,006,200.72	15.48	6,500,000.00
Total	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	6,816,179.71	100.98	1,006,200.72	14.91	6,750,000.00

Focus Area 6C							
Target indicator name		Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
T24: percentage of rural population benefiting from new or improved services/infrastructures (ICT) (focus area 6C)		2014-2019					0.00
		2014-2018					
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
Percentage of total public expenditure (M1.1 to M1.3) allocated for ICT actions/interventions (%)		2014-2019					20.00
		2014-2018					
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
Measure	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023
M01	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	220,000.00
Total	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	220,000.00

1.c) Key information on RDP implementation based on data from a) and b) by Focus Area

Priority 1 - Focus Area 1A

List of measures

The list of measures contributing towards Focus Area 1A are:

- M01 – Knowledge transfer and information actions
- M02 – Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services
- M16 – Co-operation

Progress achieved

Measure 1: Knowledge transfer and information actions

The sub-measures under M01 all contribute towards FA1A. These are

- M1.1- support for vocational training and skills acquisition actions;
- M1.2 - support for demonstration activities and information actions; and
- M1.3 - support for short-term and forest management exchange as well as farm and forest visits

In 2019 no sub-measures under M01 were launched, with M1.2 expected to be launched in Q3 2020 (ongoing Covid-19 situation has delayed this launch). During 2019, for the call that was launched for M1.1 in 2018 and which closed in January 2019, the evaluation process was undertaken leading to the award of one project in 2019.

In fact, only one application was submitted by MCAST, which was awarded in November 2019 for the committed value of €285,000 (amount linked to FA4A as per RDP Budget). MCAST is the main further and higher Vocational Education Institution in Malta covering also agriculture and animal sciences related vocational education. The project focusing to the provision of bespoke training to individuals operating in rural areas, ties in with the provision of training in farming and business management practices and specific training linked to the AECMs of the RDP. The project contributes directly towards FA1A and FA1C and concurrently it also contributes towards P4. This course requires participants to follow courses in line with their respective AECM and is complemented by the obligatory participation in a course on business management practices. As a result of this investment, persons working in the agricultural sector will be equipped with apt knowledge and skills in relation to the business they are running as well as to their respective AECM. Through this course learners are keeping up with the latest innovative technologies and techniques as well as acquire competences and skills to manage better and/or diversify the activities being carried out on the farm, with the aim to minimise risks and equip the farm to become more resilient to unpredicted events. For sustainable development purposes, learning is also extended to environmental implications from farming activities.

The implementation of the courses started in December 2019, which had to eventually be halted due to the COVID-19 realities. Through this project, the estimated target of participants is set at 3,000 covering all the envisaged seven courses. The project is set to last circa 30 months in all. This project is expected

to contribute towards addressing the RDP needs related to waste, water, and energy; landscape and environment; and wider rural economy and the quality of life. With implementation starting in December 2019, no expenditure was realised in 2019.

The MA also plans to launch an additional call under M1.1 in Q3 2020 to cover training in general related to the RDP needs which is not necessarily limited to the AECMs.

The MA is currently considering the possible revision of sub measure 1.3 in the RDP in the near future. The Managing Authority deems that the nature of the interventions emanating from this measure pose additional challenges beyond the MA's control.

Measure 2: Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services

The applicable measure contributing towards FA1A is:

- M2.2 - support for the setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services as well as forestry advisory services.

The MA is currently considering the possible revision of sub measure 2.2 in the RDP in the near future.

Measure 16: Co-operation (art 35)

The applicable sub measures contributing towards FA1A are:

- M16.2 - support for pilot projects, and for the development of new products, practices, processes and technologies; and
- M16.4 - support for horizontal and vertical cooperation among supply chain actors for the establishment and development of short supply chains and local markets, and for the promotion activities in a local context relating to the development of short-supply chains and local markets.

In 2019, the MA issued 3 calls under M16.2 and 3 calls under M16.4, in May, July and November 2019, with the latter closing in January 2020. For M16.2, projects were only received under the first call and second call (two and three applications respectively), whereas none were received for the third call. In the case of M16.4 no applications were received in any of the calls. For M16.2, the total requested budget for the two call is estimated at circa €5.9 million. During 2019, the project selection process was still under review, thereby no projects were approved and no funds were committed for the year under review. In 2020, one project was awarded under M16.2.

Target Indicator

As at end of 2019, no realised expenditure was recorded under any of these measures. Indeed, the result indicator (T1) on the % of expenditure under Articles 14, 15 and 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 in relation to the total expenditure for the RDP (Focus Area 1A) was at end of 2019 nil.

Priority 1 - Focus Area 1B

List of measures

The measure contributing towards Focus Area 1B is:

- M16 – Co-operation (art 35)

Progress achieved

Measure 16: Co-operation (art 35)

The relevant sub-measures under this FA1B are:

- M16.2 - support for pilot projects, and for the development of new products, practices, processes and technologies; and
- M16.6 - support for cooperation among supply chain actors for sustainable provision of biomass for use in food and energy production and industrial processes.

During 2019, 3 calls were issued for both sub-measures, in May, July and November of 2019, with the latter closing in January 2020. Over the 3 batches launched under M16.2, the MA received five applications of which none were approved by end of year 2019 as the project selection process was still underway. In 2020, one project was awarded under M16.2. No applications were submitted under M16.6.

As a result of the above, no funds were committed under either sub-measure in 2019. Further progress was registered in 2020, with the launch of other call for applications for both M16.2 and M16.6. The calls closed at the end of April 2020 and the project selection process is currently underway.

Target Indicators

Given that as at the end of 2019, none of the measures contributing towards this FA have been implemented, there is no progress to register in the output indicators of this Focus Area. The result indicator (T2) on the Total number of co-operation operations supported under the cooperation measure (Art. 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013) (groups, networks/clusters, pilot projects...) is also nil.

Priority 1 – Focus Area 1C

List of measures

The measures contributing towards Focus Area 1C are:

- M01 – Knowledge transfer and information actions
- M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services

- M16 – Co-operation

Progress achieved

Measure 1 - Knowledge transfer and information actions

The three sub-measures under M01 contributing towards FA1C, these are:

- M1.1 - support for vocational training and skills acquisition actions;
- M1.2 - support for demonstration activities and information actions; and
- M1.3 - support for short-term and forest management exchange as well as farm and forest visits

In 2019 no sub-measures under M01 were launched, with M1.2 expected to be launched in Q3 2020 (ongoing Covid-19 situation has delayed this launch). During 2019, for the call that was launched for M1.1 in 2018 and which closed in January 2019, the evaluation process was undertaken leading to the award of one project in 2019.

In fact, only one application was submitted by MCAST, which was awarded in November 2019 for the committed value of €285,000 (amount linked to FA4A as per RDP Budget). MCAST is the main further and higher Vocational Education Institution in Malta covering also agriculture and animal sciences related vocational education. The project focusing to the provision of bespoke training to individuals operating in rural areas, ties in with the provision of training in farming and business management practices and specific training linked to the AECMs of the RDP. The project contributes directly towards FA1A and FA1C and concurrently it also contributes towards P4. This course requires participants to follow courses in line with their respective AECM and is complemented by the obligatory participation in a course on business management practices. As a result of this investment, persons working in the agricultural sector will be equipped with apt knowledge and skills in relation to the business they are running as well as to their respective AECM. Through this course learners are keeping up with the latest innovative technologies and techniques as well as acquire competences and skills to manage better and/or diversify the activities being carried out on the farm, with the aim to minimise risks and equip the farm to become more resilient to unpredicted events. For sustainable development purposes, learning is also extended to environmental implications from farming activities.

The implementation of the courses started in December 2019, which had to eventually be halted due to the COVID-19 realities. Through this project, the estimated target of participants is set at 3,000 covering all the envisaged seven courses. The project is set to last circa 30 months in all. This project is expected to contribute towards addressing the RDP needs related to waste, water, and energy; landscape and environment; and wider rural economy and the quality of life. With implementation starting in December 2019, no expenditure was realised in 2019.

The MA also plans to launch an additional call under M1.1 in Q3 2020 to cover training in general related to the RDP needs which is not necessarily limited to the AECMs.

The MA is currently considering the possible revision of sub measure 1.3 in the RDP in the near future. The Managing Authority deems that the nature of the interventions emanating from this measure

pose additional challenges beyond the MA's control.

Measure 2 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services

The two sub-measures under M02 contributing towards FA1C are:

- M2.1 - support to help benefiting from the use of advisory services; and
- M2.3 - support for training of advisors

Following the strategic modifications that have taken place in December 2018, a call for M2.1 was launched on 15 May 2019 closing on the 18 July 2019 for which a budget of €1.9m was allocated. For this call no applications were submitted therefore no funds were committed in 2019 under M2.1.

The MA plans on issuing a further call under M2.1 in Q3 of 2020, as the original plan to launch the call in Q1 was derailed due to COVID-19 pandemic. Once launched, the call will operate on an open rolling call so that anyone registered as an Advisory Service with the Farm Advisory Service Registration Board (FASRB) within the Agricultural and Rural Payments Agency can apply. A new Legal Notice for Farm Advisory Services, which process was initiated in 2018, was enacted in 2019. The new Legal Notice is L.N.99 of 2019. As a result of the above, no progress was registered in terms of committed expenditure and realised outputs.

The MA is currently considering the possible revision of sub measure 2.3 in the RDP in the near future. MA's consideration regarding the possible revision of sub measure 2.3 in the RDP in the near future is to direct resources towards M2.1 in order to ensure more value for money from interventions supported under M2. In this regard, the aim is to channel the funds towards the ultimate users of the advisory services (i.e. farmers).

Measure 16- Co-operation

The relevant sub-measure contributing towards FA1C is:

- M16.2 - Support for pilot projects, and for the development of new products, practices, processes and technologies

In 2019 the MA launched 3 calls under sub-measure 16.2, for each of which a budget of €3m contributing towards different Focus Areas was allocated for the call. These calls were launched in May, July and November of 2019, with the latter call closing in 2020. In total, five applications were received under these 3 calls, however, none of the submitted applications were awarded by end of year 2019 as the project selection process was still underway. In 2020, one project was awarded under M16.2. Further progress was registered with the launch of a call for applications for M16.2 in 2020. The calls closed at the end of April 2020 and the project selection process is currently underway.

As a result of the above, no progress was registered in terms of committed expenditure and realised outputs from M16.2 in 2019.

Target Indicators

As at end of 2019, no realised expenditure was recorded under these measures. Progress under result indicator T3 Total number of participants trained under Art. 14 was at end of 2019 nil. Further progress is

expected in 2020 as courses undertaken through M1.1 will be completed throughout the year.

Priority 2 - Focus Area 2A

List of measures

The list of measures contributing towards Focus Area 2A are:

- M02 – Advisory Services, farm management and farm relief
- M04 – Investment in physical assets
- M06 – Farm and business development

Progress achieved

Measure 2: Advisory Services, farm management and farm relief

The relevant sub-measure under this FA is:

- M2.1 - Support to help benefitting from the use of advisory services

Following the strategic modifications taken place in December 2018, a call for M2.1 was launched on 15 May 2019 closing on the 18 July 2019 for which a budget of €1.9m was allocated. For this call, no applications were submitted therefore no funds were committed in 2019 under M2.1.

The MA plans on issuing a further call under M2.1 in Q3 of 2020, as the original plan to launch the call in Q1 was derailed due to COVID-19 pandemic. Once launched, the call will operate on an open rolling call so that anyone registered as an Advisory Service with the Farm Advisory Service Registration Board (FASRB) within the Agricultural and Rural Payments Agency can apply. A new Legal Notice for Farm Advisory Services, which process was initiated in 2018, was enacted in 2019. The new Legal Notice is L.N.99 of 2019.

As a result of the above, no progress was registered in terms of committed expenditure and realised outputs.

Measure 4: Investment in Physical Assets

The applicable M4 sub-measures relating to FA2A are:

- M4.1 - Support for investment in agricultural holdings
- M4.3 - Support for investment in infrastructure related to development, modernisation, or adaptation of agriculture and forestry

Under Measure 4.1, during 2019, there were two calls launched, on the 13 February and 5 June 2019, which closed on the 4 June and 1 October 2019 respectively. 23 applications were received under these calls and following evaluation of these submissions 14 applicants were awarded funding.

During 2019, M4.1 was managed on an open rolling call basis with three cut off dates set for February, June and October 2019. The open rolling call system has been extended till 24 July 2020 as

the methodology has proved to facilitate and smoothen the application process for the farmers, albeit at a significant administrative effort.

23 applications were received under these calls and, following evaluation of these submissions 15 applicants were awarded funding. 10 of these applications were related to FA2A and 5 related to FA5A, amounting to a committed expenditure of circa €1.1 million towards FA2A and to circa €400,000 towards FA5A, with no project having their main expenditure contributing towards P4. Realised expenditure contributing towards this FA amounted to circa Euro 1.4 million in 2019. Approved interventions covered a number of investments including improved agricultural holdings, such as structural improvements, modernisation of equipment, extensions as well as the adoption of innovative solutions

The aim of this Measure is to support investment in cost-effective and environmentally efficient systems and equipment in relation to soil management, water capture and use, renewable energy, waste management, and improved efficiency of fertiliser and pesticide use and control. Support for investments in holdings is also intended to target improved productivity on holdings or within specific sectors, as long as the adoption of these techniques and farming systems do not cause environmental damage. The focus of the investment is directed towards livestock farming and the horticultural sector. The maximum value of grant support provided under this Measure is set at €150,000 , by part-financing of eligible costs at 50%.

The call for M4.1 supports projects not only under 2A but also under other Focus Areas, including 2B, 3A, 4B, 4C, 5A, 5B and 5C.

During 2019, no new calls were launched under M4.3 as the Measure is currently over committed. This measure focuses on providing support for investment in infrastructure related to development, modernisation, or adaptation of agriculture with the aim to enhance farm viability and competitiveness. The co-financing rate for this measure is set at 90%.

During 2019, the projects awarded progressed considerably with realised expenditure amounting to circa €1 million, leading to a cumulative total realised expenditure of circa €10.2 million. The Local Councils as well as Infrastructure Malta have proceeded in improving accessibility to farms.

The MA is currently considering a programme modification to transfer additional funds to this measure, from under-performing ones.

Overall, the total cumulative realised output for M4.1 and M4.3 contributing towards FA2A amounted to circa €11.5 million by the end of 2019, leading to a total investment amount of circa €14 million. Number of operations supported covering both measures amounted to 94.

Measure 6 – Farm and business development

The relevant sub-measure under this Focus Area is:

- M6.4 - Support for investment in creation and development of non-agricultural activities

Following the pre-launch of M6.4 in August 2018, two calls were opened during 2019, closing on the 3 September and 15 October respectively. For the call which closed on 3 September 2019, 7 applications

were submitted from which 4 were awarded funding. Committed amounts under this call totalled €484,606.36 for which a Grant Agreement was signed in 2020.

Whilst the second call which closed on the 15 October 2019 received no application submissions. The MA will be issuing 3 further calls in 2020 for M6.4 closing in January, April and June.

Target Indicator

Progress has been achieved in terms of the result target indicator on the % of agriculture holdings with RDP support for investment in restructuring or modernisation (R1/T4). The value as at end of 2019 amounted to 0.52% of holdings reflecting 65 holdings. This is to be compared to a target value of 116 holdings to be attained by 2023.

Priority 2 – Focus Area 2B

List of measures

The list of measures contributing towards Focus Area 2B are:

- M02 – Advisory Services, farm management and farm relief
- M04 – Investment in physical assets
- M06 – Farm and business development

Progress achieved

Measure 2: Advisory Services, farm management and farm relief

The relevant sub-measure under this FA is:

- M2.2 - Support for the setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services as well as forestry advisory services

The MA is currently considering the possible revision of sub measure 2.2 in the RDP in the near future.

Measure 4: Investment in Physical Assets

The relevant sub-measure under this FA is:

- M4.1 - Support for investment in agricultural holdings

The considerable progress registered under M4.1 referred to under FA2A does not contribute towards FA2B. When launched, the call for proposals covered the whole measure across all the applicable Focus Areas, however there were no interventions awarded that had their primary action contributing towards FA2B. The MA had proceeded with this approach as a result of the small sized farms, thereby lending themselves to the submission of small projects as well as

the limited capacity to handle multiple applications with different FA contributions. The call for M4.1 supports projects not only under 2B but also under other Focus Areas, including 2A, 3A, 4B, 4C, 5A, 5B and 5C.

Measure 6: Farm and business development

The relevant sub-measure under this FA is:

- M6.1 – Business Start-up for young farmers

M6.1 has its primary contribution directed towards FA2B only. The scope of this measure is to facilitate the entry of young farmers into the agricultural sector with the aim to achieve generational renewal. Financial support is provided in the form of a lump sum of €70,000 to combat the barriers that exist to access the agricultural sector. Approved operations include, amongst others, investment in harvesting and post harvesting technology, upgrading of farm facilities, investment in innovative greenhouse cultivation as aquaponics as well as investment in facilities to improve livestock management and production.

It has registered good progress over the course of implementation of the programme. It was initially launched in April 2017. During 2019, the eight call which was launched in 2018, closed in March. Consequently, 34 applications and 35 beneficiaries were approved in 2019, bringing the total of approved applications under M6.1 to 53. This translates to 60 beneficiaries that are supported under the measure till the end of 2019. The committed expenditure in 2019 amounted to circa €2.5 million with realised expenditure amounting to circa €2.2 million. Total realised expenditure amounted to circa €3.3 million.

The call is currently closed as a number of applications have been received and awarded. The Managing Authority is currently assessing whether there is an element of oversubscription before deciding whether to proceed with the re-launching of the call in 2020.

To support M6.1 Beneficiaries to enhance their skills and knowledge where weaknesses are identified, the MA had made an agreement with MCAST to facilitate participation in training. M6.1 applicants are being assessed by the MCAST interviewing board who would pass their recommendations on training needs to the PSC. Applicants who are considered to require training by MCAST interviewing board but nonetheless make it through the M6.1 selection process are then required to participate in tailor made training programmes.

Target Indicator

Good progress has been recorded for result target T5: % of agriculture holdings with RDP supported business development plan/investments for young farmers (Focus Area 2B) whereby with a progress value of 53 holdings linked to M6.1, the result target value, as at end of 2019 was 0.42% compared to a target value of 0.48% to be attained by 2023.

Priority 3 - Focus Area 3A

List of measures

The list of measures contributing towards Focus Area 3A are:

- M03 – Quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs
- M04 – Investment in physical assets

- M16 – Co-operation

Progress achieved

Measure 3 – Quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs

The relevant sub-measures that contribute towards FA3A are:

- M3.1 - Support for new participation in quality schemes
- M3.2 - Support for information and promotion activities implemented by group of producers in the internal market

These efforts in 2019 included the launch of 3 calls under M3.1 (batch 7, 8 and 9), which were published in February, June and October. Batch 7 and 8 closed in 2019 (June and October respectively) and Batch 9 closed in 2020. Despite the allocation of €1 million for these various calls, only one application was submitted which failed the ranking criteria.

As for M3.2, it had not been launched during 2019 due to the lack of uptake on M3.1. Up until December 2019, this measure was directly linked to uptake under M3.1 and hence, since no uptake under M3.1 materialised, this measure could not be launched. However, plans have been made to launch calls under M3.2 in 2020 closing in July and October for which an allocated budget of €100,000 has been set.

Measure 4 – Investment in physical assets

The relevant sub-measures under this focus area are:

- M4.1 – Support for investment in agricultural holdings
- M4.2 - Support for investment in processing/Marketing and /or development of agricultural products

Despite registering good progress in interventions contributing towards FA2A, none of the operations approved during 2019 had their main expenditure related to FA3A. Therefore M4.1 did not register progress in relation to operations contributing towards FA3A and as a result, there were no committed values contributing towards this FA.

Realised expenditure of circa €35,000 was registered in 2019 in relation to operations approved during 2018.

It is important to note that the call for M4.1 supports projects not only under 3A but also under other Focus Areas, including 2A, 2B, 4B, 4C, 5A, 5B and 5C.

During 2018, the MA invested considerably in preparatory work, including various information

sessions in relation to M4.2. In 2019, two cut off dates for a call launched in 2018, were set, one in February and the other one in July 2019. As a result of this, 26 applications were received. The evaluation has been completed and 15 operations were awarded in 2019, with a committed expenditure of circa €5.3M. The focus of the approved projects revolves around upgrading and diversification related investment aiming to improve competitiveness, covering different farms such as poultry, eggs, cheeselets and meat, amongst others. Approved projects under M4.2 registered good implementation progress with realised expenditure amounting to nearly €0.45 million, which represents the total cumulative amount realised output for that measure. Total investment reached more than €0.9 million by the end of 2019.

Measure 16 – Co-operation

The relevant sub-measures contributing towards this FA are:

- M16.2 - support for pilot projects, and for the development of new products, practices, processes and technologies
- M16.4 - 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

In 2019 the MA launched 3 calls under sub-measure 16.2 and 16.4, for each of which a budget of €3m contributing towards different Focus Areas was allocated for the call. These calls were launched in May, July and November of 2019, with the latter call closing in 2020. For M16.2, five applications were received under these 3 calls, however, none of the submitted applications were awarded by end of year 2019 as the project selection process was still underway. In 2020, one project was awarded under M16.2. Further progress was registered with the launch of a call for applications for M16.2 in 2020. The calls closed at the end of April 2020 and the project selection process is currently underway. In the case of M16.4 no applications were received in any of the calls.

Result Target Indicator

By the end of 2019, the target on the % of agricultural holdings supported under quality schemes, local markets and short supply circuits, and producer groups/organisations was nil. However progress was registered on the Nr of operations supported under M4.2 (Programme Specific Target Indicator) contributing to FA3A with 15 operations selected in 2019 compared to a target of 25 to be attained by 2023.

Priority 4

List of measures

The list of measures contributing towards Priority 4 are:

- M01 – Knowledge transfer and information actions
- M02 – Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services

- M04 – Investment in physical assets
- M08 – Investment in Forest Area Development and improvement of viability of forests
- M10 – Agri-Environment-Climate Measures
- M11 – Organic Farming
- M13 – Payments to Areas Facing Natural or Other Specific Constraints

- M16 – Co-operation

Progress achieved

Measure 1: Knowledge transfer and information access

The sub-measures under M01 all contribute towards FA4C and are interlinked with FA1A contributions. These are:

- M1.1- support for vocational training and skills acquisition actions;
- M1.2 - support for demonstration activities and information actions; and
- M1.3 - support for short-term and forest management exchange as well as farm and forest visits

In 2019 no sub-measures under M01 were launched, with M1.2 expected to be launched in Q3 2020 (ongoing Covid-19 situation has delayed this launch). During 2019, for the call that was launched for M1.1 in 2018 and which closed in January 2019, the evaluation process was undertaken leading to the award of one project in 2019.

In fact, only one application was submitted by MCAST, which was awarded in November 2019 for the committed value of €285,000 (amount linked to FA4A as per RDP Budget). MCAST is the main further and higher Vocational Education Institution in Malta covering also agriculture and animal sciences related vocational education. The project focusing to the provision of bespoke training to individuals operating in rural areas, ties in with the provision of training in farming and business management practices and specific training linked to the AECMs of the RDP. The project contributes directly towards FA1A and FA1C and concurrently it also contributes towards P4. This course requires participants to follow courses in line with their respective AECM and is complemented by the obligatory participation in a course on business management practices. As a result of this investment, persons working in the agricultural sector will be equipped with apt knowledge and skills in relation to the business they are running as well as to their respective AECM. Through this course learners are keeping up with the latest innovative technologies and techniques as well as acquire competences and skills to manage better and/or diversify the activities being carried out on the farm, with the aim to minimise risks and equip the farm to become more resilient to unpredicted events. For sustainable development purposes, learning is also extended to environmental implications from farming activities.

The implementation of the courses started in December 2019, which had to eventually be halted due to the COVID-19 realities. Through this project, the estimated target of participants is set at 3,000 covering all the envisaged seven courses. The project is set to last circa 30 months in all. This project is expected to contribute towards addressing the RDP needs related to waste, water, and energy; landscape and environment; and wider rural economy and the quality of life. With implementation starting in December

2019, no expenditure was realised in 2019.

The MA also plans to launch an additional call under M1.1 in Q3 2020 to cover training in general related to the RDP needs which is not necessarily limited to the AECMs.

The MA is currently considering the possible revision of sub measure 1.3 in the RDP in the near future. The Managing Authority deems that the nature of the interventions emanating from this measure pose additional challenges beyond the MA's control.

Measure 2: Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services

The applicable sub-measures that contribute towards FA4A are:

- M2.1 - support to help benefiting from the use of advisory services; and
- M2.3 - support for training of advisors

Following the strategic modifications that have taken place in December 2018, a call for M2.1 was launched on 15 May 2019 closing on the 18 July 2019 for which a budget of €1.9m was allocated. For this call no applications were submitted therefore no funds were committed in 2019 under M2.1.

The MA plans on issuing a further call under M2.1 in Q3 of 2020, as the original plan to launch the call in Q1 was derailed due to COVID-19 pandemic. Once launched, the call will operate on an open rolling call so that anyone registered as an Advisory Service with the Farm Advisory Service Registration Board (FASRB) within the Agricultural and Rural Payments Agency can apply. A new Legal Notice for Farm Advisory Services, which process was initiated in 2018, was enacted in 2019. The new Legal Notice is L.N.99 of 2019.

As a result of the above, no progress was registered in terms of committed expenditure and realised outputs.

The MA is currently considering the possible revision of sub measure 2.3 in the RDP in the near future. MA's consideration regarding the possible revision of sub measure 2.3 in the RDP in the near future is to direct resources towards M2.1 in order to ensure more value for money from interventions supported under M2. In this regard, the aim is to channel the funds towards the ultimate users of the advisory services (i.e. farmers).

Measure 4: Investment in physical assets

The applicable sub measures that contribute towards Priority 4 are:

- M4.1 – Investment in agricultural holdings
- M4.4 - Support for non-productive investment linked to the achievement of agri-environment objectives

M4.1's approved financial allocation in the RDP contributes towards FA4B and FA4C, whereas M4.4

contributes to FA4A and FA4C.

During 2019, M4.1 was managed on an open rolling call basis, which has been extended till 24 July 2020. This methodology has proved to facilitate and smoothen the application process for the farmers, albeit at a significant administrative effort. In 2019, there were three closing dates, one in February, June and October.

Overall, considerable progress was registered under M4.1, however there was no contribution towards P4 up to 2019 in terms of committed expenditure and realised outputs. The underlying difficulty with M4.1 that was experienced last year, was also the case for 2019. In fact, even though projects were approved under this Measure in 2019, these contributed primarily towards FA2A and FA5A. Therefore, similar to 2018, despite the expectations set at Programme level, none of the applications that were received could be registered as contributing towards Priority 4, implying that farmers' major investments are steered more towards competitiveness and efficiency rather than the eco-systems when it comes to investment in the holdings.

In general, it is important to note that that the call for M4.1 supports projects not only under P4 FA4B and FA4C but also under other Focus Areas, including 2A, 2B, 3A, 5A, 5B and 5C.

Considerable progress was registered by M4.4 as four calls were launched in 2019, April, July, October and November for which a total of 116 submissions were received by the MA. Following the assessment of these applications, 42 were awarded funding. In cumulative terms, the total number of operations of support for non-productive investment (4.4) up to 2019 amounts to 116.

The progress achieved contributed to more than €4.8 million in committed expenditure, leading to an uptake of 80%. Realised expenditure in 2019, was more than €2.7 million, bringing the total of realised expenditure under this Measure to circa €7.8 million and total investment to circa €9.8 million by the end of 2019.

Investment under this measure is primarily directed towards the construction and upgrading of rubble walls. The Beneficiaries under this measure are either farmers, land managers, and public entities, including Local Councils, the Ministry for Gozo, the Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects, the Ministry for the Environment Sustainable Development and Climate Change and the Ministry of Tourism.

Measure 8: Investment in Forest Area Development and improvement of viability of forests

The applicable sub-measure for FA4A is:

- M8.5 – Investments improving the resilience and environment value of forest ecosystems

50% of the financial allocation for this sub measure falls under this Focus Area (amounting to €1.75 million). The rest of the allocation contributes to FA4A. The MA has pre-launched this sub-measure in Q2 of 2019 with the aim to support afforestation initiatives.

The MA is currently considering the possible revision of sub measure 8.5 in the RDP in the near future. As reported in the AIR 2018, from consultations carried out by the MA, it clearly emerges that Malta has difficulties in ensuring that this measure is successful, as a result of the limitations of Article 22 (1) of EU Regulation 1305/2013[1]. Moreover, M8.5 is bound by a regulatory eligibility criterion centred around a minimum area of intervention set at 0.5ha; for Malta, this a large amount of land to be

either owned by the private sector or the local councils, therefore these restrictions make it very difficult to have applications under the measure. In fact, few farmers are likely to create afforestation projects due to the limited land available to them. Furthermore, eligible Beneficiaries such as Local councils are unlikely to have such land available as such open spaces are usually managed by Central Government – this is stipulated in the Fourth Schedule (Article 33) of the Local Government Act (Chapter 363) where a list is given of all sites that are excluded from the responsibility of Local Councils. These difficulties are contributory challenges in implementing this measure

[1] In the case of state-owned land, support may only be granted if the body managing such land is a private body or a municipality.

Measure 10: Agri-Environment Climate Measures

Both sub-measures contribute to the 3 Focus Areas available under Priority 4. The sub-measures are:

- M10.1 – Agri-environment-climate measures
- M10.2 – Conservation of genetic resources

Measure 10.1 is another measure where considerable progress has been registered. By the end of 2019, the MA had launched all the 6 AECMs established within the RDP. A call is launched every year during annual applications campaign (request period) during the summer period. In 2019, there were nearly a 1,000 unique beneficiaries which were recorded under P4

The committed expenditure in 2019 amounted to circa €0.45 million leading to an overall cumulative committed expenditure of circa €3.8 million under this measure. Realised expenditure amounted to also circa €0.4 million bring the total realised expenditure under the Measure to circa €2.2 million.

In 2019, circa €300,000 were realised for AECM 1 focusing on measures to control weeds in orchards and vineyards by mechanical instead of chemical methods, reaching an area claimed of 308 ha; circa €30,000 for AECM 3 focusing on the introduction of bee boxes on holding; circa €75,000 towards AECM 6a, b and c, focusing on measure for the integration and maintenance of autochthonous Maltese species, covering a committed area of 70 ha.

In addition, in 2019, circa €30,000 were realised under transitional Measures AEMs (covering P4) for 2018 (transitional 2007-2013) as follows:

- AEM 1 - Expenditure under this AEM amounted to €660.31.
- AEM 3 - Expenditure under this AEM amounted to €24,286.83.
- AEM 4 - Expenditure under this AEM amounted to €3,733.65.
- AEM 6 - Expenditure under this AEM amounted to €1,177.77.
- AEM 9 - Expenditure under this AEM amounted to €742.76.

- AEM PCK 2 - Expenditure under this AEM amounted to €1,115.06.

During 2019, two calls were launched under M10.2, which closed in July and September, were a budget

of €3m was allocated for each, though no commitments were made in 2019.

Measure 11: Organic Farming

The contribution of M11 sub-measures is directly related to FA4A. The relevant sub-measures are two:

- M11.1 – Conversion to organic farming
- M11.2 – Maintenance of organic farming

The progress on M11.1 and M11.2 has been relatively slow. This can be related to the limited amount of agricultural land dedicated for organic produce as well as the limited number of organic producers. Overall, in recent years organic farming is also growing relatively slowly in Malta mainly since the nature of the holdings, with small and scattered parcels is not conducive to developing organic farming where products are likely to be contaminated from activities on neighbouring parcels. This limitation, together with the fact that much manual labour is already applied in arable production, as well as taking into account that the expected returns on organically labelled produce are limited, lead to a lack of interest in organic production.

In 2019 the MA, issued the annual call during the payment campaign week, leading to committed amounts of €1,721 for M11.1 and €2,816 for M11.2. Whilst there were circa €1,500 realised expenditure for M11.1 in 2019, there were none for M11.2.

Measure 13: Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints

The budgetary allocation for this Measure is directly linked to FA4A. The applicable sub-measure in this case is:

- M13.3 – Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints

This land based sub-measure was launched in 2015. The area claimed up to 2019 amounted to circa 7,200 ha which is translated into committed expenditure of €1.9 million, bringing the total of committed expenditure to 100% of the programme allocation. The realised amounts reached circa €1.8 million in 2019, bring the total realised expenditure to circa €8 million for this Measure. In 2019, a small amount of circa €1,500 was dedicated to Least Favoured Areas, under transitional measures.

Support under this measure offers beneficiaries a simple, standard payment per hectare of agricultural land in order to help ensure that this land remains under agricultural management. In line with the RDP the aim of the measure is to prevent land abandonment in disadvantaged areas as well as to maintain the Maltese rural landscape.

Measure 16: Co-operation

The relevant sub-measure under the Priority is M16.2. Its financial allocation is linked to both FA4A and FA4C.

- M16.2 – Support for pilot projects, and for the development of new products, practices, processes and technologies.

In 2019 the MA launched 3 calls under sub-measure 16.2, for each of which a budget of €3m contributing

towards different Focus Areas was allocated. These calls were launched in May, July and November of 2019, with the latter call closing in 2020. In total, five applications were received under these 3 calls, however, none of the submitted applications were awarded by end of year 2019 as the project selection process was still underway. In 2020, one project was awarded under M16.2. Further progress was registered with the launch of a call for applications for M16.2 in 2020. The calls closed at the end of April 2020 and the project selection process is currently underway.

Target Indicators

Given that a number of measures under this Priority registered good progress and a number of operations had been implemented as at end of 2019, progress was noted for the output indicators contributing towards this Priority, in terms of total public expenditure, total area and number of beneficiaries. Likewise, progress under result indicators was registered as follows:

- R7/T9: % of agricultural land under management contracts supporting biodiversity and/or landscapes (focus area 4A) – the set target for 2023 is 6.37% and the achievements by 2019 amount to 13.48%.
- R8/T10: % of agricultural land under management contracts to improve water management (focus area 4B) – the set target for 2023 is 2.98% and the achievements by 2019 amount to 4.12%.
- T12: % of agricultural land under management contracts to improve soil management and/or prevent soil erosion (focus area 4C) – the set target for 2023 is 2.98% and the achievements by 2019 amount to 6.1%.

Priority 5 - Focus Area 5A

List of measures

The list of measures contributing towards Focus Area 5A are:

- M01 – Knowledge transfer and information actions
- M02 – Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services
- M04 – Investment in physical assets
- M16 – Co-operation

Progress achieved

Measure 1: Knowledge transfer and information actions

Similar to P4, the sub-measures under M01 all contribute towards FA5A and are interlinked with FA1A contributions.

- M1.1- support for vocational training and skills acquisition actions;

- M1.2 - support for demonstration activities and information actions; and
- M1.3 - support for short-term and forest management exchange as well as farm and forest visits

In 2019 no sub-measures under M01 were launched, with M1.2 expected to be launched in Q3 2020 (ongoing Covid-19 situation has delayed this launch). During 2019, for the call that was launched for M1.1 in 2018 and which closed in January 2019, the evaluation process was undertaken leading to the award of one project in 2019.

In fact, only one application was submitted by MCAST, which was awarded in November 2019 for the committed value of €285,000 (amount is linked to FA4A as per RDP Budget). MCAST is the main further and higher Vocational Education Institution in Malta covering also agriculture and animal sciences related vocational education. The project focusing to the provision of bespoke training to individuals operating in rural areas, ties in with the provision of training in farming and business management practices and specific training linked to the AECMs of the RDP. The project contributes directly towards FA1A and FA1C and concurrently it also contributes towards P4. Currently, no contribution can be recorded under P5.

The MA also plans to launch an additional call under M1.1 in Q3 2020 to cover training in general related to the RDP needs which is not necessarily limited to the AECMs.

The MA is currently considering the possible revision of sub measure 1.3 in the RDP in the near future. The Managing Authority deems that the nature of the interventions emanating from this measure pose additional challenges beyond the MA's control.

Measure 2: Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services

The applicable measures contributing towards FA5A are:

- M2.1 - support to help benefiting from the use of advisory services
- M2.3 - training of advisors

Following the strategic modifications that have taken place in December 2018, a call for M2.1 was launched on 15 May 2019 closing on the 18 July 2019 for which a budget of €1.9m was allocated. For this call no applications were submitted therefore no funds were committed in 2019 under M2.1.

The MA plans on issuing a further call under M2.1 in Q3 of 2020, as the original plan to launch the call in Q1 was derailed due to COVID-19 pandemic. . Once launched, the call will operate on an open rolling call so that anyone registered as an Advisory Service with the Farm Advisory Service Registration Board (FASRB) within the Agricultural and Rural Payments Agency can apply. A new Legal Notice for Farm Advisory Services, which process was initiated in 2018, was enacted in 2019. The new Legal Notice is L.N.99 of 2019.

As a result of the above, no progress was registered in terms of committed expenditure and realised outputs.

The MA is currently considering the possible revision of sub measure 2.3 in the RDP in the near future. MA's consideration regarding the possible revision of sub measure 2.3 in the RDP in the near future is to direct resources towards M2.1 in order to ensure more value for money from interventions supported

under M2. In this regard, the aim is to channel the funds towards the ultimate users of the advisory services (i.e. farmers).

Measure 4: Investment in physical assets

The applicable sub-measures are:

- M4.1 – support for investment in agricultural holdings
- M4.3 - support for investment in infrastructure related to development, modernisation, or adaptation of agriculture and forestry.

M4.1's approved financial allocation in the RDP contributes towards FA2A, 2B, 3A, 4B, 4C, 5A, 5B, 5C and 5D. M4.3 contributes to FA4A and FA4C. M4.3 also contributes towards FA2A.

The call for M4.1 supports projects not only under 5A but also under other Focus Areas, including 2A, 2B, 3A, P4, 5B, 5C AND 5D. By the end of 2019, there were 14 approved actions under M4.1, contributing towards 5A, amounting to a committed expenditure of circa €1.4 million and circa €75,000 of realised expenditure. Total investment amounted to nearly €150,000.

During 2019, no new calls were launched under M4.3 as the Measure is currently over committed. Under this FA, this measure focuses on increasing efficiency in water use by agriculture.

There is one project that is currently, being implemented under M4.3 with a contribution towards FA5A. This project carries a substantial project cost of circa €27 million, with a committed amount of €16.5 million, €6.5 of which allocated to the project in 2019. The Project Beneficiary is the Water Services Corporation and provides treated sewage effluent (TSE) to agricultural land located in proximity to the treatment plants. In terms of project implementation, following the progress registered on the ground during 2018, further progress was also achieved in other parts of the project through the launch and award of a tender in relation to the provision of the network. The contract has been signed between the Water Services Corporation and the contractor and implementation progress has been registered. The implementation of the network is at an advanced stage. Furthermore, the project entails the restoration of reservoirs. Two out of five have been completed. As a result of this progress, circa €9.3 million were realised during 2019, bringing the total of realised expenditure under this Measure towards FA5A to more than €14 million and more than 80% of committed amounts. The total expenditure by the end of 2019 amounted to €16.7 million.

In view of the ever growing need to support the local agricultural sector in terms of water supply, and as a result of the positive experience of the implementation of this project, the MA allocated an additional €6.5 million to this project in 2019 (referred to above) and is considering the submission of a programme modification, to transfer additional funds to M4.3 under FA5A.

Overall, the total cumulative realised output for M4.1 and M4.3 contributing towards FA5A amounts to nearly €15 million.

Measure 16: Co-operation

The applicable sub measure contributing towards FA5A is:

- M16.2 - support for pilot projects, and for the development of new products, practices, processes and technologies;

In 2019 the MA launched 3 calls under sub-measure 16.2, for each of which a budget of €3m contributing towards different Focus Areas was allocated. These calls were launched in May, July and November of 2019, with the latter call closing in 2020. In total, five applications were received under these 3 calls, however, none of the submitted applications were awarded by end of year 2019 as the project selection process was still underway. In 2020, one project was awarded under M16.2. Further progress was registered with the launch of a call for applications for M16.2 in 2020. The calls closed at the end of April 2020 and the project selection process is currently underway.

Target Indicator

The applicable target indicator for this FA is % of irrigated land switching to more efficient irrigation system and is set at 5.44% (T14). The operations contributing towards this indicator are primarily projects under M4.1 and M4.3. Given that none of the operations approved under M4.1, contributing towards this indicator, have been completed, the value of the indicator is nil. Also, while there has been progress in the implementation of M4.3 the project on the distribution of treated water is still under progress.

Priority 5 - Focus Area 5B

List of measures

The measure contributing towards Focus Area 5B are:

- M01 – Knowledge transfer and information actions
- M02 – Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services
- M04 – Investment in physical assets

Progress achieved

Measure 1: Knowledge transfer and information actions

Similar to FA5A, the sub-measures under M01 also contribute towards FA5B and are interlinked with FA1A contributions.

- M1.1- support for vocational training and skills acquisition actions;
- M1.2 - support for demonstration activities and information actions; and
- M1.3 - support for short-term and forest management exchange as well as farm and forest visits

In 2019 no sub-measures under M01 were launched, with M1.2 expected to be launched in Q3 2020 (ongoing Covid-19 situation has delayed this launch). During 2019, for the call that was launched for M1.1 in 2018 and which closed in January 2019, the evaluation process was undertaken leading to the

award of one project in 2019.

In fact, only one application was submitted by MCAST, which was awarded in November 2019 for the committed value of €285,000 (amount is linked to FA4A as per RDP Budget). MCAST is the main further and higher Vocational Education Institution in Malta covering also agriculture and animal sciences related vocational education. The project focusing to the provision of bespoke training to individuals operating in rural areas, ties in with the provision of training in farming and business management practices and specific training linked to the AECMs of the RDP. The project contributes directly towards FA1A and FA1C and concurrently it also contributes towards P4. Currently, no contribution can be recorded under P5.

The MA also plans to launch an additional call under M1.1 in Q3 2020 to cover training in general related to the RDP needs which is not necessarily limited to the AECMs.

The MA is currently considering the possible revision of sub measure 1.3 in the RDP in the near future. The Managing Authority deems that the nature of the interventions emanating from this measure pose additional challenges beyond the MA's control.

The relevant sub measures that contribute towards FA2B are:

- M2.1 - support to help benefiting from the use of advisory services; and
- M2.3 - support for training of advisors

These measures which also contribute towards FA1C, directly feed into FA5B in line with the provisions of the RDP.

As of 2019 the MA had launched one call under M2.1 in May which later closed in July 2019. For this call the MA allocated a budget of €1.9m, however no applications were received under this call therefore no funds have been committed to this sub-measure. The MA plans on issuing a further call under M2.1 by the third quarter of 2020 (ongoing Covid-19 situation has delayed this launch). Once launched, the call will operate on an open rolling call for a determined period so that anyone registered as an Advisory Service with the Farm Advisory Service Registration Board (FASRB) can apply.

The MA is currently considering the possible revision of sub measure 2.3 in the RDP in the near future. MA's consideration regarding the possible revision of sub measure 2.3 in the RDP in the near future is to direct resources towards M2.1 in order to ensure more value for money from interventions supported under M2. In this regard, the aim is to channel the funds towards the ultimate users of the advisory services (i.e. farmers).

Measure 4: Investment in physical assets

The relevant sub measure for this FA is:

- M4.1 – support for investment in agricultural holdings

Overall, considerable progress was registered under M4.1, however there was no contribution towards FA5B. This is primarily the case since reporting structures require the allocation of the commitments towards the FA where the pre-dominant allocation is contributing to. In this case, the projects awarded under this measure in 2019 are contributing towards FA5A and FA2A.

The call for M4.1 supports projects not only under FA5B but also under other Focus Areas, including 2A, 2B, 3A, 4B, 4C, 5A, 5C and 5D.

Target Indicators

The result indicator (T15) on the total investment in energy efficiency (€) (focus area 5B) is currently nil, primarily as a result of the reporting structures which require the allocation of the commitments towards the FA where the pre-dominant allocation is contributing to.

Priority 5 – Focus Area 5C

List of measures

The measure contributing towards Focus Area 5C is:

- M04 – Investment in physical assets
- M16 – Co-operation

Progress achieved

Measure 4 – Investment in physical assets

The -measures under M04 contributing towards FA5C is:

- M4.1 – support for investment in agricultural holdings

Overall, considerable progress was registered under M4.1, however there was only a small contribution of circa €10,000 towards FA5C supporting sustainable investments coming from the approval of 1 operation in 2019. The committed expenditure towards this FA is low since reporting structures require the allocation of the commitments towards the FA where the pre-dominant allocation is contributing to. In this case, the projects submitted under this measure are contributing towards FA5A and FA2A.

The call for M4.1 supports projects not only under FA5C but also under other Focus Areas, including 2A, 2B, 3A, 4B, 4C, 5A, 5B and 5D.

Measure 16- Co-operation

The relevant sub-measure contributing towards FA5C is:

- M16.2 - Support for pilot projects, and for the development of new products, practices, processes and technologies

In 2019 the MA launched 3 calls under sub-measure 16.2, for each of which a budget of €3m contributing towards different Focus Areas was allocated. These calls were launched in May, July and November of 2019, with the latter call closing in 2020. In total, five applications were received under these 3 calls, however, none of the submitted applications were awarded by end of year 2019 as the project selection process was still underway. Further progress was registered in 2020, with the launch of a call for applications for M16.2. The calls closed at the end of April 2020 and the project selection process is currently underway.

Target Indicators

Given that none of the measures under this FA had been implemented as at end of 2019, there is no progress under any of the output indicators contributing towards this Focus Area. Likewise, progress under result indicator T16: Total investment in renewable energy production (€) (focus area 5C) was at end of 2019 nil, primarily since reporting structures require the allocation of the commitments towards the FA where the pre-dominant allocation is contributing to.

Priority 5 – Focus Area 5D

The measures applicable under FA5D are:

- M01 – Knowledge transfer and information actions
- M02 – Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services
- M04 – Investment in physical assets

Progress achieved

Measure 1: Knowledge transfer and information actions

Similar to FA5A and 5B, the sub-measures under M01 also contribute towards FA5D and are interlinked with FA1A contributions.

- M1.1- support for vocational training and skills acquisition actions;
- M1.2 - support for demonstration activities and information actions; and
- M1.3 - support for short-term and forest management exchange as well as farm and forest visits

In 2019 no sub-measures under M01 were launched, with M1.2 expected to be launched in Q3 2020 (ongoing Covid-19 situation has delayed this launch). During 2019, for the call that was launched for M1.1 in 2018 and which closed in January 2019, the evaluation process was undertaken leading to the award of one project in 2019.

In fact, only one application was submitted by MCAST, which was awarded in November 2019 for the committed value of €285,000 (amount is linked to FA4A as per RDP Budget). MCAST is the main further and higher Vocational Education Institution in Malta covering also agriculture and animal sciences

related vocational education. The project focusing to the provision of bespoke training to individuals operating in rural areas, ties in with the provision of training in farming and business management practices and specific training linked to the AECMs of the RDP. The project contributes directly towards FA1A and FA1C and concurrently it also contributes towards P4. Currently, no contribution can be recorded under P5.

The MA also plans to launch an additional call under M1.1 in Q3 2020 to cover training in general related to the RDP needs which is not necessarily limited to the AECMs.

The MA is currently considering the possible revision of sub measure 1.3 in the RDP in the near future. The Managing Authority deems that the nature of the interventions emanating from this measure pose additional challenges beyond the MA's control.

Measure 2: Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services

The relevant sub measures that contribute towards FA5D are:

- M2.1 - support to help benefiting from the use of advisory services; and
- M2.3 - support for training of advisors

These measures which also contribute towards FA1C, directly feed into FA5B in line with the provisions of the RDP.

As of 2019 the MA had launched one call under M2.1 in May which later closed in July 2019. For this call the MA allocated a budget of €1.9m, however no applications were received under this call therefore no funds have been committed to this sub-measure. The MA plans on issuing a further call under M2.1 by the third quarter of 2020 (ongoing Covid-19 situation has delayed this launch). Once launched, the call will operate on an open rolling call for a determined period so that anyone registered as an Advisory Service with the Farm Advisory Service Registration Board (FASRB) can apply.

The MA is currently considering the possible revision of sub measure 2.3 in the RDP in the near future. MA's consideration regarding the possible revision of sub measure 2.3 in the RDP in the near future is to direct resources towards M2.1 in order to ensure more value for money from interventions supported under M2. In this regard, the aim is to channel the funds towards the ultimate users of the advisory services (i.e. farmers).

Measure 4: Investment in physical assets

The relevant sub measure for this FA is:

- M4.1 – support for investment in agricultural holdings

Overall, considerable progress was registered under M4.1, however there was no contribution towards FA5D. This is primarily the case since reporting structures require the allocation of the commitments towards the FA where the pre-dominant allocation is contributing to. In this case, the projects submitted under this measure are contributing towards FA5A.

Overall, considerable progress was registered under M4.1, however there was only a small contribution of circa €15,000 towards FA5D coming from 1 operation approved in 2019 supporting

investment on modernisation and resource sustainability on a sheep farm. The committed expenditure towards this FA is low since reporting structures require the allocation of the commitments towards the FA where the pre-dominant allocation is contributing to. In this case, the projects submitted under this measure are contributing towards FA5A and FA2A. In terms of expenditure, only €225 were realised up to 2019, leading to a total expenditure of €450.

The call for M4.1 supports projects not only under FA5D but also under other Focus Areas, including 2A, 2B, 3A, 4B, 4C, 5A, 5B and 5C.

Target Indicators

The result indicator (T17) on the % of LU concerned by investments in live-stock management in view of reducing GHG and/or ammonia emissions (focus areas 5D) is currently nil. This is due to the fact that none of the actions contributing towards this FA have been completed.

Priority 5 – Focus Area 5E

The list of measures contributing towards this FA are:

- M08 - Investment in forest areas development and improvement of the viability of forests
- M10 - Agri-Environment-Climate Measures

Measure 8: Investment in Forest Area Development and improvement of viability of forests

The applicable sub-measure for FA5E is:

M8.5 – Investments improving the resilience and environment value of forest ecosystems

50% of the financial allocation for this sub measure falls under this Focus Area (amounting to €1.75 million). The rest of the allocation contributes to FA4A. The MA has pre-launched this sub-measure in Q2 of 2019 with the aim to support afforestation initiatives.

The MA is currently considering the possible revision of sub measure 8.5 in the RDP in the near future. As reported in the AIR 2018, from consultations carried out by the MA, it clearly emerges that Malta has difficulties in ensuring that this measure is successful, as a result of the limitations of Article 22 (1) of EU Regulation 1305/2013[1]. Moreover, M8.5 is bound by a regulatory eligibility criterion centred around a minimum area of intervention set at 0.5ha; for Malta, this a large amount of land to be either owned by the private sector or the local councils, therefore these restrictions make it very difficult to have applications under the measure. In fact, few farmers are likely to create afforestation projects due to the limited land available to them. Furthermore, eligible Beneficiaries such as Local councils are unlikely to have such land available as such open spaces are usually managed by Central Government – this is stipulated in the Fourth Schedule (Article 33) of the Local Government Act (Chapter 363) where a list is given of all sites that are excluded from the responsibility of Local Councils. These difficulties are contributory challenges in implementing this measure.

[1] In the case of state-owned land, support may only be granted if the body managing such land is a private body or a municipality.

Measure 10: Agri-Environment Climate Measures

The applicable sub-measures contributing to FA5E are:

- M10.1 – Agri-environment-climate measures
- M10.2 – Conservation of genetic resources

Measure 10.1 is another measure where considerable progress has been registered. By the end of 2019, the MA had launched all the 6 AECMs established within the RDP. A call is launched every year during Annual payment campaign between April and May. In 2019, there were 458 unique beneficiaries which are recorded under FA5E.

The committed expenditure in 2019 amounted to circa €1.3 million leading to an overall cumulative committed expenditure of circa €1.7 million under this measure. Realised expenditure amounted to circa €0.7 million bring the total realised expenditure under the Measure to circa €1 million.

In 2019, circa €4,000 were realised for AECM 2 focusing on the maintenance of trees, leading to the support for about 120 trees; circa €17,000 for AECM 4 focusing on the implementation of an integrated pest management plan targeting vineyards and orchards, reaching an area of area of 11 ha; circa €0.7 million towards AECM 5, focusing on the implementation of soil management and conservation plan on a holding, covering a committed area of 382ha. Taking into consideration the increased interest under this AECM, the Managing Authority is considering the possibility of transfer of funds under focus area 5E.

During 2019, two calls were launched under M10.2, which closed in July and September, were a budget of €3m was allocated for each call, though no commitments were made in 2019 but eventually a Grant Agreement was signed in 2020.

The MA notes an increased interest under the AECMs contributing to this FA, resulting in an over-achievement in the budget allocated to this Focus Area. As result, the MA is considering a programme modification to address these circumstances.

Target indicator

The target indicator for this FA is R20: % of agricultural and forest land under management contracts contributing to carbon sequestration and conservation (focus area 5E). The achievement is set at 3.44 8%. This result captures hectares supported through AECMs 2, 4 and 5 amounting to a total of 394ha and is divided by the Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA) of 11,450.

Priority 6 – Focus Area 6A

List of measures

The list of measures contributing towards Focus Area 6A are:

- M06 – Farm and Business Development
- M16 – Co-operation

Progress achieved

Measure 6: Farm and Business Development

The applicable sub-measure is:

- M6.4 - Support for investment in creation and development of non-agricultural activities

M6.4 was pre-launched in September 2018, followed by a series of information sessions extending from September 2018 to June 2019, where the last 2 information sessions were held on the 24 June 2019 in Malta and 26 June 2019 in Gozo, amidst a campaign to raise awareness on the measure.

Following the pre-launch of M6.4 in September 2018, two calls were opened during 2019, closing on the 3 September and 15 October respectively. For the call which closed on 3 September 2019, 7 applications were submitted. The project selection process was kicked off in 2019 and was eventually completed early in 2020, with the award of 4 projects. The second call which closed on the 15 October 2019 received no application submissions. The MA is issuing 3 further calls in 2020 for M6.4 closing in January, April and June.

Measure 16: Co-operation measures

The relevant sub-measure contributing to FA6A is:

- M16.2 - Support for pilot projects, and for the development of new products, practices, processes and technologies

In 2019, the Managing Authority launched three calls under M16.2, closing in May, July and November, with the latter closing in January 2020. The July call received 2 applications and November call 3 applications, however, none of these operations were awarded funding during 2019. The total requested budget for the two calls is estimated at circa €5.9 million. During 2019, the project selection process was still under review, thereby no projects were approved, and no funds were committed in 2019.

Target Indicators

As at end of 2019, no expenditure was recorded under any of these measures. Indeed, the result T20: Nr of jobs created through supported projects; was at end of 2019 nil.

Priority 6 – Focus Area 6B

The relevant measures contributing towards this FA are:

- M16 – Co-operation
- M19 – Support for LEADER Local Development (CLLD)

Progress Achieved

Measure 16: Co-operation

The relevant sub-measure contributing towards this FA is:

- M16.2 - Support for pilot projects, and for the development of new products, practices, processes and technologies

In 2019 the MA launched 3 calls under sub-measure 16.2, for each of which a budget of €3m contributing towards different Focus Areas was allocated for this call. These calls were launched in May, July and November of 2019, with the latter call closing in 2020. In total, five applications were received under these 3 calls, however, none of the submitted applications were awarded by end of year 2019 as the project selection process was still underway. Further progress was registered in 2020, with the launch of a call for applications for M16.2. The calls closed at the end of April 2020 and the project selection process is currently underway.

Measure 19 - Support for LEADER Local Development (CLLD)

All sub-measures falling under M19 directly contribute towards this FA:

- M19.1 - Preparatory support
- M19.2 - Implementation of operations under the CLLD Strategy
- M19.3 - Preparation and implementation of co-operation activities of the Local Action Group
- M19.4 - Running costs and animation

M19 carries the highest financial allocation under P6, amounting to more than €5 million, with M19.2 carrying the largest share at 83% of the measure. Following, the groundwork undertaken in 2018, progress was registered in 2019 both in terms of committed and realised expenditure. To sustain the efforts undertaken in 2018, the MA monitored the three LAGs on a continuous basis in view of the difficulties faced in previous years. This has materialised in registered progress leading to committed expenditure amounting to circa €0.5 million and circa €0.2 million respectively in 2019, bringing the total of realised expenditure to around €0.3 million. 30 operations were awarded funding in 2019 and the funds committed are directed towards Local Councils and Voluntary Organisations implementing actions that contribute towards the Community Led Local Development Strategies.

This progress was achieved as a result of the co-ordinated effort at the level of the LAGs. Although, all

LAGs registered progress, the programme experienced significant differences in the level of progress achieved by the different LAGs. Gal Xlokk is the one that registered considerable progress. It launched calls under Measure 1 (Restoration of assets of artistic and cultural value) and Measure 2 (Strengthening a healthy cultural identity) of its Strategy, three batches for each respective measure.

In the case of Gozo Action Group Foundation, 2 batches were issued under Call 2 in 2019 for Measure 1 (Develop an ICT media platform for the valorisation of Gozo lifestyle concept) and 3 batches for Measure 4 (Improve the attractiveness of living in Gozo for young persons and young families) of the Gozo LAG Strategy. One project was received for Measure 1 and two for Measure 4 of the same LAG Strategy, which projects were still under evaluation in 2019. The Majjistral LAG also launched its calls with four batches under Measure 2 (Strengthening a healthy cultural identity) and eight batches under Measure 4 (Development of green infrastructure), with five and six projects being submitted respectively. These calls for projects contributed towards the award of the 30 projects referred to above.

Majjistral has also attained a certain level of progress in 2019 over some of the indicators in its strategy. In particular, 4 out of a target of 9 beneficiaries and projects are receiving support for investment in non-agricultural areas and the development of green infrastructure respectively (Measure 4). The LAG is also active in providing training sessions to its staff members and support to potential beneficiaries.

Xlokk LAG has attained significant progress in the implementation of its strategy with information provided by the LAG referring to the attainment of strategy targets as outlined in the Table below.

Indicator	Target	2019
Number of beneficiaries receiving support for investment in non-agricultural activities in rural areas	18	18
Number of restoration projects of artefacts of important cultural value	18	18
Number of beneficiaries receiving support for investment in non agricultural activities in rural areas	22	19
Number of new/improved quality cultural and/or social investment in the GXF area	22	19
Number of participants following the undertaking of the investment needed, per year up to the end of the programming period	2500	over 2500
Number of beneficiaries receiving support for investment in non-agricultural activities in rural areas	12	6
Number of projects for the development of green infrastructure	12	6
Number of cooperative projects	1	1
Number of participating local operators and stakeholders	15	9
Number of training sessions for LAG staff and members of the Decision Body (by the Concerned Authorities)	3	2
Number of information and networking sessions carried out by the LAG	5	3
Number of potential beneficiaries receiving support whilst developing operations and preparing applications	30	40
Number of projects implemented by the LAG with the framework of the LDS	50	44

In 2019, circa €0.5 million were committed for M19.2, whilst M19.3 saw a committed budget

of circa €0.1 million through one project awarded following the November call. Realised expenditure for M19.2 of close to Euro 0.2 million was reached in 2019 and another Euro 75,000 was reached for M19.1. There was no realised expenditure for other M19 measures in 20.

Target indicator

Progress was achieved in terms of T21: % of rural population covered by local development strategies (focus area 6B) through the setting up of the 3 LAGs and the adoption of their strategies. The achievement is set at 105.75%. This achievement is the result of the current total population covered by the LAG strategies (as published in strategies) amounting to 283,284 which is 15% higher than the established target in the programme of 268,733. The increase in the population coverage is due to the fact that Malta has experienced an increase in population over the last few years which has also been experienced in rural areas.¹

For the other target indicators related to this FA T23: Jobs created in supported projects (Leader) (focus area 6B), the achievement is nil as at 2019 as none of the projects are completed.

Priority 6 – Focus Area 6C

The relevant measure contributing towards this Focus Area is:

- M01 – Knowledge transfer and information actions

Progress Achieved

Measure 1: Knowledge transfer and information actions

Similar to P4 and P5, the sub-measures under M01 all contribute towards FA6C and are interlinked with FA1A contributions.

- M1.1- support for vocational training and skills acquisition actions;
- M1.2 - support for demonstration activities and information actions; and
- M1.3 - support for short-term and forest management exchange as well as farm and forest visits

The budgetary allocations between the measures mirror those under FA5D, with M1.1 still carrying the highest share.

In 2019 no sub-measures under M01 were launched, with M1.2 expected to be launched in Q3 2020 (ongoing Covid-19 situation has delayed this launch). During 2019, for the call that was launched for M1.1 in 2018 and which closed in January 2019, the evaluation process was undertaken leading to the award of one project in 2019.

In fact, only one application was submitted by MCAST, which was awarded in November 2019 for the committed value of €285,000 (amount linked to FA4A as per RDP Budget). MCAST is the main further and higher Vocational Education Institution in Malta covering also agriculture and animal sciences related vocational education. The operation focusing to the provision of bespoke training to individuals operating in rural areas, ties in with the provision of training in farming and business management

practices and specific training linked to the AECMs of the RDP and thus its contribution is not towards this priority but towards P4.

The MA is currently considering the possible revision of sub measure 1.3 in the RDP in the near future. The Managing Authority deems that the nature of the interventions emanating from this measure pose additional challenges beyond the MA's control. .

The MA also plans to launch an additional call under M1.1 in Q3 2020 to cover training in general related to the RDP needs which is not necessarily limited to the AECMs.

Target Indicators

The target value for the indicator (which is a programme specific target indicator) on the % of the total public expenditure (M1.1 to M1.3) allocated for ICT actions/interventions (%) was at end of 2019 nil as realised expenditure for these measures had not been undertaken.

Other Remarks

Upon validation of the AIR on the SFC the following validation warning were raised:

- Warning 250: as per previous discussions with the European Commission on this warning, this is raised due to an anomaly in the system, whereby while Table B3 captures ANNUAL output realised, table D captures CUMULATIVE data. Naturally, the values in table D, exceed those in table B.
- Warning 270: the Managing Authority has registered an over-achievement in the total area under management contracts, resulting in such warning.

1.d) Key information on achievements towards the milestones set in the performance Framework based on Table F

This section applies to AIR(s) 2016, 2017, 2018 only

1.e) Other RDP specific element [optional]

This is not applicable for Malta's Rural Development Programme.

1.f) Where appropriate, the contribution to macro-regional and sea basin strategies

As stipulated by the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, article 27(3) on the "content of programmes", article 96(3)(e) on the "content, adoption and amendment of operational programmes under the Investment for growth and jobs goal", article 111(3), article 111(4)(d) on "implementation reports for the Investment for growth and jobs goal", and Annex 1, section 7.3 on "contribution of mainstream programmes to macro-regional and sea-basin strategies, this programme contributes to MRS(s) and/or SBS:

- EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)
- EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)
- EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)
- EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP)
- Atlantic Sea Basin Strategy (ATLSBS)

1.g) Currency rate used for conversion AIR (non EUR countries)

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2. THE PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE EVALUATION PLAN.

2.a) Description of any modifications made to the evaluation plan in the RDP during the year, with their justification

No modifications were made to the Evaluation Plan as defined in Chapter 9 of the RDP.

2.b) A description of the evaluation activities undertaken during the year (in relation to section 3 of the evaluation plan)

The Annual Implementation Report (AIR) for the year ending 31st December 2018 was submitted to the European Commission in June 2019. This report presented the results emerging from the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) activities carried out during 2018, thereby allowing the MA to assess progress in the RDP implementation.

In the AIR for 2018, a total of 30 CEQs were answered, 18 of which were related to a specific Focus Area (FA). Since some measures had only been recently launched or were expected to be launched in 2019, the progress recorded in the FAs concerned, was limited up to the end of 2018. In turn, the extent of evaluation activities that could be undertaken was also limited. Against this background, most evaluation activities were undertaken with respect to those FAs in which progress was recorded, such as FA2A, whereby interviews were held with beneficiaries of Measure 4.1 and discussions were held with two of the main beneficiaries for Measure 4.2 to discuss the extent of progress and to collect relevant GIS data.

Given that several measures were launched during 2019, the M&E activities intensified following the submission of the AIR for 2018. Indeed, regular meetings held between the evaluators, the MA, the PA and the IT developers have led to the consolidation of a central database that is being used to monitor and evaluate progress in the programme. More specifically, the M&E activities commenced on the following measures:

- Measure 1.1: For the purpose of the evaluation, questionnaires were prepared for each course and distributed to participants attending the training courses. Through these questionnaires, the beneficiaries provide their feedback on whether the training received contributed to an increase in knowledge in a number of fields, including improved soil management, improved water management, better energy efficiency and innovation.
- Measure 4.1: Interviews have been planned to be conducted with beneficiaries (in 2020) and the evaluators have discussed a template for the completion of projects with the MA. At the request of the evaluators, FADN data for 2013 to 2018 has also been provided.
- Measure 4.3: Efforts have been undertaken to discuss the collection of data with beneficiaries currently managing relatively larger projects for the distribution of treated water and the development of rural roads.
- Measure 4.4: Data collection efforts have been stepped up by the development of a form which would be completed by the beneficiary upon the completion of the project.
- Measure 6.1: The business plans of applicants have been reviewed with the aim of extracting useful information, in particular variables which are not stored electronically, and which could be valuable to the evaluation (ex: turnover and employment of agricultural holding). This information has been organised in a database to facilitate the impact evaluation of projects falling under this measure.

- Measure 19: A comprehensive set of indicators is in the process of being developed, with the contribution of individual LAGs. Meetings will be held with individual LAGs to discuss elements of the evaluation process to which they can contribute.
- Measure 20: A set of indicators have been sent to the MA so that data can be compiled, maintained and updated on an ongoing basis for the monitoring and evaluation of NRN.

2.c) A description of activities undertaken in relation to the provision and management of data (in relation to section 4 of the evaluation plan)

In 2019, three meetings were held with ABACO, the database system administrator, and ARPA, the Paying Agency which collects data from beneficiaries for payment purposes. The meetings were held between October and December 2019. The contract to the evaluators was awarded at the end of March 2019, and as such meetings with relevant stakeholders could not start before April which was close to the submission of the 2018 AIR.

The main objective of the meetings held by the evaluators was to comprehend the data that is being inputted by ARPA and to identify gaps. Data inputted into the centralised database currently captures information provided at application stage. The evaluators have been actively involved in the development of a project progress and a separate project completion template from which data would also need to be inputted into the system. Discussions have been held with all players as different data formats exist depending on the reporting requirements. Therefore, together with ABACO, ARPA and the MA, the evaluators have sought to conduct an exercise to take stock of existing data, highlight the required indicators by measure and focus area and discuss the best way for information to be extracted from databases and presented so as to facilitate data analysis. This has inevitably led to modifications and enhancements of the data system.

For instance, emphasis was placed on the collection of data at the level of investment actions linked to focus areas. This is particularly important for evaluation purposes but also for monitoring in order to determine the allocation of expenditure under the respective focus areas. Where data is unavailable, collection of data from beneficiaries has also been addressed, how it should be collected and how the system can cater for inputting and processing of data. For example, under M10.1, the data related to the different AECMs was requested including number of trees, bee box movement and data on soil organic matter. This data will enable the evaluators to assess the impacts of the measures. Under Measure 4.4 it was also discussed that the digitised length of rubble walls restored /maintained / created would provide a useful indicator on the impact on biodiversity so that this information is now being requested from the beneficiary at payment stage,

The MA, PA and other entities using the system, are engaged in continuous discussions to continue improving the IT system while building on the systems that are already available. Such improvements assist the MA and external evaluators in better monitoring and evaluation processes. In particular the GIS database with the required additional information requested by the evaluators will be provided to the evaluators so that spatial analysis of the relevant focus areas can be carried out.

Finally, in section 4 of Chapter 9 in the RDP, the presence of several data gaps/bottlenecks in the databases used in the monitoring and evaluation practices was noted. These data gaps/bottlenecks have now been addressed through the efforts of several stakeholders, including the Managing Authority, the ARPA, the IT

system administrator and the evaluators.

2.d) A list of completed evaluations, including references to where they have been published on-line

Publis her/Ed itor	Managing Authority for the Rural Development Programme (Malta)
Author (s)	Managing Authority for the Rural Development Programme (Malta)
Title	Annual Implementation Report (Malta) for the year ending 31st December 2018
Abstra ct	In 2018, the MA directed its efforts to launching various measures, preparing for the launch of additional measures, adjudicating a number of projects, starting the implementation of investments' projects and consolidation of land-based measures whilst raising awareness with the various stakeholders. The MA launched M1.1, M4.2, M11.1, M11.2 and M19.3. It also relaunched M4.3 and M10.1. A total of 502 applications were received in 2018. Meanwhile, committed expenditure amounted to €70,101,326 whereas realised expenditure stood at €30,344,572. This expenditure was distributed across FA2A namely through the implementation of M4.1 and M4.3, FA2B through M4.1 and M6.1, FA3A through M4.1 and M4.2, P4 through M4.4, M10.1 and M13.3, FA5A through M4.3, FA5E through M10.1 and FA6B through M19.1, M19.2 and M19.4. As at end 2018, these sub-measures except M4.3 were still open. Under LEADER, the LAGs started launching their first measures under M19.2 as from October 2018.
URL	https://eufundscms.gov.mt/en/EU%20Funds%20Programmes/European%20Agricultural%20Fund/Documents/Downloads%20And%20Links/AIR/Implementation%20report_2014MT06RDNP001_2018_2_en%20(6).pdf

2.e) A summary of completed evaluations, focussing on evaluation findings

The Annual Implementation Report (AIR) submitted in June 2019 covering the year ending 31st December 2018 represented an important element of the evaluation process in terms of stepping up the monitoring and evaluation activities. Indeed, the MA focused on the successful implementation of measures and on monitoring progress so as to ensure that the momentum in late 2018 and 2019 is maintained.

The AIR for 2018 evaluated the progress of various measures, also in the light of the Strategic RDP Modification that was approved in December 2018. This modification addressed issues related to the implementation of certain measures as well as the withdrawal of Measure 17 (Risk Management) from the Programme. Following the approval of this modification, the MA stepped up its efforts in implementing measures and selecting the applications submitted throughout the course of the year. 2018 was characterised by the launch of specific measures, preparations for the launch of additional measures, adjudication of a number of projects, start of implementation of investments' projects, consolidation of land-based measures and raising awareness with the various stakeholders. Throughout 2018, the MA received a total of 502 applications [1].

In the AIR for 2018, a total of 30 CEQs were answered, 18 of which were related to a specific Focus Area (FA). A series of recommendations were put forward by the evaluators under the specific CEQs. Most of the recommendations emphasised the need to step up the process of data collection and to work towards the centralisation of data. It was recommended that the data mechanism would allow for the uploading of more recent data rather than relying on data provided at application stage, thereby facilitating the evaluation process, in particular when it comes to projects of a larger scale. Towards this end, the MA and other relevant stakeholders engaged in active discussion throughout 2019 to ensure effective collection of data. Furthermore, in view of the importance of adopting participatory approaches to evaluation, it was recommended that good channels of communication are maintained with the beneficiaries so as to ensure that participation in focus groups, interviews and surveys to be carried out as part of the evaluation would be up to the targeted level.

[1] Source: Citizens' Summary 2018, available at:

[https://eufunds.gov.mt/en/EU%20Funds%20Programmes/European%20Agricultural%20Fund/Documents/Downloads%20And%20Links/AIR/Citizen%20Summary%20for%20Implementation%20Year%202018_v2%20FINAL%20\(2\).pdf](https://eufunds.gov.mt/en/EU%20Funds%20Programmes/European%20Agricultural%20Fund/Documents/Downloads%20And%20Links/AIR/Citizen%20Summary%20for%20Implementation%20Year%202018_v2%20FINAL%20(2).pdf)

2.f) A description of communication activities undertaken in relation to publicising evaluation findings (in relation to section 6 of the evaluation plan)

Reference shall be made to the evaluation plan, any difficulties encountered in implementation shall be described, together with solutions adopted or proposed.

Date / Period	01/01/2018 - 31/12/2018
Title of communication	Annual Implementation Report Malta - Rural Development Programme (National)

activity/event & topic of evaluation findings discussed/disseminated	
Overall organiser of activity/event	Managing Authority
Information channels/format used	Available Online
Type of target audience	Agricultural and rural stakeholders as well as general public (citizens summary)
Approximate number of stakeholders reached	454
URL	https://eufunds.gov.mt/en/EU%20Funds%20Programmes/European%20Agricultural%20Fund/Documents/Downloads%20And%20Links/AIR/Implementation%20report_2014MT06RDNP001_2018_2_en%20(6).pdf

2.g) Description of the follow-up given to evaluation results (in relation to section 6 of the evaluation plan)

Reference shall be made to the evaluation plan, any difficulties encountered in implementation shall be described, together with solutions adopted or proposed.

<p>Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)</p>	<p>Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018: NRN should engage in direct and formal involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of rural development, improving the quality of implementation of rural development programmes and supporting innovation. Indeed, the NRN has an important role to play in bringing together the stakeholders and enhancing the effectiveness of the RDP through dialogue undertaken within the Network.</p>
<p>Follow-up carried out</p>	<p>Following the recommendations presented in the 2019 AIR, the NRN is taking a more active role when it comes to the identification of innovative projects and the dissemination of information on these projects in a bid to spur further innovation within the sector. The NRN will be also providing support and network opportunities for advisors and innovation support services operating within the parameters of the RDP targets. In addition, the NRN has prepared a communication plan to facilitate the network between stakeholders and the implementation of the RDP. The NRN will be using several tools to disseminate information and facilitate efficient exchange through different media sources including website, newsletters, workshops, seminars, information session and one-to-one meetings.</p>
<p>Responsible authority for follow-up</p>	<p>Managing authority</p>

<p>Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)</p>	<p>Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:Furthermore the evaluators recommend that data in relation to the NRN is collected in a structured manner so that expenditure and output by the NRN can be classified accordingly under its functions allowing for an assessment of how the national rural network contributes towards achieving the objectives laid down in Art. 54(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013</p>
<p>Follow-up carried out</p>	<p>The evaluators are compiling a list of indicators related to NRN which would be of interest to answering this evaluation question and which will be sent to the MA for follow up and collection of data.</p>
<p>Responsible authority for follow-up</p>	<p>Managing authority</p>

<p>Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding &</p>	<p>Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:In terms of recommendations, answering this CEQ as well as CEQs related to P5 is data intensive requiring data ranging from renewable energy production, energy efficiency, carbon</p>
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mention source in brackets)	sequestration and so on. It is thus recommended that together with the MA, meetings are set up soonest with relevant authorities including the Environment & Resources Authority and Energy & Water Agency to discuss the most plausible approach to collect relevant data.
Follow-up carried out	The MA, ARPA and the evaluators have been engaged in active discussions on the collection of data. A number of parameters from the application are being captured in a central database but more importantly data from the closure reports will need to be captured. The evaluators have made a request, and received FADN data from 2013 onwards, which will allow for an assessment of economic parameters which are important for assessing the competitiveness of the sector. These discussions are expected to be maintained throughout the implementation of the Programme and intensify once projects are completed.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:Discussion to be undertaken with the MA, PA, IT and other stakeholders such as the NSO to ensure that sufficient data is collected to capture the impact of the Programme on rural poverty by the time of the ex-post evaluation
Follow-up carried out	The MA, ARPA and the evaluators have been engaged in active discussions on the collection of data. A number of parameters from the application are being captured in a central database but more importantly data from the closure reports will need to be captured. The evaluators have made a request, and received FADN data from 2013 onwards, which will allow for an assessment of economic parameters which are important for assessing the competitiveness of the sector. These discussions are expected to be maintained throughout the implementation of the Programme and intensify once projects are completed.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:Discussion to be undertaken with the MA, PA, IT and other stakeholders such as the NSO to ensure that sufficient data is collected to capture the impact of the Programme on biodiversity and ecosystem services
Follow-up carried out	The MA, ARPA and the evaluators have been engaged in active discussions on the collection of data. A number of parameters from the application are being captured in a central database but more importantly data from the closure reports will need to be captured. The evaluators have made a request, and received FADN data from 2013 onwards, which will allow for an assessment of

	economic parameters which are important for assessing the competitiveness of the sector. These discussions are expected to be maintained throughout the implementation of the Programme and intensify once projects are completed.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:it is recommended that steps are taken to ensure that the impact of RDP interventions which contribute to increased competitiveness in the agricultural sector can be evaluated during the course of the Programme and for the ex-post evaluation. More specifically, efforts are to intensify with respect to addressing existing data lacunae, thereby ensuring that data on the indicators relevant to this CEQ are available.
Follow-up carried out	The MA, ARPA and the evaluators have been engaged in active discussions on the collection of data. A number of parameters from the application are being captured in a central database but more importantly data from the closure reports will need to be captured. The evaluators have made a request, and received FADN data from 2013 onwards, which will allow for an assessment of economic parameters which are important for assessing the competitiveness of the sector. These discussions are expected to be maintained throughout the implementation of the Programme and intensify once projects are completed.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:efforts should be directed towards centralising the data collation so as to facilitate the evaluation process. Data derived from the business plan of applicants under M6.1 should be documented electronically allowing for a more thorough assessment of the scheme. Valuable data is being captured even at application phase but not necessarily captured electronically on the database. For example, the skills shortage identified for applicants under M6.1.
Follow-up carried out	As indicated previously meetings were held between the evaluators, the MA, the PA and the IT developers to discuss the data being inputted. Specific to M6.1, a meeting was held with the MA, PA and IT developers to discuss data issues. Furthermore, the business plans of applicants have been sent to the evaluators. Collection of data is not electronic and therefore the evaluators are going through the business plans to extract relevant information which can be used for evaluation purposes such as turnover and employment of agricultural holdings. This information has been organised in a database to facilitate the impact evaluation of projects falling under this measure.
Responsible authority	Managing authority

for follow-up	
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Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:It is recommended that the MA monitors discussions particularly ongoing ones on the quality scheme for cow's milk and participating where necessarily to promote the take up of Measure 3.1. Furthermore, discussions should commence as early as possible on the collection of data for M4.2 which contributes towards this FA.
Follow-up carried out	An application was submitted for measure 3.1 which has been assessed and evaluated in the second half of 2019, but it failed selection. 'Koperattiva Produtturi tal-Halib' (KPH) which is the cooperative for the producers of milk, submitted a new application in 2020 and is currently being evaluated. The application has been re-submitted and awarded throughout 2020. With respect to measure 4.2, a meeting was held at the end of December 2019, with ABACO, the organisation responsible for processing data that is being collected from applications, and ARPA IT Developer and the paying agency. This meeting was held to understand what data is captured, how the system can cater for the data that is required for evaluation purposes, how it can be extracted and in what format. Eventually, a meeting will be held to select variables from the closing report which is submitted by beneficiaries for payment purposes and which would include the actual achievements of the projects.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:The evaluators will be engaging with the MA, PA and other relevant stakeholders to ensure sufficient collection of data for the ex-post evaluation. This would also include commissioning of surveys as relevant for example for the computation of the Farmland Bird Index.
Follow-up carried out	The MA, ARPA and the evaluators have been engaged in active discussions on the collection of data. A number of parameters from the application are being captured in a central database but more importantly data from the closure reports will need to be captured. The evaluators have made a request, and received FADN data from 2013 onwards, which will allow for an assessment of economic parameters which are important for assessing the competitiveness of the sector. These discussions are expected to be maintained throughout the implementation of the Programme and intensify once projects are completed.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:Steps should be taken to speed
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relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	up the approval of the recently launched measures, so beneficiaries are selected throughout 2019.
Follow-up carried out	The measures under this Focus Area include M1, M2 and M16 . Notable progress has been recorded under M1. Courses to be attended by AECMs beneficiaries were launched in the first quarter of 2020. In terms of the former, all AECMs beneficiaries are obliged to attend such courses.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:Higher efforts are directed towards promoting and implementing measures and sub-measures targeting innovation. Furthermore, existing data lacunae are to be addressed particularly in terms of the identification of projects which are innovative and which would also be contributing towards enhancing innovation.
Follow-up carried out	With respect to data lacunae, the evaluators are holding in depth discussion with relevant stakeholders namely, the PA and the IT developers, to discuss the collection of relevant data required for the evaluation of innovative interventions. Furthermore, following the recommendations of evaluators, the National Rural Network (NRN) is taking a more active role when it comes to the identification of innovative projects and the dissemination of information on these projects in a bid to spur further innovation within the sector.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in CEQs in AIR 2018:Greater attention is required to monitor links between the agriculture community (broadly defined) and the research and innovation community to ensure the effective take up of the M16. In particular the development of pilot projects is important in the context of a local agricultural sector which is small in size and which exhibits difficulties in obtaining economies of scale which is often required for the introduction of innovative techniques.
Follow-up carried out	As indicated above, the MA has progressed in the implementation of M16 with M16.2 launched over three batches with three applications approved. The NRN in itself also plays an important role in bringing the stakeholders together and has an active role in the promotion of M16.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:Steps are to be undertaken to ensure that the impact of RDP interventions in terms of the degree of innovation supported can be evaluated during the course of the Programme and for the ex-post evaluation. More specifically, efforts are to intensify with respect to addressing existing data lacunae, thereby ensuring that data is available. It may also be worth considering asking applicants to specify whether the project contains innovative elements.
Follow-up carried out	The evaluators are holding in depth discussion with relevant stakeholders namely, the PA and the IT developers, to discuss the collection of relevant data required for the evaluation of innovative interventions. This data is to feed in the quantitative component of the evaluation. In order to make data gaps which are likely to arise, the evaluation related to innovation may need to depend on qualitative approaches such as case studies wherein the cases will be selected with the assistance of the National Rural Network.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:Also, efforts should be directed towards monitoring projects which rely on construction as is the case for some projects falling under M4.1 and M4.3. As current trends in the construction sector are likely to persist, there is a risk for project implementation vis-à-vis the closure of the programming period.
Follow-up carried out	The MA is maintaining open channels of communication with the beneficiaries to identify challenges. The boom in the construction industry in Malta has led to implementation challenges by the beneficiaries which is not easy to overcome. The Paying Agency is currently looking into the possibility of standard cost options in order to simplify payment procedures which could contribute towards addressing these challenges. To ensure that communication with beneficiaries is maintained throughout project implementation, the MA also developed progress reports to track RDP projects implementation. Closure reports have also been developed to be completed by RDP beneficiaries to assist in the evaluation of the RDP.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:Good channels of communication are maintained with the beneficiaries in order to ensure that participation in focus groups, interviews and surveys to be carried out as part of the evaluation, will be up to the targeted level.
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brackets)	
Follow-up carried out	The MA is committed in maintaining an open channel of communication with beneficiaries. Indeed, regular meetings are held with beneficiaries to discuss the progress and challenges related to specific measures. For large projects, the MA also holds one-to-one meetings with the project managers to discuss the level of progress. In some instances, the evaluators are also invited to avoid duplication of effort from the side of the beneficiaries. These meetings contribute towards facilitating the evaluation process. To ensure that communication with beneficiaries is maintained throughout project implementation, the MA also developed progress reports to track RDP projects implementation. Closure reports have also been developed to be completed by RDP beneficiaries to assist in the evaluation of the RDP.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018: Greater attention is required to monitor links between, on the one hand, the agriculture community (broadly defined) and, on the other, the research and innovation community to ensure the effective take up of these measures.
Follow-up carried out	The MA is working towards identifying the potential for collaboration between different stakeholders in the agricultural sector. This recommendation is also being addressed through the NRN which 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 more involved. Indeed, the NRN is working towards supporting networking opportunities for advisors and innovation support services operating within the parameters of the Rural Development Programme targets. Such opportunities can include though not restricted to the participation of beneficiaries under M16. The NRN convenes annually, with the last meeting held on the 22nd November 2019. During this meeting, several issues were discussed such as the communication strategy, the action plan as well as the link between the agricultural community and the research and innovation community.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018: Steps should also be taken to ensure that data required to capture the impact of lifelong learning and vocational training on the agricultural sector can be evaluated during the course of the Programme and for the ex-post evaluation. In this respect, the evaluators will be liaising with relevant stakeholders and with the MA to develop an
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	evaluation sheet for the participants.
Follow-up carried out	In conjunction with the MA and the educational institution concerned, the evaluators are disseminating a questionnaire to the participants attending training courses. This questionnaire aims to shed light on the impact of such training on individual beneficiaries. The beneficiaries provide their feedback on whether the training received contributed to an increase in knowledge in a number of fields, including improved soil management, improved water management, better energy efficiency and innovation.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018: Good channels of communication are maintained with the beneficiaries in order to ensure that the participation in focus groups, interviews and surveys to be carried out as part of the evaluation, will be up to the targeted level.
Follow-up carried out	The MA is committed to maintaining an open channel of communication with beneficiaries. Indeed, regular meetings are held with beneficiaries to discuss the progress and challenges related to specific measures.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018: As a general recommendation, from an evaluation perspective, there should be more efforts directed towards the centralisation of data particularly on the progress of the projects so as to facilitate the evaluation process. The data mechanism should allow for the uploading of more recent data rather than relying on data provided at application stage. This in particular is relevant for the larger projects such as those being conducted under M4.3.
Follow-up carried out	In order to address this recommendation, the MA has set up a number of meetings with IT Developer (data collection), ARPA (Paying Agency) and the evaluators to discuss the variables which are currently being inputted. Furthermore, the evaluators have discussed a closure report template for the completion of projects with the MA which would vary depending on the measure it is addressing. At the request of the evaluators, FADN data for 2013 to 2018 has also been provided. Finally, efforts have also been undertaken to discuss the collection of data with beneficiaries currently managing relatively larger projects such as Water Services Corporation (distribution of treated water) and Infrastructure Malta (rural roads).

Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority
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Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:Evaluation identified a number of challenges in the implementation of M4.4. Construction prices are persistently increasing leading to constraints on the agricultural sector and local entities as the construction sector is unwilling to engage in less profitable elements such as the building or restoration or rubble walls, reservoirs, etc. Costs for the restoration of rubble walls should be simplified through the adoption of a SCO,through a fixed price
Follow-up carried out	The Paying Agency issued a tender for the development of the SCO within the Programme and the possibility is being explored. The adoption of this approach would simplify from an administrative perspective the distribution of funds and provides clarity also to the beneficiaries. The MA, ARPA and the evaluators have been engaged in active discussions on the collection of data. A number of parameters from the application are being captured in a central database but more importantly data from the closure reports will need to be captured. The evaluators have made a request, and received FADN data from 2013 onwards, which will allow for an assessment of economic parameters which are important for assessing the competitiveness of the sector. These discussions are expected to be maintained throughout the implementation of the Programme and intensify once projects are completed.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:Although the agricultural area impacted by M4.4 is available, GIS data showing how much agricultural land is associated with the applications to restore rubble walls needs to be processed. This is useful in identifying spatially where interventions are made to correlate them to designated Areas of High Landscape Value, Area of Ecological Importance and Natura2000 Sites.
Follow-up carried out	Discussions between the MA, the GIS Team within ARPA and the Evaluators have been held and this issue has been discussed. It was agreed that the MA would provide ARPA with information on selected projects under Measure 4.4 so that the data at both MA and ARPA reflects actual contracted land. It was also agreed that during the final payment claim stage ARPA would request the beneficiary to provide certified information on length, area and volume of rubble walls maintained / restored/ constructed.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:In terms of the evaluation per se, in order to strengthen the methodologies used data regarding the implementation of the different AECMs is required including information on trees planted, components of the Integrated Pest Management Plans and Soil Management Plans, information related to biodiversity on parcels, and reduction in pesticide use.
Follow-up carried out	The information that can be captured by GIS has been discussed among the MA, ARPA and the Evaluators. It was agreed that ARPA would provide GIS shapefiles for AECMs where this data is collected including on trees, bee boxes, and soil organic matter.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:It is further recommended that the MA contacts all registered organic producers with the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (MCCAA) for further promoting this measure.
Follow-up carried out	The budget allocated to M11 is limited and therefore efforts required to promote the measure must be considered within the context of the budget. Notwithstanding the uptake remains relatively low and the MA should engage in discussions on the low uptake.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:As a general recommendation under AECM5 any data collected on Soil Organic Matter is inputted in GIS so that spatial data on organic matter is collected throughout the implementation of the RDP
Follow-up carried out	This has been discussed during a meeting between the MA, ARPA and the Evaluators and it was agreed that ARPA would provide a sample of the shapefile on AECM 5 wherein organic soil matter data is being collected annually and inputted into the GIS database.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:It was pointed out that there is no expenditure that can be reported under M4.1 contributing to Focus Area 4b. This must also be discussed with the MA with a view to enhance the evaluation.
Follow-up carried out	The MA is working with the Evaluators to provide the latter with reports that have information on each line item related to the investment, so that although the expenditure is allocated to the largest action, actions that have a lower budget but could affect the focus area (such as construction of reservoirs, irrigation systems, etc) are captured.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:Steps need to be taken to ensure that the impact of RDP interventions in terms of the degree of a balanced territorial development can be evaluated during the course of the Programme and for the ex-post evaluation through the provision of adequate data. Efforts are to intensify with respect to addressing data requirements, thereby ensuring that the impact can be assessed.
Follow-up carried out	The NRN has committed to provide the opportunity for the LAGS to attend training on the use of Siti Agri System Platform (IACS) which includes agriculture related information. In addition, the Managing Authority in collaboration with the NRN and the RDP evaluators, will be going to organise a seminar to discuss the RDP monitoring and evaluation process, including the monitoring and evaluation of the LEADER at the local level. This will include training to LAGs on the indicators adopted, how to collect data, the sources and frequency of collection. It will also include training on monitoring of data, reporting and responsibilities. Due the COVID-19 situation, the meeting was postponed to mid 2020.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:Efforts should be directed towards monitoring projects which rely on construction as is the case for some projects falling under M4.4. As current trends in the construction sector are likely to persist, there is a risk for project implementation vis-à-vis the closure of the programming period
Follow-up carried out	The MA seeks to engage in regular meetings with key beneficiaries of the Programme to monitor progress as is the case with the Ministry for Gozo which is one of the main beneficiaries under M4.4. Other beneficiaries under this

	measure are also being invited to complete progress report to monitor the implementation of projects.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:The target for FA4A (% of agricultural land under management contracts contributing to biodiversity) has been exceeded and is likely to increase as more take up is anticipated for M10.1 in 2019. Given the strong demand for the measure, the MA may consider future amendments of the programme allocating budget towards this FA
Follow-up carried out	The MA is currently in the process of discussing modifications to the Programme including an increase in the budget for AECMs.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:Efforts should be directed towards monitoring projects which rely on construction as is the case for some projects falling under M4.4. As trends in the construction sector are likely to persist, there is a risk for project implementation vis-à-vis the closure of the programming period. Monitoring of projects should be undertaken through bilateral meetings with beneficiaries and / or regular progress updates.The MA may request Progress/ Closure reports
Follow-up carried out	As explained above, the MA has undertaken bilateral meetings to monitor progress on Measure 4.4. Progress reports are also being completed by measure beneficiaries.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:For future evaluations areas affected by M4.1 under FA5A should be made available
Follow-up carried out	The MA is working with the Evaluators to provide the latter with reports that have information on each line item related to the investment, so that although the expenditure is allocated to the largest action, actions that have a lower budget but could affect the focus area (such as construction of reservoirs,

	irrigation systems, etc) are captured.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:The reporting of investment actions under M4.1 needs to be refined to capture contributions which may be of a secondary nature
Follow-up carried out	The MA is working with the Evaluators to provide the latter with reports that have information on each line item related to the investment, so that although the expenditure is allocated to the largest action, actions that have a lower budget but could affect the focus area (such as investment in renewable energy systems) are captured. The evaluators have also requested the assistance of the Helpdesk to determine the appropriate allocation of M4.1 in relation to contribution across Focus Areas. Discussion is expected to ensue in the coming weeks.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:The MA is encouraged to avoid late launch of measures and to ensure that M16 is launched as soon as possible and measures to encourage take-up undertaken
Follow-up carried out	M16.2, 16.4 and 16.6 were launched in 2019 with 3 calls made for each measure. For measure 16.2 , 3 applications have thus far been awarded. On the other hand, for M16.4 and M16.6 no applications were received.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:For future evaluations, investment under M4.1 contributing to FA5D should be made available so that the indicator can be computed. Discussions with the MA and PA will be undertaken to ensure that the data required for the evaluation is captured and can be analysed
Follow-up carried out	The MA is working with the Evaluators to provide the latter with reports that have information on each line item related to the investment, so that although

	the expenditure is allocated to the largest action, actions that have a lower budget but could affect the focus area (such as investment in renewable energy systems) are captured.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:In order to ensure the success of Measure 8.5 it is important that the general public is made aware of the requirements of the measure, now that the measure has been pre-launched in Q2 of 2019.
Follow-up carried out	The MA is currently considering the possible revision of sub measure 8.5 in the RDP.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:The establishment of an evaluation committee which proved to be successful in other Rural Development Programmes
Follow-up carried out	This committee would be made up of the evaluators, the MA, PA and other data providers such as Department of Agriculture, NSO, ERA and other relevant parties in order to develop a fora for discussions on evaluation in relation to the Programme. If it is envisaged that having stakeholders such as ERA and NSO may pose to be a challenge, the evaluation committee could be made of the evaluators, MA and PA, with an invitation being issued to these stakeholders as the need may arise. It is recommended that the evaluation committee would meet once every three months or as the need may arise.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:The MA should maintain close cooperation with relevant stakeholders (which may include, but not limited to, farmers organisations, the University of Malta, MCAST as well as MCST) to gauge the areas where potential pilot projects could be of benefit to the sector.
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Follow-up carried out	M16.2 was launched in 2019 in three batches. Applications were received during the first and second batches with three applications awarded. Revisions in the eligibility for this sub measures, as a standalone measure rather than tied to other measures, may have had positive effects on its attractiveness.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:For LEADER, the MA should encourage greater cooperation between the LAGs to overcome challenges and positive lessons can be brought forward. Given that LEADER also has a Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy against which LAGs will have to report, parties should engage in dialogue to ensure that relevant data for the purpose of evaluation can be collected. Indeed, it is to be ensured that the monitoring system in place will provide evidence.
Follow-up carried out	Direct communication is being kept between the LAGs and the MA. Meetings were held to discuss the status of Measure 19 including the projects under this measure, the expenditure and the data being collected. As for the recommended training for LAGs, the NRN has committed to provide the opportunity for the LAGS to attend training on relevant topics which could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VAT training • COCOF training • Ongoing familiarisation on the use of Siti Agri System Platform (IACS) • Public procurement training
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:Data on possible secondary contributions can be collected even at the application stage. This however needs to be recorded in the IT system and thus interaction is required with IT developers to ensure that sufficient data will be collected in order to determine the effectiveness of the Programme driven through the synergies.
Follow-up carried out	Discussions are underway with the IT developers to allow for the identification of secondary contributions.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018:The skills of the staff should continue to be enhanced and exchanges should be encouraged so that lessons learnt from other Programmes which may be similar to size and structure to Malta could be absorbed
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brackets)	
Follow-up carried out	Investment in human resources is an ongoing process and is expected to intensify given the overlap of the current and upcoming programming period's RDP. The MA has also engaged in training of staff and the exchange of experience with other MAs.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

Evaluation result relevant for follow-up (Describe finding & mention source in brackets)	Recommendation made in the CEQs in AIR 2018: Ensure that the impact of innovation, cooperation and the development of the knowledge base can be evaluated during and after the implementation of the RDP through the availability of data which captures these elements. Questionnaires should be distributed amongst participants to capture evaluation questions particularly in terms of the extent to which the course aids in capturing innovation.
Follow-up carried out	The evaluators are holding in depth discussion with relevant stakeholders namely, the Paying Agency and the IT developers, to discuss the collection of relevant data. This data is to feed in the quantitative component of the evaluation. This will be complemented by a case-study approach which would involve a micro assessment of the extent to which RDP measures have succeeded in fostering innovation and cooperation. Following the recommendations of the evaluators, the National Rural Network (NRN) is taking a more active role when it comes to the identification of innovative projects and the dissemination of information on these projects in a bid to spur further innovation within the sector. Furthermore, the evaluators have drafted questionnaires, which are being distributed to course participants under M1.1, to assess the effectiveness of the courses.
Responsible authority for follow-up	Managing authority

3. ISSUES WHICH AFFECT THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND THE MEASURES TAKEN

3.a) Description of steps taken to ensure quality and effectiveness of programme implementation

Consultation with public and private entities

Apart from the several information sessions held throughout the years (referred to under Chapter 4 of the AIR), the MA holds several consultation sessions with different public entities who are considered as critical stakeholders in the management, implementation, monitoring and control of the programme. Continuous discussions are held with the Department of Agriculture, the Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency (ARPA), the Environment and Resources Authority, and the Planning Authority. In addition, discussions with the Lands Authority, the Veterinary and Phytosanitary Regulation Department as well as the Chief Information Officers with the relevant Ministries are also held to achieve programme effectiveness as well as to facilitate programme implementation.

The Managing Authority also held discussions with the various beneficiaries of the programme in relation to the specific measures, covering implementation issues as well as their contribution to reach programme objectives. These are called bi-lateral meetings and during 2019, these were held for projects falling under M4.1, M4.3 and M4.4. Beneficiaries that participated in bi-lateral meetings covered Public Entities, such as Infrastructure Malta, Transport Malta and the Water Services Corporation, Voluntary Organisations as well as private sector entities (private sector entities are primarily agricultural holdings).

Online Application

As part of Government's initiative to make the Public Service easily accessible, Government embarked on a number of simplification measures, of which one relates to the submission of online applications. In this regard, during 2019, the Managing Authority embarked on this initiative and started collaborating with the IT service provider to develop this facility. Work is currently underway, with a focus on M4.1, which is currently being piloted and is expected to be rolled out to all the RDP measures by the end of 2020.

Currently, only the AECMs applications are submitted online through the support of the Front Office referred to under Chapter 4 of this Document.

Simplified Cost Options

As part of a programme modification submitted during 2019, the Managing Authority introduced the possible use of simplified cost options based on Art 67 (1)(c) of (EU) Regulation 1303/2013, as established in line with Art 67 (5)(a)(1) and Art 67 (5)(b) of (EU) Regulation 1303/2013. This will reduce the administrative burden for both the Managing Authority and prospective beneficiaries under M2.1.

To further simplify the implementation of the RDP, in 2019, ARPA issued a call for tenders for the engagement consultancy services for the development of simplified cost options to be used within the framework of the RDP for Malta. The contract was also awarded in 2019. The objective of this contract is for ARPA to obtain expert advice on the applicability of SCO for Malta's RDP and identify SCOs that

could simplify application and implementation processes as well as reduce administrative burden for beneficiaries. Results are scheduled to be achieved in 2020. The MA may consider the possible revision of the RDP to capture these SCOs.

Monitoring Committee meetings

During 2019, the Monitoring Committee (MC) of the programme was held on 17 May 2019. During this meeting, the Monitoring Committee discussed the following items:

- Update on RDP Implementation by the MA, covering also N+3 forecasts and contribution towards performance framework targets, including related communication activities undertaken;
- Update on RDP financial execution;
- Ongoing evaluation of the Rural Development Plan, and
- Update on preparations for post CAP 2020.

Presentations delivered during the Monitoring Committee can be downloaded from the MA website:

<https://eufunds.gov.mt/en/EU%20Funds%20Programmes/European%20Agricultural%20Fund/Pages/Monitoring-Committee-2014-2020.aspx>

Technical Meeting

On 16 May 2019, the Managing Authority held a meeting with representatives from DG AGRI, during which, discussions were held concerning the progress in implementation of the RDP. The meeting kicked off with discussions on the ongoing and ex-post evaluations of the RDP, for which the appointed external evaluators of the programme were present. The discussion delved into the difficulties and challenges encountered and addressing the challenges in the run up to the submission of the AIR. Following that, DG Agri and the MA proceeded to project site visits covering a number of RDP beneficiaries.

Annual Review Meeting

In line with the provisions of the Common Provisions Regulation Article 51, an Annual Review Meeting was held between the Commission and Malta. The meeting was held on 14 November 2019 and discussion was steered to:

- Progress report on implementation based on the 2018 Annual Implementation Report and the last

declaration of expenditure; and

- Update on preparation for programming period 2021-2027.

The recommendations stemming from the Commission, where:

Recommendation	Course of Action
<p>Malta once again to speed up the RDP implementation and to do its utmost to launch all missing measures and sub-measures as soon as possible not to further jeopardize an efficient implementation of the RDP and to ensure that the objectives of the programme are reached.</p>	<p>This was largely addressed, given that as at to date 29 of the 34 RDP measures have been launched, with some of the remaining earmarked for possible revision in the near future . Managing Authority holds regular bilateral meetings with beneficiaries as well as with LAG's in ensuring that project and strategy targets are met.</p>
<p>The Commission takes note of the reassurance given by the MA as regards the N+3 automatic de-commitment risk.</p>	<p>Malta is on track to deliver the N+3 target for this (2020) year. 2019 target has been achieved.</p>
<p>The Commission asks Malta to monitor the progress towards the N+3 for 2020 and put in place corrective actions if necessary. The Commission reminds the MA to undertake all efforts to avoid automatic de-commitment at the end of 2020 and thus losing resources from the RDP as foreseen by Art 38 of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013.</p>	<p>Malta is on track to deliver the N+3 target for this year (2020). The MA commits to monitor the situation closely and put in any corrective measures, if necessary.</p> <p>In this context, the possibility of transfer of funds from underperforming measures to successful ones is being considered, whilst keeping in view the programme targets and ambitions. These will be communicated to the Commission immediately once the proposal becomes clearer.</p>
<p>The Commission urges</p>	<p>Despite the considerable efforts to improve implementation progress for M3, with the launch of three calls during 2019, no commitments were made</p>

<p>Malta to monitor the measures with implementation problems and if necessary carry out corrective actions (e.g. M.3, M.11).</p>	<p>towards this measure. The MA has worked tirelessly with both the National Competent Authority for quality schemes and with specific sectors, but thus far only 1 application has materialised and which is being contracted in 2020.</p> <p>As for M11, very minimal progress has been achieved which could be linked to the limited amount of agricultural land dedicated for organic farming.</p> <p>In this context of both these measures, the MA is currently assessing the corrective action to take not to miss out of the funds allocated, whilst considering to shift them to other more successful measures if challenges remain unsurmountable during the timeframes of this programming period.</p>
<p>The Commission takes note of the information provided and expresses its concerns about the serious delays in the progress towards the indicators, which are in line with the delayed RDP implementation. The Commission therefore calls upon Malta to do its utmost to accelerate the RDP implementation.</p>	<p>The MA directed the necessary efforts to address this concern and as at today, the RDP has registered considerable progress with more than 70% of its funds committed as at the end of 2019 and 93% as at end May 2020, with some measures performing better than others. P2 is the best performing priority with a close to 100% commitment values. The Priority performing the least is P3 at 65%, followed closely by P4 and P5. To speed up implementation the MA issued several calls and held a substantial number of Project Selection Committees. Progress has also been registered across a number of target result indicators particularly for FA2B whereby support is being provided to 53 holdings compared to a target of 60 (2023). Also, for FA2A the % of agriculture holdings with RDP support for investment in restructuring or modernisation has reached 0.52% compared to a target of 0.92% by 2023.</p> <p>Likewise, considerable progress has been reached towards the attainment of environmental and climate change objectives through the application of land-based measures. For priority 4, the % of agricultural land under management contracts contributing to biodiversity and soil management has surpassed the target reaching 11% and 9% respectively. Significant progress has also been attained for FA5E as the % of agricultural land under management to foster carbon sequestration/conservation has surpassed the target reaching 6.28%.</p> <p>As a result of the progress achieved in terms of implementation, the MA is expecting positive impacts on the indicators which previously showed no/slow uptake. Complementary to this, the MA is closely following progress at the level of project implementation by the Beneficiaries, and where necessary, bi-lateral meetings are held, to ensure that the RDP targets are achieved. The MA remains committed to maintain the momentum gained over the past months.</p>
<p>The Commission requests the MA to guarantee that evaluation activities are carried out in due time also in line with what is provided in the RDP and calls on the MA to finalise the revised version of the AIR.</p>	<p>The MA is committed to the evaluation activities of the RDP. External consultants have been appointed and have prepared the first Interim Evaluation Report. Intensive discussions were carried out throughout the year for each of the measures in the Programme to discuss data management, an essential input into the evaluation process. The evaluators are in constant contact with the MA in relation to the implementation of the contract.</p>

Joint Review Meeting

The Joint Review Meeting was held on the 15th November 2019. During this meeting, Maltese Authorities discussed with the European Commission the overall implementation of funds and the upcoming programming period.

Programme Modifications

During 2019, the MA triggered the process to modify the RDP in consultation with the MC in line with Article 49(3) of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013. The MC consultation process was undertaken through a written procedure. It was launched on 30 September and closed on 14 October. The changes were adopted by the European Commission on 30 January 2020.

In the main, modifications related to the Performance Framework, clarification of the text with respect to prospective clients, streamlining of RDP measures, text corrections and the introduction of SCOs, amongst others. The changes are described in detail under Section 1.1 of the revised RDP adopted in January 2020 – Version 5.2.

Administrative Capacity Building

- Training Activities

During 2019, several MA Officers attended various training initiatives, including the Public Management Toolkit Courses, organised throughout the year by the Institute of Public Services. This toolkit includes training related to:

- Public Procurement;
- Strategic Change Management;
- Interpersonal Skills;
- Risk Management;
- Budgeting;
- Disciplinary Procedures;
- Well-being issues;
- Industrial Relations and HR Principles;

- Performance Management;
- Corporate Values;
- Decision Making in the EU;
- Data Protection; and
- Management.

During the year under review, MA Officials participated in several courses, training sessions, workshops and seminars delivered by the ENRD, Evaluation Helpdesk, European Commission, and other reputable training organisations. These activities related to:

- Horizontal issues, such as competitiveness and innovation;
- Stakeholder involvement in the implementation of the RDP;
- The use of simplified cost options;
- The National Rural Network;
- Several workshops on the AIR and data management;
- Technical Assistance, HR Competencies and Communication Skills for ESI Fund
- Common Errors in public procurement and determining financial corrections for non-compliance with EU regulations.

All MA officers, including Senior Management, participated in a shadowing experience at the Managing Authority of the Campagna Region in Italy in October 2019 and Emilia Romagna in November 2019. During this experience, MA officials benefitted from first-hand experience on the pertinent duties of the MA in managing their respective RDPs.

Project Selection Committee

To expedite the selection process, during the course of 2019, two Project Selection Committees (PSC) running in parallel were maintained. PSC I and PSC II. PSC I covers the selection process for M1, M19, M4.3, M4.4, M16, M10.2, whilst PSC II covers sector specific calls fall covering M2, M3, M4.1, M4.2, M6.1, M6.4 (these are indicative assignments and measures can shift from one PSC to another, although this has not materialised this far in practice).

Outsourcing of certain tasks

In order to further boost its administrative capacity, the MA outsourced external expertise in view of

supporting its core functions. External experts were engaged to assist in the drafting of guidelines for calls for the different measures as well as to provide technical support to the PSC. A study to assess the applicability of Financial Instruments for the local agri-business sector was also launched, which study has now been submitted to the office responsible for strategic decisions for both the current and future programming period.

Other activities

The MA participates in various inter-ministerial meetings mainly aimed at avoiding double funding of projects, simplification and ensuring clear delineation between one programme and another. Such committees include representation from the various ESI Funds.

The MA also participates in various EU committees and meetings (including RDCs, Expert Group on Monitoring and Evaluation of the CAP, ENRD and EIP workshops and seminars).

Calls for Projects

- Open rolling system with set cut-off dates (for all measures)
- Guidance Notes
- The implementation guidance documents, together with the application forms for the launched measures during 2019, have all been uploaded on the MA website (www.eufunds.gov.mt) as well as on the new website the MA launched during 2018: (<http://www.efundsmalta.gov.mt/>). These guidance documents provide an overview of the measure, targeted priorities, eligible applicants and costs and beneficiary obligations. In line with feedback received during the Annual Review Meeting, the MA is and will keep considering opportunities for better use of an enhanced website platform. Indeed, discussions have been initiated for the setting up of an enhanced website covering all funds which is being considered across all Programmes. During 2019, the MA has enhanced the frequency of the notifications to ensure that beneficiaries receive timely information. For further support, the FAQs were also enhanced. Complementary to this, the MA is continuously putting its efforts into making sure that the website is easily accessible to the general public.

Information Sessions

The MA held various information sessions to support prospective applicants in the application process for RDP measures. Throughout 2019, the MA organised the following sessions:

Information sessions in relation to M4.1 and M4.4 were held at:

- Gozo on the 16th April
- Ta' Qali on the 17th April

Information sessions mainly in relation to M6.4 were held at:

- Ta' Qali on the 24th June
- Gozo on the 26th June

Information sessions in relation to M10.1 Agro-Environment-Climate Measures (AECMs) were held at:

- Mgarr at Mgarr Farmers Cooperative on the 6th August;
- Ghammieri, Marsa at the FES Hall in on the 22nd August;
- Xewkija, Gozo at the Government Experimental Farm on the 24th August; and
- Ta' Qali at the FCCS Cooperative (Pitkalija) on the 27th August.

In addition, the MA actively participated in various information sessions organised by the Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency (ARPA) for Beneficiaries that were awarded a grant, as follows:

- M4.1 – 2 sessions were held in 2019, on 5 June and 10 June;
- M4.2 – 1 session was held 4 October 2019;
- M4.4 - 2 sessions were held on 5 June 2019 and 10 June 2019;
- Two information sessions were specifically held for Local Councils were held on the 21st and 23rd October 2019, covering sub-measures 4.3,4.4 and 19.2.

Ongoing enhancement on IT system

The MA acknowledges that the IT system is the backbone of monitoring and evaluation requirements. Therefore, it is in constant contact with the IT system administrator to manage and improve the IT system.

In line with the overall simplification measures to improve accessibility to Government Services (referred to earlier on), the MA is currently working to translate the current application process to an online platform as explained earlier on. This process is expected to be completed by the end of 2020.

3.b) Quality and efficient delivery mechanisms

Simplified Cost Options (SCOs) ¹, proxy automatically calculated

	Total RDP financial allocation [EAFRD]	[%] planned SCO coverage out of the total RDP allocation ²	[%] realised expenditure through SCO out of total RDP allocation (cumulative ³)
Fund specific methods CPR Article 67(5)(e)	97,326,898.00	21.08	11.17

¹ Simplified Cost Options shall be intended as unit cost/flat rates/lumps sums CPR Article 67(5) including the EAFRD specific methods under point (e) of that article such as business start-up lump sums, flat rate payments to producers organisations and area and animal related unit costs.

² Automatically calculated from programme version's measures 06, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18

³ Automatically calculated from declarations of expenditure's measures 06, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18

Simplified Cost Options (SCOs), based on specific detailed MS data [optional]

	Total RDP financial allocation [EAFRD]	[%] planned SCO coverage out of the total RDP allocation	[%] realised expenditure through SCO out of total RDP allocation (cumulative)
Total CPR Article 67(1)(b)(c)(d) + 67(5)(e)	97,326,898.00		
Fund specific methods CPR Article 67(5)(e)	97,326,898.00		

E-management for beneficiaries [optional]

	[%] EAFRD funding	[%] Operations concerned
Application for support		
Payment claims		
Controls and compliance		
Monitoring and reporting to the MA/PA		

Average time limits for beneficiaries to receive payments [optional]

[Days] Where applicable, MS deadline for payments to beneficiaries	[Days] Average time for payments to beneficiaries	Comments

4. STEPS TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND PROGRAMME PUBLICITY REQUIREMENTS

4.a) Action taken and state of play as regards the establishment of the NRN and the implementation of its action plan

4.a1) Actions taken and state of play as regards establishment of the NRN (governance structure and network support unit)

The NRN for Malta is composed of two separate entities that are distinct in nature but complement each other. These are the Network Support Unit (NSU) and National Rural Network Committee (NRNC). The NSU is composed of members of the EAFRD Managing Authority, which also acts as the Secretariat to the NRNC. The NSU's responsibilities include: the preparation of documents required to facilitate NRNC discussions; the distribution of documents to NRNC Members; technical and organisational issues and administration activities for NRNC meetings; and keeping minutes of NRNC meetings. The NRNC is a committee composed of various representatives from different agricultural sectors, representatives of other actors active in rural areas, Local Action Groups and public entities. Noting that the NRNC is not a decision making body, with their duties being those of participating during NRN meetings and its processes; ensure that statements and/or recommendations made are in the interest of rural development, the agricultural sector and the effective and efficient implementation of the Rural Development Programme; and bring in for discussion only relevant matters related to rural development, the agricultural sector and the implementation of the Rural Development Programme.

Building on the action undertaken in previous years, in 2019 an NRN meeting was held on 22 November. This was the only meeting of the NRN for the year 2019; during this meeting the NRN was presented with an overview of the RDP for the 2014-2020 Programming Period and delved into the ongoing measures of the RDP. A working plan for the following two years and the topics for discussions were raised and agreed too. The focus of the NRN for the next two years is set on simplification and communication and promotion of the programme.

4.a2) Actions taken and state of play as regards the implementation of the action plan

In line with the NRN Terms of References, the National Rural Network groups the local organisations and administrations involved in rural development in an effort to:

- i. increase the involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of rural development;
- ii. improve the quality of implementation of rural development programmes;
- iii. inform the broader public and potential beneficiaries on rural development policy linked to RDP funding opportunities; and
- iv. foster innovation in agriculture, food production, forestry and rural areas.

MA Websites

The MA manages the following two websites:

- www.eufundsmalta.gov.mt

- www.eufunds.gov.mt

Both websites provide information about Malta's Rural Development Programme. During 2019 these two websites were used as the main communication channels between the Managing Authority and its stakeholders, informing them of the latest pre-announcements, calls, newsletters, events, circulars, guidance notes and other useful resources. Through these two portals beneficiaries and new applicants were able to obtain all the necessary information for the development of their project, from application stage to implementation in an easy user-friendly manner. These websites were revised regularly by the Managing Authority as to ensure that the information available was updated and still relevant.

NRN Formal Information Sessions (several informal information sessions are regularly delivered)

During 2019, a series of information sessions on the measures of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 were held. These included:

- Information sessions in relation to M4.1 and M4.4 were held as follows:
 - Gozo on the 16th April
 - Ta Qali on the 17th April
- Information sessions mainly in relation to M6.4 were held as follows:
 - Ta Qali on the 24th June
 - Gozo on the 26th June
- Information sessions in relation to M10.1 Agro-Environment-Climate Measures (AECMs) were held as follows:
 - Mgarr at Mgarr Farmers Cooperative on the 6th August
 - Ghammieri, Marsa at the FES Hall in on the 22nd August
 - Xewkija, Gozo at the Government Experimental Farm on the 24th August
 - Ta' Qali at the FCCS Cooperative (Pitkalija) on the 27th August

The purpose of these information sessions was for the MA to meet and discuss calls under these sub-measures with the potential applicants first-hand. This allowed beneficiaries such as farmers and local processors of agricultural products to discuss project ideas with the MA and help determine what best could be funded through such schemes. These information sessions were strategically scheduled months prior to calls closing as to allow for applicants to have enough time to develop their applications

NRN Newsletter

In 2019, the 16th and 17th issues of the NRN newsletter were published in August and December respectively. The August issue began by detailing some of the work the Managing Authority had been carrying out throughout the first half of 2019. Followed by an article on the LEADER project and the three Local Action Groups (LAGs) appointed to develop the Local Development Strategy, these being Majjistral Action Group Foundation, Gal Xlokk Foundation, and Gozo Action Group Foundation. These three LAGS are receiving €6.5m in order to implement their respective strategies.

The December issue informed stakeholders of the upcoming calls being launched, M1.1, M1.2, and M2.1, providing a summary of these sub-measures and eligible operations. Followed by an article detailing the RDP 2014-2020 Agri-Environment Climate Measures (AECM) which fall under M10.1, focusing on AECM

5: Measure for the implementation of soil management and conservation plan on a holding. In addition to providing information on this AECM, the article also detailed a step by step guide for readers to follow. This issue also delved into the Rural Development Programme for Malta (2014-2020) evaluation process and the role of the evaluators, describing their quantitative and qualitative research techniques being practiced.

The newsletter also included an article on the project being implemented in Gozo awarded under M4.4 – Rehabilitation of Gozo’s valleys to enhance their rain capturing and soil retention capabilities worth around €10m (Public Grant). The project will allow for the rehabilitation of 12 valleys across Gozo, clearing valley floors and the reinstatement of about 26 km rubble walls leading to the improved soil management as well as the rehabilitation and conversation of habitats and preservation of biodiversity.

Also, the newsletter referred to the New Water programme which is being undertaken by the Water Services Corporation which will see the development of high-quality water which is suitable for safe crop irrigation. EU funding through EAFRD will allow for the distribution of treated water potentially addressing up to 35% of the current total water demand of the agricultural sector. This will contribute towards the achievement of good groundwater quantitative status in groundwater bodies.

The newsletter also included three additional articles on the practices of organic farming, beekeeping, and wine quality schemes, and how these can be supported through the Rural Development Programme for Malta (2014-2020).

Information Leaflets

During 2019, the MA carried on with the dissemination of the information leaflets that were designed and developed in 2018. In addition, during the year under review, the MA also procured more of these leaflets for wider dissemination. These leaflets provided information on various sub measures of the RDP and were disseminated amongst farmers as well as during 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.

These leaflets focused primarily on sub-measures M4.1, M4.2, M4.4, M6.1, M10.1, M11.1, and M11.2 as they detailed the main aims of these calls, explaining what would be considered as eligible expenditure and what would be ineligible. This allowed for brief and basic understanding of the calls, following which interested applicants could easily contact the MA or go onto the website to find out more information.

Several adverts on all Sunday National newspapers as well as Government gazette are regularly published. In total, 14 adverts/notices were published in various print media during 2019.

These publications, information sessions and website all contribute towards the MA’s efforts of further increasing awareness and reaching out to stakeholders via different channels of communication in order to reach the four NRN aims/functions listed above.

4.b) Steps taken to ensure that the programme is publicised (Article 13 of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 808/2014)

In line with its EAFRD Communication Strategy 2014-2020, the Managing Authority implemented a number of actions in order to ensure that sufficient information is made available both to potential

beneficiaries as well as the general public. The measures undertaken include:

Adverts on local newspapers

During 2019, the MA published adverts pre-announcing the launching of measures, prior to formal launch.

These adverts are normally published on all national Sunday newspapers and on the government gazette. Adverts are published on newspapers that are published in English and in Maltese.

Information Sessions

Throughout 2019, the MA, through the NRN, organised various information sessions in order to disseminate information concerning various measures. Information sessions relay information in relation to:

- funding opportunities and the launching of calls under the RDP;
- the procedures to be followed in order to qualify for funding under the RDP;
- the procedures for assessing applications for funding;
- the eligibility conditions and/or criteria for selecting and evaluating the projects to be funded;
- the responsibility of beneficiaries to inform the public about the aim of the operation and the support from the RDP.

The following information sessions were held during 2019:

- M10.1 (AECMs) and M11 - Tuesday 6 August at the Mgarr Farmers Cooperative Mgarr
- M10.1 (AECMs) and M11 - Thursday 22 August at the FES Hall in Ghammieri
- M10.1 (AECMs) and M11 - Tuesday 27 August at the Government Experimental Farm Xewkija Gozo
- M10.1 (AECMs) and M11 - Thursday 29th August at the FCCS Cooperative Ta Qali
- M6.4 - Monday 24 June at the FCCS Hall at Pitkali Ta' Qali
- M6.4 - Wednesday 26 June at the Gozo Experimental Farm, Xewkija Gozo

In addition, the MA actively participated in various information sessions organised by the Agriculture and Rural Payments Agency (ARPA) for Beneficiaries that were awarded a grant, as follows:

- M4.1 – 2 sessions were held in 2019, on 5 June and 10 June;
- M4.2 – 1 session was held 4 October 2019;
- M4.4 - 2 sessions was held on 5 June 2019 and 10 June 2019;
- Two information sessions were specifically held for Local Councils were held on the 21st and 23rd October 2019, covering sub-measures 4.3,4.4 and 19.2.

Short Message Service (SMS)

To widen the base of potential beneficiaries, in line with previous years, the MA also sent out SMSs to

potential applicants upon launching its sub measures and the related sub measures as well as information session notifications, amongst others.

EU Funds Websites

The Managing Authority of EAFRD continued to promote the websites covering all the funds falling under its remit – www.eufundsmalta.gov.mt and www.eufunds.gov.mt. These websites bring together all the funds that the Funds and Programmes Division manages, and information provided includes: information on the different programmes, the calls for projects, regularly updated guidance notes for applicants for each call, block procedure timetable, access the past publications, newsletters, past events, publicity information, and links and downloads to useful information.

Europe Day

To mark Europe Day on the 9 May 2019, the Managing Authority participated in the EU Citizen's Fair which took place in Freedom Square in Valletta. This activity brought together and centralised all EU related information offices and contact points to the general public. The Citizens' Fair served as a one-stop-shop providing visitors with EU-related information, from job and EU career opportunities to EU citizens' rights and EU funding opportunities and programmes.

Public Events

The Managing Authority in 2019 was invited to attend the following public events in which it was able to promote the work of the MA and informing stakeholders of measures available, these include:

- 28th & 29th June 2019 – Managing Authority at Mnarja, Buskett
- 29th September 2019 - Managing Authority at Ghammieri Open Day

During these events the MA set up a stand where it gave out leaflets and discussed open calls and another opportunities with interested parties. Subsequently these press events were reported in the media. These events were a great opportunity to interact directly with the public and potential applicants and explaining to them the work of the MA and ways by which they could benefit from these schemes.

Information Leaflet

The Managing Authority, through the NRN, printed and disseminated further information leaflets (referred to under section 4.2a) concerning various sub-measures. The leaflet was distributed to both farmers and general public during events as well as to Local Councils and other public entities across Malta and Gozo.

Other information measures undertaken

- *Front Office*

The main point of contact for farmers in Malta is the Front Office, with an office located in Ta' Qali, Malta and another office in Xewkija, Gozo. During 2019, the Front Office continued to offer its one-stop shop experience to farmers, including the acceptance of applications under Pillar I other National Schemes. Amongst other things, requests for transfer of Agricultural Land is also handled at this office. The Malta office is also located within proximity of the *Pitkali Markets' Centre*, which is the place where local grown fruit and vegetables are deposited by farmers and sold to licensed hawkers through middlemen (known as pitkala). It is also located within walking distance from the main Farmers' Market in Malta.

Managing Authority Presence at ARPA Front Offices:

In the lead up to the deadline for submission of M4.4 Batch 10 applications, the MA was present at the Malta and Gozo front offices as follows:

- Monday 30th September 2019: Ta' Qali Front Office, between 7.30am and 12.00pm;
- Tuesday 1st October 2019: Ta' Qali Front Office, between 7.30am and 3.30pm;
- Tuesday 1st October 2019: Xewkija Front Office, between 7.30am and 1.30pm.

Amongst the services provided, the front office provides technical advice with respect to (Note that the below support is not offered by MA staff present at Front Office):

- Procedures to be followed for the transfer of land;
- A detailed explanation of payments issued;
- Eligibility criteria of EU and National Aid Schemes;
- Regulations and policies to be adopted by an applicant in order to be compliant for such measures.

In order to take advantage of this facility and to ensure that the MA is within reach to farmers, whilst at the same time extending the one-stop shop experience for farmers, MA staff is regularly present at the Front Office, Ta' Qali, Malta and Xewkija Gozo to answer any queries from the farmers and public concerning RDP measures and promote the RDP in general.

- *One to one meetings*

In addition to the above, the Managing Authority holds one-to one meetings with potential beneficiaries to provide the necessary guidance for application purposes. The MA also provides ongoing telephone and email support to potential and current beneficiaries as necessary. Beneficiaries can also discuss queries with the MA in person during AECM payment campaigns in which MA officers are present at front office during such activities.

- *Malta-EU Steering Action Committee (MEUSAC)*

MEUSAC is a public agency with one of its function focusing on assisting national and local government

and civil society organisations to apply for EU-funded projects. It is distinct from the MA but complements the role of the MA in the dissemination of information and the provision of technical support to potential applicants. Their support also extends to the RDP for Malta. Its services include one-to-one meetings with potential beneficiaries to discuss project proposals and identify EU funding possibilities, support in the drawing up of application forms, hands on information sessions and general customer care help desk.

Details on approved Beneficiaries

The public list of EAFRD beneficiaries is available online on www.eufunds.gov.mt. The information can be accessed on:

[https://eufunds.gov.mt/en/EU%20Funds%20Programmes/European%20Agricultural%20Fund/Documents/Measures/Results/EAFRD%20Projects%20Online%20List%20\(9-Apr-2020\).pdf](https://eufunds.gov.mt/en/EU%20Funds%20Programmes/European%20Agricultural%20Fund/Documents/Measures/Results/EAFRD%20Projects%20Online%20List%20(9-Apr-2020).pdf)

ARPA also publishes a list of payments made in line with (EU) No. 1306/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on: <https://agrifish.gov.mt/en/arpa/Pages/paymentsUnit.aspx>

Publications issued by the MA

During 2019, the MA issued the following two communication related documents. These NRN Newsletters were issued in line with the Network's objective to continue to create awareness by reaching out to the stakeholders via different channels of communication.

- Issue No. 16 August 2019, which can be accessed through:

<https://eufunds.gov.mt/en/EU%20Funds%20Programmes/European%20Agricultural%20Fund/Documents/Newsletter/NRN%20Aug%202019doc.pdf>

- Issue No. 17 December 2019, which can be accessed through:

<https://eufunds.gov.mt/en/EU%20Funds%20Programmes/European%20Agricultural%20Fund/Documents/Newsletter/NRN%20Dec%202019.pdf>

Dissemination of promotional items

As part of its mission to inform the general public about the EAFRD, the Managing Authority invested in promotional items to disseminate them during public events, such as information sessions, press events and other national events such as Europe Day.

5. ACTIONS TAKEN TO FULFIL EX ANTE CONDITIONALITIES

This section applies to AIR(s) 2015, 2016 only

6. DESCRIPTION OF IMPLEMENTATION OF SUB-PROGRAMMES

This section applies to AIR(s) 2016, 2018 only

7. ASSESSMENT OF THE INFORMATION AND PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

This section applies to AIR(s) 2016, 2018 only

8. IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIONS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE PRINCIPLES SET OUT IN ARTICLES 5, 7 AND 8 OF REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013

This section applies to AIR(s) 2016, 2018 only

9. PROGRESS MADE IN ENSURING INTEGRATED APPROACH TO USE EAFRD AND OTHER UNION FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

This section applies to AIR(s) 2018 only

10. REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (ARTICLE 46 OF REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013)

30A. Has the ex-ante assessment been started ?	No
30B. Has the ex-ante assessment been completed ?	No
30. Date of completion of ex-ante assessment	-
31.1. Has selection or designation process already been launched ?	No
13A. Has the funding agreement been signed ?	No
13. Date of signature of the funding agreement with the body implementing the financial instrument	-

11. ENCODING TABLES FOR COMMON AND PROGRAMME-SPECIFIC INDICATORS AND QUANTIFIED TARGET VALUES

See Monitoring Annex

Annex II

Detailed table showing implementation level by Focus areas including output indicators

Focus Area 1A							
FA/M	Target indicator name	Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
1A	T1: percentage of expenditure under Articles 14, 15 and 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 in relation to the total expenditure for the RDP (focus area 1A)	2014-2019					8.19
		2014-2018					
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					

Focus Area 1B							
FA/M	Target indicator name	Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
1B	T2: Total number of cooperation operations supported under the cooperation measure (Article 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013) (groups, networks/clusters, pilot projects...) (focus area 1B)	2014-2019					4.00
		2014-2018					
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					

Focus Area 1C							
FA/M	Target indicator name	Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
1C	T3: Total number of participants trained under Article 14 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 (focus area 1C)	2014-2019					7,200.00
		2014-2018					
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					

Focus Area 2A							
FA/M	Target indicator name	Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
2A	T4: percentage of agricultural holdings with RDP support for investments in restructuring or modernisation (focus area 2A)	2014-2019	0.52	56.17	0.52	56.17	0.93
		2014-2018	0.44	47.53	0.38	41.05	
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
FA/M	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023
2A	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	23,878,582.00	102.86	11,530,324.05	49.67	23,215,010.00
M02	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	200,000.00
M04	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	23,878,582.00	113.22	11,530,324.05	54.67	21,090,010.00
M04	O2 - Total investment	2014-2019			14,017,636.89	45.67	30,691,713.00
M04.1	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			1,356,936.44	16.62	8,165,666.00
M04.1	O4 - Number of holdings/beneficiaries supported	2014-2019			65.00	56.03	116.00
M04.3	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			10,173,387.61	78.71	12,924,344.00
M06	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,925,000.00
M06	O2 - Total investment	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	4,200,000.00

Focus Area 2B							
FA/M	Target indicator name	Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
2B	T5: percentage of agricultural holdings with RDP supported business development plan/investments for young farmers (focus area 2B)	2014-2019	0.48	100.24	0.48	100.24	0.48
		2014-2018	0.15	31.33	0.15	31.33	
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
FA/M	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023
2B	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	4,200,000.00	79.85	3,304,000.00	62.82	5,259,597.00
M02	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	200,000.00
M04	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	759,597.00
M04	O2 - Total investment	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	1,519,194.00
M04.1	O4 - Number of holdings/beneficiaries supported	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	10.00
M06	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	4,200,000.00	97.67	3,304,000.00	76.84	4,300,000.00
M06	O2 - Total investment	2014-2019			3,304,000.00	66.08	5,000,000.00
M06.1	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			3,304,000.00	76.84	4,300,000.00
M06.1	O4 - Number of holdings/beneficiaries	2014-2019			60.00	100.00	60.00

supported						
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Focus Area 3A

FA/M	Target indicator name	Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023	
3A	T6: percentage of agricultural holdings receiving support for participating in quality schemes, local markets and short supply circuits, and producer groups/organisations (focus area 3A)	2014-2019					1.56	
		2014-2018						
		2014-2017						
		2014-2016						
		2014-2015						
	Nr of operations supported under M4.2 contributing to FA3A (M4.2) (operations)	2014-2019				15.00	60.00	25.00
		2014-2018						
		2014-2017						
		2014-2016						
		2014-2015						
FA/M	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023	
3A	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	5,641,044.48	61.46	473,980.93	5.16	9,178,538.00	
M03	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,100,000.00	
M03.1	O4 - Number of holdings/beneficiaries supported	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	90.00	
M04	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	5,641,044.48	75.68	473,980.93	6.36	7,453,538.00	
M04	O2 - Total investment	2014-2019			947,961.86	6.36	14,907,077.00	
M04.1 M04.2	O3 - Number of actions/operations supported	2014-2019			18.00	28.13	64.00	
M16	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	625,000.00	
M16.4	O9 - Number of holdings participating in supported schemes	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	105.00	

Priority P4								
FA/M	Target indicator name	Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023	
P4	T12: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts to improve soil management and/or prevent soil erosion (focus area 4C)	2014-2019			7.46	250.42	2.98	
		2014-2018			5.45	182.94		
		2014-2017			2.00	67.14		
		2014-2016						
		2014-2015						
	T10: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts to improve water management (focus area 4B)	2014-2019				4.57	153.41	2.98
		2014-2018				4.12	138.30	
		2014-2017				2.00	67.14	
		2014-2016				1.32	44.31	
		2014-2015						
	T9: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts supporting biodiversity and/or landscapes (focus area 4A)	2014-2019				15.50	243.42	6.37
		2014-2018				13.48	211.69	
		2014-2017				9.62	151.08	
		2014-2016				9.78	153.59	
		2014-2015						
FA/M	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023	
P4	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	33,890,069.01	67.46	18,207,053.60	36.24	50,236,643.00	
M01	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	285,000.00	16.19	0.00	0.00	1,760,000.00	
M01.1	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	1,440,000.00	
M01.1	O12 - Number of participants in trainings	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	2,880.00	
M02	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,050,000.00	
M02.1	O13 - Number of beneficiaries advised	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	630.00	
M04	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	17,957,426.87	72.09	7,867,289.57	31.58	24,908,690.00	
M04	O2 - Total investment	2014-2019			9,834,111.96	29.81	32,987,379.00	
M04.4	O3 - Number of actions/operations supported	2014-2019			116.00	61.70	188.00	
M08	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,750,000.00	
M08.5	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	1,750,000.00	
M10	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	3,813,206.49	55.93	2,303,992.61	33.79	6,817,953.00	
M10.1	O5 - Total area (ha)	2014-2019			378.45	56.39	671.10	
M11	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	10,279.83	5.14	2,357.72	1.18	200,000.00	
M11.1	O5 - Total area (ha)	2014-2019			6.64	14.76	45.00	
M11.2	O5 - Total area (ha)	2014-2019					13.00	
M13	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	11,824,155.82	98.53	8,033,413.70	66.95	12,000,000.00	
M13.3	O5 - Total area (ha)	2014-2019			7,210.08	82.87	8,700.00	
M16	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,750,000.00	

Focus Area 5A

FA/M	Target indicator name	Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
5A	T14: percentage of irrigated land switching to more efficient irrigation system (focus area 5A)	2014-2019			0.73	13.41	5.44
		2014-2018					
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
FA/M	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023
5A	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	17,855,178.81	86.22	14,972,229.79	72.30	20,708,157.00
M01	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	1,760,000.00
M01.1	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	1,440,000.00
M01.1	O12 - Number of participants in trainings	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	2,880.00
M02	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	350,000.00
M02.1	O13 - Number of beneficiaries advised	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	222.00
M04	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	17,855,178.81	97.31	14,972,229.79	81.60	18,348,157.00
M04	O2 - Total investment	2014-2019			16,701,873.52	75.66	22,074,834.00
M04	O5 - Total area (ha)	2014-2019			20.57	13.36	154.00
M04.1 M04.3	O3 - Number of actions/operations supported	2014-2019			15.00	28.30	53.00
M16	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	250,000.00

Focus Area 5B							
FA/M	Target indicator name	Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
5B	T15: Total investment for energy efficiency (€) (focus area 5B)	2014-2019					759,597.00
		2014-2018					
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
FA/M	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023
5B	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,169,798.00
M01	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	440,000.00
M01.1	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	360,000.00
M01.1	O12 - Number of participants in trainings	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	720.00
M02	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	350,000.00
M02.1	O13 - Number of beneficiaries advised	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	230.00
M04	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	379,798.00
M04	O2 - Total investment	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	759,597.00
M04.1 M04.2 M04.3	O3 - Number of actions/operations supported	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	5.00

Focus Area 5C							
FA/M	Target indicator name	Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
5C	T16: Total investment in renewable energy production (€) (focus area 5C)	2014-2019	1.00	0.00			3,038,387.00
		2014-2018					
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
FA/M	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023
5C	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	9,147.25	0.43	0.00	0.00	2,119,194.00
M04	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	9,147.25	0.60	0.00	0.00	1,519,194.00
M04	O2 - Total investment	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	3,038,387.00
M04.1 M04.3	O3 - Number of actions/operations supported	2014-2019			1.00	4.55	22.00
M16	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	600,000.00

Focus Area 5D							
FA/M	Target indicator name	Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
5D	T17: percentage of LU concerned by investments in live-stock management in view of reducing GHG and/or ammonia emissions (focus area 5D)	2014-2019					16.09
		2014-2018					
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
FA/M	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023
5D	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	14,316.22	0.89	225.00	0.01	1,614,446.00
M01	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	220,000.00
M01.1	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	180,000.00
M01.1	O12 - Number of participants in trainings	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	360.00
M02	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	350,000.00
M02.1	O13 - Number of beneficiaries advised	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	230.00
M04	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	14,316.22	1.37	225.00	0.02	1,044,446.00
M04	O2 - Total investment	2014-2019			450.00	0.02	2,088,891.00
M04.1 M04.3 M04.4	O3 - Number of actions/operations supported	2014-2019			1.00	6.67	15.00
M04.1 M04.3 M04.4	O8 - Number of Livestock Units supported (LU)	2014-2019			1.00	0.01	6,700.00

Focus Area 5E							
FA/M	Target indicator name	Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
5E	T19: percentage of agricultural and forest land under management contracts contributing to carbon sequestration and conservation (focus area 5E)	2014-2019			4.00	75.30	5.31
		2014-2018			2.06	38.78	
		2014-2017			0.31	5.84	
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
FA/M	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023
5E	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	1,676,007.83	86.75	938,599.60	48.58	1,932,047.00
M08	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,750,000.00
M08.5	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	1,750,000.00
M08.5	O3 - Number of actions/operations supported	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	25.00
M10	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	1,676,007.83	920.65	938,599.60	515.58	182,047.00
M10.1	O5 - Total area (ha)	2014-2019			787.01	129.40	608.20

Focus Area 6A

FA/M	Target indicator name	Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023
6A	T20: Jobs created in supported projects (focus area 6A)	2014-2019					35.00
		2014-2018					
		2014-2017					
		2014-2016					
		2014-2015					
FA/M	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023
6A	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,175,000.00
M06	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,925,000.00
M06	O2 - Total investment	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	4,200,000.00
M06.2 M06.4	O4 - Number of holdings/beneficiaries supported	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	32.00
M16	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	250,000.00

Focus Area 6B								
FA/M	Target indicator name	Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023	
6B	T23: Jobs created in supported projects (Leader) (focus area 6B)	2014-2019					10.00	
		2014-2018						
		2014-2017						
		2014-2016						
		2014-2015						
	T22: percentage of rural population benefiting from improved services/infrastructures (focus area 6B)	2014-2019						0.00
		2014-2018						
		2014-2017						
		2014-2016						
		2014-2015						
	T21: percentage of rural population covered by local development strategies (focus area 6B)	2014-2019				105.75	105.79	99.97
		2014-2018				105.75	105.79	
		2014-2017				99.97	100.00	
		2014-2016						
		2014-2015						
FA/M	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023	
6B	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	6,816,179.71	100.98	1,006,200.72	14.91	6,750,000.00	
M16	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	250,000.00	
M19	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019	6,816,179.71	104.86	1,006,200.72	15.48	6,500,000.00	
M19	O18 - Population covered by LAG	2014-2019			284,284.00	105.79	268,733.00	
M19	O19 - Number of LAGs selected	2014-2019			3.00	100.00	3.00	
M19.1	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			345,014.71	58.11	593,750.00	
M19.2	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			304,194.36	6.87	4,425,000.00	
M19.3	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	300,000.00	
M19.4	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			356,991.65	30.22	1,181,250.00	

Focus Area 6C								
FA/M	Target indicator name	Period	Based on approved (when relevant)	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Target 2023	
6C	T24: percentage of rural population benefiting from new or improved services/infrastructures (ICT) (focus area 6C)	2014-2019					0.00	
		2014-2018						
		2014-2017						
		2014-2016						
		2014-2015						
	Percentage of total public expenditure (M1.1 to M1.3) allocated for ICT actions/interventions (%)	2014-2019						20.00
		2014-2018						
		2014-2017						
		2014-2016						
		2014-2015						
FA/M	Output Indicator	Period	Committed	Uptake (%)	Realised	Uptake (%)	Planned 2023	
6C	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	220,000.00	
M01	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	220,000.00	
M01.1	O1 - Total public expenditure	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	180,000.00	
M01.1	O12 - Number of participants in trainings	2014-2019			0.00	0.00	360.00	

Documents

Document title	Document type	Document date	Local reference	Commission reference	Checksum	Files	Sent date	Sent By
Citizens' Summary for Implementation Year 2019_MC Circulation_20200616	Citizens' summary	16-06-2020		Ares(2020)5123319	104734262	Citizens' Summary for Implementation Year 2019_MC Circulation_20200616	30-09-2020	nscicken
AIR Financial Annex 2014MT06RDNP001	Financial annex (System)	09-06-2020		Ares(2020)5123319	1298883921	AIRfinancialAnnex2014MT06RDNP001_mt.pdf	30-09-2020	nscicken
Additional information on SFC warnings	Other annex	22-09-2020		Ares(2020)5123319	3780619040	Additional information on SFC warnings	30-09-2020	nscicken

