

NATIONAL RURAL NETWORK MALTA

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Welcome Message

WELCOME TO THE 16TH ISSUE OF THE NATIONAL RURAL NETWORK NEWSLETTER.

Dear Readers,

2019 has so far been a very important and busy year for the Managing Authority during which, a number of new measures were launched, several applications were received and a large number of applicants were awarded.

This impetus builds on year 2018 during which the Managing Authority awarded about 80 applicants who had requested funding through sub-measure 4.1 of the RDP. In total, these applicants will benefit from more than €7.53 million in projects that will include the purchase of machinery, construction of new farms, updating of existing farms,

construction of greenhouses and water reservoirs. The Managing Authority is still receiving applications for funding through this sub-measure.

By the end of 2018, the MA had also awarded 30 applicants that will receive support through sub-measure 4.3 of the RDP. Through this sub-measure, 29 Local Councils are currently carrying out resurfacing of various rural roads and passageways. Additionally, the Water Services Corporation will be creating a network to distribute second class water to be used for irrigation purposes. To implement these projects, these applicants will be receiving around €28.1 million.

Additionally, by end 2018, the Managing Authority had awarded more than 80 applicants that will receive funds through sub-measure 4.4 of the RDP. Thanks to this measure, various farmers, livestock breeders, land managers, Local Councils and Government Entities will be restoring and reconstructing a significant number of rubble walls around the Maltese Islands. These applicants will benefit from about €12.9 million. The Managing Authority is still receiving applications for funding through this sub-measure.

The Managing Authority also awarded around 20 applicants requesting funding through sub-measure 6.1 of the Rural



Rural Development Programme for Malta 2014-2020

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



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

Development Programme. Between them, these applicants will be receiving around €1.6 million.

During 2018, the Managing Authority launched three sub-measures, namely 11.1, 11.2 and 4.2 and on AECM, namely AECM 5. Sub-measure 11.1 and 11.2 provide support for farmers that are currently in the process of converting their holding to organic production or are already registered as organic farmers. Sub-measure 4.2 provides support for investments in processing equipment. The Managing Authority

will continue receiving applications requesting funding through this sub-measure until the 2nd of July 2019. Meanwhile, AECM 5 supports farmers who agree to carry out environmentally friendly practices that improve the quality of the soil.

As in previous years, the Managing Authority will continue with its networking efforts with the diverse stakeholders that contribute to the agricultural sector in one way or another through various meetings and events.

Even though 2018 was an important year, 2019 will also bring

with its numerous challenges and opportunities with the launch of various sub-measures, including sub-measure 6.4 that will promote diversification in the agricultural sector.

The Managing Authority is always open to new ideas. Should you have any recommendations or wish to share your experiences, get in touch with us!

Best Regards
Network Support Unit



LEADER

THREE LOCAL ACTION GROUPS IMPLEMENTING THE LEADER PROGRAMME.

Each of the three Local Action Groups (LAGs) has drafted a Local Development Strategy that will be implemented in the respective territory. The three LAGs, namely Majjistral Action Group Foundation, GAL XLOKK Foundation and Gozo Action Group Foundation between them

“WILL BE RECEIVING, €6.5M THAT WILL BE USED TO IMPLEMENT THE RESPECTIVE STRATEGY”

These strategies were drafted after consultation with numerous stakeholders including NGOs, Local Councils, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and

other voluntary organisations. This bottom up approach ensures that the needs identified by the LAGs reflect indeed the needs of the rural communities in Malta and Gozo. The measures programmed in these LDSs aim to enhance rural areas through the promotion of regional tourism, rural gastronomy and improvement of rural landscapes.

Throughout 2018, GAL Xlokk launched two measures, Measure 4 ‘Development of Green Infrastructure’ and Measure 2 ‘Strengthening a Healthy Cultural Identity’. Gozo Action Group Foundation launched Measure 1 ‘Gozo in the 21st Century’. In 2019, GAL XLOKK launched Measure 1 ‘Restoration of assets of artistic and cultural value’ and Majjistral

Action Group Foundation launched Measure 4 ‘Development of Green Infrastructure’. Additionally, all three LAGs have been actively preparing to submit applications in relation to transnational cooperation projects. More information concerning the LEADER Programme and the measures that encompass the three LDSs can be found on the websites of the three LAGs:

Majjistral Action Group Foundation:
<http://www.galmajjistral.com/> or
gerald@galmajjistral.com

GAL Xlokk Foundation:
<https://galxlokk.com/> or
info@galxlokk.com

Gozo Action Group Foundation:
<https://leadergozo.eu/> or
info@leadergozo.eu

Organic Farming

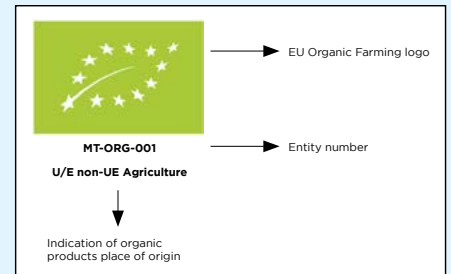
ORGANIC FARMING IS A SYSTEM THAT PROVIDES CONSUMERS WITH FRESH AND AUTHENTIC FOOD WHILE RESPECTING THE NATURAL LIFE-CYCLE SYSTEMS. IN ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH THIS, ORGANIC FARMING PRACTICES INCLUDE WIDE CROP ROTATION AS A PREREQUISITE FOR AN EFFICIENT USE OF ON-SITE RESOURCES.

Organic practices include the implementation of very strict limits on the use of synthetic chemical pesticides and synthetic fertiliser use, livestock antibiotics, food additives and processing aids. The use of genetically modified organisms is prohibited in this regard.

In Malta, the Agriculture Directorate's role is to highlight the health benefits of consuming organic products and to also to create a set-up where organic farming can become more feasible. The Directorate is also responsible

for market surveillance and the authorisation of importation of organic products from third countries. On the other hand, the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (MCCAA) is the local authority in charge of certification. Applications for organic certification are received by the MCCAA who then carries out an initial certification audit. If the applicant is successful, an 'in-conversion' certificate is awarded. If the requirements are maintained for two years, the applicant is certified as an organic producer. Certified producers are monitored through surveillance visits that are carried out at least annually by the MCCAA. Operators wishing to switch their production to organic farming should consult the MCCAA website for more information.

Consumers may find a list of certified organic retailers, importers, producers and wholesalers on the MCCAA website (<https://mccaa.org.mt/media/4145/20190909-organic-operators.pdf>). Consumers should also note that organic products carry the official EY logo:



The presence of this logo indicates that the products or produce being purchased has been grown using organic practices that abide by the respective regulations.

The Rural Development Programme for Malta (2014 – 2020) also supports organic producers through sub measures 3.1, 11.1 and 11 whereas investments in physical assets may also be supported through sub-measure 4.1 of the RDP. More information concerning these and other measures can be found on the Managing Authority website. Information can also be obtained by contacting the Managing Authority using the contact details provided in this newsletter.



Beekeeping

BEEKEEPING IS THE ART OF MAINTAINING HONEY BEE COLONIES, IN HIVES

BEEKEEPERS KEEP BEES IN ORDER AND COLLECT HONEY TOGETHER WITH OTHER PRODUCTS OF THE HIVE SUCH AS BEESWAX. BEEKEEPING GOES WAY BACK IN HISTORY WITH EVIDENCE IN EGYPTIAN ART DATING BACK TO 4000 YEARS AGO.

Beekeeping in Malta also has a long history with the Greeks calling our Island Melite that derives from the word meli, meaning honey). Honey from Malta was considered as a delicacy by the many colonisers and it was the Phoenicians who introduced the domestication of beekeeping. A number of apiaries called 'Miġbħa' are found around the Maltese islands, that date back to Punic times.

Beekeeping in the Maltese Islands have used numerous different beekeeping methods with records showing that till the 1950s, bees were kept in earthenware jars. These jars were made from clay and were kept under trees or in apiaries in order to protect them from the harsh Mediterranean sun. After the 1950s, different techniques were adopted by the local beekeepers with the use of movable frame hives and new tools were being used.

Beekeeping is a very important segment of the local agricultural sector since it also encourages biodiversity within our ecosystems.

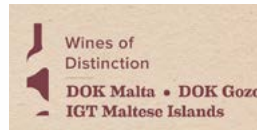
Many crops need pollination provided by bees and other insects as part of their lifecycle, with more than a third of the world's agricultural crops depending on the process of pollination. Therefore, a large amount of food production depends on the existence of bees.

The beekeeping sector faces a numerous challenges that have led to a decrease in bee population and colonies and an increase in the mortality rate. Another challenge facing this sector is the radical decrease in the number of beekeepers, caused by the fact that fewer people are entering the sector as a consequence of the high costs involved to invest in this sector. Beekeepers also are faced with challenges with regards to bee-health medicinals since there is a low interest by the pharmaceutical sector to invest in such medicinals.

The Rural Development Programme for Malta (2014 – 2020) supports beekeepers through AECM 3 (with 190 boxes being committed) whereas investments in physical assets may also be supported through sub-measure 4.1 of the RDP. More information concerning these measures can be found on the Managing Authority website. Information can also be obtained by contacting the Managing Authority using the contact details provided in this newsletter.



Wine Quality Schemes for Quality Wines



MORE THAN TEN YEARS AGO, MALTA INTRODUCED WINE QUALITY SCHEMES BASED ON EU SYSTEMS FOR QUALITY WINES. THESE SCHEMES ALLOW FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF WINES EITHER AS 'DENOMINAZZJONI TA' ORIGINI KONTROLLATA' (DOK) OR 'INDIKAZZJONI GEOGRAFIKA TIPIKA' (IGT). THE LAUNCH OF THESE CATEGORIES MARKED THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA IN THE MALTESE WINE INDUSTRY, WHERE LOCAL WINE PRODUCERS STARTED FOLLOWING EU QUALITY STANDARDS.

DOK Malta, DOK Gozo, and IGT Maltese Islands wines can be identified by the ribbon-like banner flanking the wine bottle. This banderol bears the emblem of the Ministry for the Environment and Sustainable Development and a unique serial number and guarantees that the wine has been certified by the Directorate of Agriculture. Therefore, this banderole is an instant guarantee of the wine's authenticity and quality.

DOK and IGT red, white and rose wines are produced from grapes cultivated in Malta and Gozo. DOK wines are further divided into DOK Malta, for grapes grown in Malta and DOK Gozo, for grapes that have been harvested on the island of Gozo.

In October 2017, the Directorate of Agriculture launched the Wines of Distinction campaign in order to improve the appreciation towards local wines. This campaign aims to raise awareness and appreciation of local quality wines amongst the general public and tourists.

The Parliamentary Secretariat for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights is spearheading this campaign that is spread over two years. Quality wines are currently being marketed through several outlets including TV, radio, billboards, magazines and other social media and online portals. A wine appreciation and tasting event was also held in March 2019.

The aim of this campaign is to ultimately increase the appreciation

of high quality local wines that carry the DOK Malta, DOK Gozo and IGT certification that are laboriously prepared by our local vintners.

The Rural Development Programme for Malta (2014 - 2020) supports farmers and wine makers through sub-measure 3.1 whereas investments in physical assets may also be supported through sub-measure 4.1 and 4.2 of the RDP. More information concerning these measures can be found on the Managing Authority website. Information can also be obtained by contacting the Managing Authority using the contact details provided in this newsletter.

