

## 1. Annual Work Programme (AWP) 2012: priorities supporting RDP implementation

- NRN activities used to implement its priorities.

- An NRN Meeting is held every quarter. This meeting aims at encouraging networking between different sectors and stakeholders. Several issues are discussed during these meetings, including; success of RDP 2007-2013 measures, progress of the LAGs in the implementation of the LEADER Programme, the EAFRD post 2014 ongoing consultation process and activities undertaken by the NRN over the previous quarter.
- At least one public NRN seminar is held every year. This seminar is open to the general public and this year (2012), it dealt with the ongoing consultation process being undertaken by the Managing Authority with the support of experts on rural development, which findings will form the basis of the new RDP 2014-2020. Participants were invited to join working groups dedicated to various themes such as fruit and vegetables, animal husbandry, rural tourism and water conservation.
- The NRN, together with the MA very regularly participate in fairs and events organized by Local Councils, Naturalment Malti and/or the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs around Malta and Gozo, in order to promote both the National Rural Network and the RDP in general.
- The NRN has been widely promoted through two TV programmes which are viewed by thousands of Maltese and Gozitans. These programmes are Mad-Daqqa T'Għajn (At a Glance) and Malta u lil Hinn Minnha (Malta and Beyond). These two programmes are transmitted on two different TV stations; the former on One TV and the latter on the national TV station (TVM). Both offer a variety of features related to the rural sector, rural tourism and cooking rural produce. One feature during each programme is dedicated to a rural dimension or project funded through the EAFRD.
- An NRN newsletter is published every quarter. This newsletter is available for download from the NRN section of the MA website and is also distributed via email to all rural stakeholders including farmers with a registered email address, ENRD members, public sector employees. Every edition of the newsletter focuses on a particular theme. For instance, past editions featured the importance of water, quality in agricultural produce and the Reform Process in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). This newsletter can be downloaded from: [https://secure2.gov.mt/MRRA-MA/nrn\\_n?l=1](https://secure2.gov.mt/MRRA-MA/nrn_n?l=1)



## 2. Thematic Initiatives launched by the Network

### • New thematic issues that the network is planning to address:

- The NRN is currently addressing the CAP reform, focusing on Pillar II of the next programming period. Following a public NRN conference held on 15 June 2012, 6 thematic working groups were set up. These six working groups are meeting for 6 times over 6 months and will discuss the requirements of all stakeholders. The aim is to adapt the new RDP to the needs of the various sectors. The 6 themes being discussed are:
  - Efficient and profitable crop farming;
  - Sustainable livestock production;
  - Adding value (food processing, new products);
  - Direct sales, quality assurance and marketing;
  - Improving the offer to rural visitors;
  - Water and landscape management.

### • Status info and plans about continued thematic initiatives:

- The NRN consultation process was initiated on the 15th of June 2012 during a public conference. The outcome of the conference was discussed during the NRN meeting held on July 10th 2012. Following the conference, 6 group leaders from various sectors were appointed, together with six facilitators from the Managing Authority, Paying Agency and the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs. The working groups met for the first time during the first week of September. During the first introductory meeting, the participants were allowed to speak about their main concerns regarding the sector. Eventually, the working groups will carry out a SWOT analysis of the sector and a review of the Measures which were implemented during the 2007-2013 programme. Moreover, the new EAFRD regulation will be discussed and participants will be asked to contribute towards the choice of measures which could be developed into the next RDP.

• **Issues addressed by the events:**

- The main focus of the NRN is currently the CAP reform and the next programming period.
- Participation in fairs is mostly aimed at promoting the RDP in general and the benefits of its subsequent measures among the general public by showcasing projects financed through various Measures of the RDP.

• **Issues addressed by working groups:**

- The NRN consultation process (being undertaken mostly in the form of working groups) is focusing on 6 themes:
  - Efficient and profitable crop farming;
  - Sustainable livestock production;
  - Adding value (food processing, new products);
  - Direct sales, quality assurance and marketing;
  - Improving the offer to rural visitors;
  - Water and landscape management.
- The quarterly NRN Committee meetings are eventually discussing the outcomes of these working groups with the appointed representatives from all the sectors related to rural development.

• **Issues addressed by committees/steering groups:**

- The current main focus of the NRN is two fields:
  - The ongoing consultation process with stakeholders
  - An analysis of the beneficiaries of RDP 2007-2013 by measure and by sector.
- NRN committee meetings are starting to discuss the outcomes of the working groups. In the near future, various representatives will be asked to present their sector, with the aim of updating the other stakeholders on the opportunities, concerns and difficulties encountered by each sector.

• **Issues subject of surveys/consultation/analysis:**

- The main thematic issue being currently tackled by the NRN is the drafting of the new RDP for the next programming period. As previously explained, this issue is being discussed both within the NRN committee and also within 6 separate working groups, each of which is tackling one of 6 themes.
- This thematic issue is the subject of a wide consultation process with all rural stakeholders accompanied by an in-depth technical and economic analysis.

• **Information about thematic initiatives available on:**

- Documents related to the NRN consultation process will be available on the MA website: [https://secure2.gov.mt/MRRA-MA/pe\\_act](https://secure2.gov.mt/MRRA-MA/pe_act).

## 1.2 LEADER-related activities

- The MA has staff dedicated to LAGs' support: one officer is solely dedicated to support LAGs.
- Practical training sessions were organized by the MA when the LEADER programme was launched in Malta. These training sessions were held for LAG managers, secretaries and Decision Committee members. The LAGs are usually invited to participate in events/fairs where the Managing Authority actively participates.
- The LAGs prepare their own guidelines, application forms and any other supporting documents. LAGs then seek MA approval prior to publication. However, for Measure 421 – Transnational Cooperation, guidelines were established by the Managing Authority. Moreover, the Managing Authority provided a set of Operating Rules for LEADER.
- Guidelines can be downloaded from the MA website and from the website of each individual LAG:
  - <https://secure2.gov.mt/mrra-ma/downloads-links?!=1>
  - <http://www.leadermajjistral.eu/>
  - <http://www.galxlokk.com/>
  - <http://www.leadergozo.eu/en/downloads>

- LEADER implementation, though carried out by the LAGs, is supported by the MA and also by the National Rural Network, especially since this is the first time that Malta is implementing the LEADER Programme. The MA reviews and approves adverts, guidelines and application forms before the launch of LAGs Actions and Measures. The MA also guides the LAGs on how to evaluate applications and drafts the contracts for the beneficiaries. The MA is kept constantly up to date with progress of Action and Measure implementation by the LAGs. The MA also processes payment claims pertaining to Measure 431.
- The NSU/MA provides inter-regional and transnational cooperation support. When Measure 421 was launched, the MA officer in charge of LEADER offered the necessary support by initially explaining the scope, guidelines and application form to the LAGs. Before the final applications were submitted, the LAGs submitted a proposal for the project. This proposal was reviewed and approved by the MA.
- The MA organizes the yearly Imnarja Festival and the 3 LAGs participate through showcasing their regional produce and projects, distribute information and answer to queries. On a separate note, the LAGs plan their own visits abroad. Travelling, participation in fairs and other events will take place mainly through Measure 421 and the MA is constantly updated about such visits. Also, LAGs present detailed reports following any visit abroad.
- Information about these events is available on: <https://secure2.gov.mt/mrra-ma/file.aspx?f=274>.
- The MA provides partner search support: the MA sometimes receives requests for collaboration from other LAGs abroad. These are forwarded to the three LAGs and any action is left at their discretion.

### 3. Relevant Experiences/Good Practices

- **Identification and dissemination of EAFRD-funded projects representing relevant experience:**

- The MA staff responsible for publicity and the NSU identify successful EAFRD projects. Relevant experience/good practices are communicated through sponsorship of TV programmes, NRN Newsletter, Funding 360 newsletter distributed by MEUSAC.
- Relevant experiences/good practices are available on:
  - In its features on the TV programmes Malta u lil Hinn Minnha and Mad-Daqqa t'Ghajn, the MA seeks to showcase projects financed through the RDP. These programmes have a wide viewership since they focus on various subjects not just agriculture and rural development.
  - A DVD showcasing a number of projects was also prepared and is distributed for free during fairs and events. Additionally, it is played on a TV screen on the MA stand during such events.
  - The NRN newsletter is also being used to promote relevant experiences and good practice since as from the October 2012 issue, it will focus on particular measures and projects. Each issue will take into consideration one or more Measures, giving the readers information about projects financed through such Measures.
  - A number of projects can also be viewed on the ENRD website and ENRD publications:
    - » [http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp\\_view/en/view\\_projects\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/en/view_projects_en.cfm);
    - » [http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app\\_templates/filedownload.cfm?id=6870210C-FBBC-B3CB-9E26-0AC8180AD504](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_templates/filedownload.cfm?id=6870210C-FBBC-B3CB-9E26-0AC8180AD504).

### 4. Monitoring and evaluation of networking

- The monitoring and evaluation team keeps track of the work undertaken by the NRN and presents the findings in the Annual Progress report and Monitoring committee. Moreover, external evaluators doing the mid-term/ex-post evaluation process also assess the rural network performance.
- LAGs are continuously monitored by the Monitoring and Evaluation team within the MA. The LAGs are required to provide information regarding launch of measures, participation in local events, conferences and fairs, any articles published in newspapers, magazines and newsletters. This information is then used to compile the Annual Progress Report. LAGs are also evaluated by the external ongoing evaluation team contracted by the Managing Authority. These findings are also presented during Monitoring Committee meetings.

## 5. Communication

- The network doesn't have a communication plan but a communication plan is part of the RDP. The RDP Communication Plan was submitted in line with Article 76 of Commission Regulation (EC) No1698/2005, Article 58 of Commission Regulation (EC) No1974/2006 and Annex VI of the same regulation. This detailed plan gives information about the strategy framework for this plan, the setting up of communication tools, information and publicity measures, development and implementation of the plan, monitoring and evaluation and the financing of the communication plan.
- The MA and NRN seek to participate in fairs organized by the Ministry for Resources Rural Affairs and Local Councils. These fairs and events are very well attended by the general public therefore it has been deemed as a good way to inform the people about the benefits of the RDP. During such fairs, informative brochures and leaflets are distributed and general queries are answered.
- The communication tools mostly used by the network are:
  - DVDs of RDP funded projects
  - Articles in newsletters and other booklets like 'Biedja u Sajd' issued by Naturalment Malti
  - Printing of Promotional leaflets, flyers, factsheets and booklets.
  - Another important means of communication is TV and over the past year the MA has been sponsoring feature on two TV programmes. These TV programmes are very popular among the general public. The MA also participates in TV and radio programmes, especially prior to launches of measures and during the application period.
  - Billboards and information plaques are also important since these are located in close proximity of projects funded through the RDP. Therefore, they serve as means for the public to observe the benefits of implementing such a programme.

## 6. Documents

- Publications are available on: <https://secure2.gov.mt/MRRA-MA/publicity?!=1;>
- Latest version of the NSP and RDP are available on: [https://secure2.gov.mt/MRRA-MA/downloads-links?!=1.](https://secure2.gov.mt/MRRA-MA/downloads-links?!=1)