

# NATIONAL RURAL NETWORK MALTA

EDITION 17 DECEMBER 2019

## Further Pre-Announcements of Measures

### MEASURE 1 'KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND INFORMATION ACTIONS'

#### 2 SUB-MEASURES

The scope of this call is to equip farmers with invaluable knowledge and skills which would allow them to meet the challenges resulting from the evolving standards and demands of the rural economy. Service providers applying under this call are expected to develop and present tailor-made training programmes developed in accordance with the needs established in the RDP, including;

- Landscape and environment: managing habitats and features
- Maltese quality produce: improving quality, traceability, strategic marketing, adding value, branding and promotion
- Sustainable Livestock: improving resource efficiency, competitiveness, productivity and welfare
- Water, wastes and energy: improving sustainable use and generating renewable energy
- Wider rural economy and quality of life: developing rural tourism, rural skills and promoting social inclusion

The total budget allocated to this measure is €4.4m. Support under this measure is provided to entities providing training courses (sub-Measure 1.1), demonstration activities and information actions (sub-Measure 1.2). Eligible participants in these activities are farmers and there is no limit on the size of the farm holding that can take part. Participation is to be provided free of charge.

### MEASURE 2.1 'SUPPORT TO HELP BENEFITING FROM THE USE OF ADVISORY SERVICES'

The scope of the measure is to assist farmers through Farm Advisory Service Entities recognised by the Farm Advisory Service Registration Board. The use of advisory services for the agricultural sector complements the purpose of measures seeking to



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*

improve human potential through training, including Measure 1, and by providing incentives to farmers to seek direct advice to address their specific situation. The budget allocated to this sub-measure is €1.9m.

Advisory service is focused on specific issues that are directly asked by the recipients of the advice, which should really assess the specific situation of each individual and that is not mere dissemination nor only presenting general information. The service packages available under this measure include:

- **Service Package 1** which provides information and creates awareness on Cross Compliance obligations and benefit of AECMs and /or explanation of the requirements and obligations of the AECM measures implemented by the end beneficiary. Other services under this Service Package include assessing the compliance status with the Cross Compliance requirements, Occupational Health and Safety requirements, Soil Testing and Fertiliser Planning, Soil Sampling, Record Keeping,

Nutrient Management Plan, and Operations in Natura 2000. The service is a tailor-made service oriented to solve a specific request(s) by the farmer and is provided freely of charge.

- **Service Package 2** provides technical advice on the adaptation and mitigation to climate change.
- **Service Package 3** provides advice of the development of a business plan.

The recipients of the advice is restricted to farmers and is provided free of charge up to €1,500.

## Composting

**THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR MALTA 2014-2020 (RDP) CONTAINS A SERIES OF AGRI-ENVIRONMENT CLIMATE MEASURES (AECMS) WHICH FALL UNDER MEASURE 10.1. THESE ARE VOLUNTARY MEASURES, WHICH FARMERS CAN CHOOSE TO UNDERTAKE. SUPPORT IS GRANTED FOR UNDERTAKING A SET OF ACTIONS, WHICH GO ABOVE WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THEM BY LAW.**

These measures target the various agricultural sectors including permanent crops (vineyards, olive trees fruit trees), arable land, beekeepers and protection of native farm species.

One such measure is **AECM 5: Measure for the implementation of a soil management and conservation plan on a holding.**

This measure is aimed at arable land and its objective is to help farmers to target the three primary soil related threats on a parcel level; erosion, compaction and low soil organic matter. One of the obligations of this measure, is that farmers have to practice composting on at least one of their parcels which are committed

under this AECM. This article will provide an overview on how to make composting using the '*Hot turn Composting Method*'. This method is the one recommended in the Methodological Assumptions for Payments Calculations, which is an Annex of the RDP.

The hot composting method is more intensive and labour productive but can potentially produce compost in as quickly as 20 days. It has the benefits of killing weed seeds and pathogens (diseases), and breaking down the material into very fine compost. In contrast, cold composting takes a much longer time (six to 12 months) and does not destroy seeds, so



if you cold compost weeds, any weed seeds will grow when you put the compost into the garden. Cold composting does not destroy pathogens either, so if you put diseased plants into your cold compost, the diseases may spread into the garden, hence the common advice not to (cold) compost diseased plants. The other issue with cold composting is that you end up with lots of large pieces left over in the compost when the process is completed, whereas hot compost looks like fine black humus (soil).

**KINDLY NOTE THAT THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE AND IS JUST PROVIDING RECOMMENDATIONS ON ONE OF MANY POSSIBLE WAYS TO MAKE COMPOSTING. THIS GUIDE IS IN NO WAY PUTTING OBLIGATIONS ON FARMERS WHO ARE BENEFICIARIES UNDER AECM 5 TO PRACTICE THIS COMPOSTING METHOD. FARMERS ARE FREE TO PRACTICE ANY OTHER COMPOSTING METHODS THEY SEE FIT.**

The requirements for hot composting are as follows:

1. Compost temperature is maintained between 55-65 degrees Celsius;
2. The C:N (carbon:nitrogen) balance in the composting materials is approximately 25-30:1;

3. The compost heap needs to be at least 1.5m high (any lower than this will not generate the heat required);
4. If composting material is high in carbon, such as tree branches, they need to be broken up, such as with a mulcher;
5. Compost is turned from outside to inside and vice versa to mix it thoroughly;

In order to achieve the ratio of carbon to nitrogen, the compost materials need to be between 25 to 30 parts carbon to one-part nitrogen by weight. A simple method is to use 1/3 Manure and

green materials and 2/3 dry carbon materials.

- Materials that are high in carbon are typically dry, “brown” materials, such as sawdust, cardboard, dried leaves, straw, branches and other woody or fibrous materials that rot down very *slowly*.
- Materials that are high in nitrogen are typically moist, “green” materials, such as lawn/grass clippings, fruit and vegetable scraps, animal manure and green leafy materials that rot down very *quickly*

#### SOME IMPORTANT POINTS TO NOTE:

- Locate your compost heap in an area protected from too much sun or heavy rain, to prevent the compost from drying out or becoming water-logged and slowing down the composting process.
- Space required for your heap should be a minimum 1.5 x 1.5 metres, and enough space in front of it to stand when turning the compost. Any smaller than this will generate the heat required)
- Water each layer until it is moist as you build the heap. After three or four days, give the compost air by mixing and turning it over, then turn every three days until the compost is ready, usually in 14-21 days. Remember, frequent turning and aeration is the secret of successful composting.
- Turn the compost using a garden fork, or even better, a long-handled pitchfork.
- In cold or wet weather, you can cover the compost heap with a tarp or plastic sheet, to prevent the rain cooling it down, since the water will penetrate into the core of the compost pile. Even though cold outside air will cool the surface, but not the core of the compost heap, by covering it, this prevents some heat loss from the surface to cooler outside air, and retains the heat within the compost heap better

**STEP BY STEP GUIDE<sup>1</sup>****DAY 1**

- Mix together ingredients by laying them in alternating thin layers of “greens” and “browns”.
- Wet the compost heap down very well so it is dripping water out of the bottom and is saturated.
- The layers need to be mixed in alternating layers of brown high carbon materials and green nitrogen rich materials. Ideally, the layer at the top contains dry brown carbon materials and must avoid leaving the green moist materials at the top, since these will smell and attract rodents, flies and other pests.
- An activator can be put in the middle of the compost heap to start off composting process. Activators include comfrey, nettles, yarrow, animal, fish, urine, or old compost.

**DAY 5**

- Turn the compost heap over, outside turned to inside, inside turned to outside.
- To explain in more detail, when turning compost, move the outside of the pile to a spot next to it, and keep moving material from the outside to the new pile. When you're done, all the material that was inside will be outside and vice versa.
- Ensure that moisture stays constant. Put gloves on and squeeze a handful of the compost materials, should only release one drop of water, or almost drips a drop

**DAY 7 & DAY 9**

- The compost heap should reach its maximum temperature on these days. As a simple guideline, if you can put your arm into the compost up to the elbow, then it is not at 50 degrees Celsius, and is not hot enough.
- Turn the compost heap over every second day (on day 6 and again on day 8).
- If the compost pile starts coming down in size quickly, there is too much nitrogen in the compost.

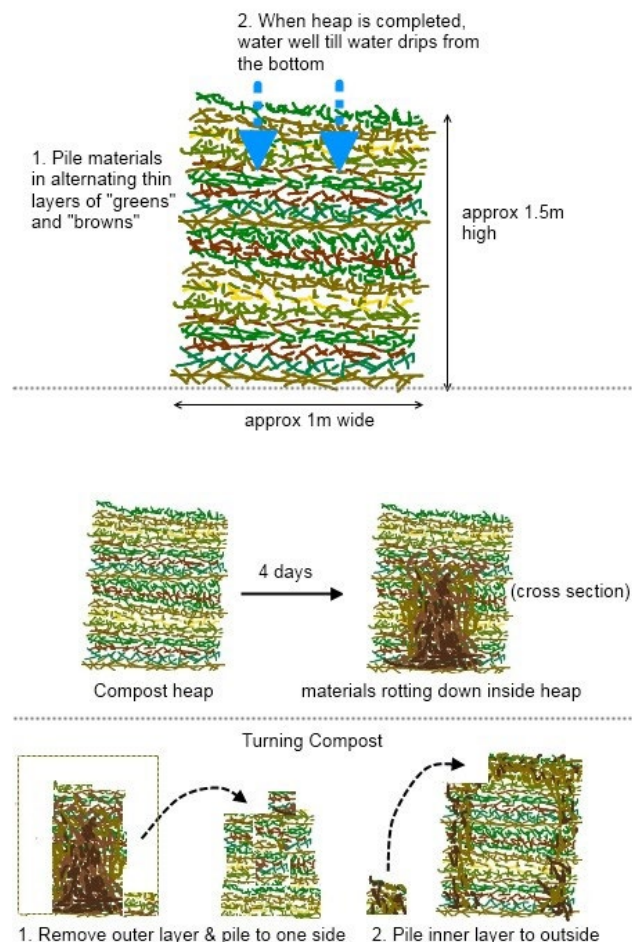
- To heat up the compost faster, a handful of blood & bone fertiliser per pitchfork when turning speeds it up.
- If it gets too hot and smelly and goes down in size, it has too much nitrogen, need to slow it down, throw in a handful of sawdust per pitchfork when turning

**DAY 11 TO DAY 17**

- Continue to turn the compost every 2nd day

**DAY 18 -21**

- Compost should now be warm, dark and smells good and will be ready.



<sup>1</sup> This guide was taken from Deep Green Permaculture from the following website <https://deepgreenpermaculture.com>

# Rural Development Programme for Malta (2014-2020):

## THE EVALUATION PROCESS AND THE ROLE THE EVALUATORS HAVE IN THIS PROCESS.

**IN MAY 2019, THE EAFRD MANAGING AUTHORITY ENGAGED AN EVALUATION TEAM TO UNDERTAKE THE EVALUATION ACTIVITIES AND THE EX-POST EVALUATION OF THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR MALTA. THE GOAL BEHIND THESE EVALUATION ACTIVITIES IS TO ENSURE THAT ALL EVALUATION ACTIVITIES DETAILED IN RESPECTIVE EU GENERAL AND FUND SPECIFIC REGULATIONS ARE CARRIED OUT.**

The objective of the evaluation activities is to report to the Managing Authority (MA) objectively on the progress of the programme in relation to its stated goals as well as indicators, by highlighting the most successful measures, those lagging behind and identifying the reasons for these results. The evaluator's role

is also to identify weaknesses in the programme and put forward recommendations on how the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the programme can be improved. In these cases, evaluators are to suggest possible amendments to the programme where deemed necessary for the successful completion of the programme. The presence of these external evaluators serves as a quality management mechanism and an early warning system within the RDP 2014-2020 programme. The evaluators are analysing current data collection methods which are in place and proposing any improvements, or new methods that will enhance the data collection function.

Through their evaluation efforts the evaluators are reviewing the programme's progress on indicators using quantitative

as well as qualitative research techniques to answer the common evaluation questions outlined in the relevant Regulation. Ultimately, the evaluator and evaluation process' goal is to measure the effectiveness, efficiency, results and impacts of the RDP 2014-2020. These evaluation results are then communicated to the general public and key stakeholders.

Since the start date of the contract, the Evaluation Team has geared its efforts on the compilation of the 2018 Annual Implementation Report submitted to the European Commission on June 28 2019, which included a specific chapter on common evaluation questions capturing essential features related to the qualitative and quantitative assessment of the implementation of the RDP and its progress towards the achievement of the targets set.



# Ministry for Gozo – Measure 4.4 Project

**THE MINISTRY FOR GOZO WAS AWARDED AROUND €8,000,000 FROM MEASURE 4.4 OF THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (2014-2020) TO IMPLEMENT THE PROJECT: ‘REHABILITATION OF GOZO’S VALLEYS TO ENHANCE THEIR RAIN CAPTURING AND SOIL RETENTION CAPABILITIES’.**

Its scope is to augment the island’s soil retention and rain water capturing capabilities through the rehabilitation of 12 valleys across Gozo. These are: Wied ix-Xlendi; Wied tal-Grazzja, Wied ta’ Mgarr ix-Xini, Wied Riĥan, Wied Ta Grajgel and Daħlet Qorrot, Wied Il-Wileg (incorporating also Valley at Tal-Halq/Ta Marga l/o Qala), Wied tax-Xhajma, Wied Imgarr/Ġnien Migiarro, Wied ta’ Marsalforn, Wied tal-Ort, Għasri, Wied l-Infern, and Wied il-Kbir. Interventions shall principally consist of the reinstatement of around 26 km of rubble-walls, as well as the clearing of the valleys’ floors and natural water course ways.

Through the above interventions, the total rain water harvesting potential of the island are foreseen to increase by around 15,000 m<sup>3</sup>; reducing the local farming community reliance on Gozo’s groundwater resources. Thus, preventing the occurrence of soil salinization that is the result of continuous use of salt rich water for crop irrigation. One of the consequences of this phenomenon is decreasing crop yields. Gozo’s soil deposits shall also be safeguarded from erosion through run-off due to the reinstated soil retention structures mentioned previously.

The main benefit arising from this project shall be a reversal



**THE TOTAL RAIN WATER HARVESTING POTENTIAL OF THE ISLAND ARE FORESEEN TO INCREASE BY AROUND 15,000 M<sup>3</sup>**

of landscape degradation and the associated biodiversity loss. This shall be achieved with the restoration of rubble-walls that serve as habitats for several endemic species and the preservation of the island’s soil deposits and perched aquifer.

# SUPPLY OF HIGHLY POLISHED TERTIARY TREATED WATER

## for Agricultural Use

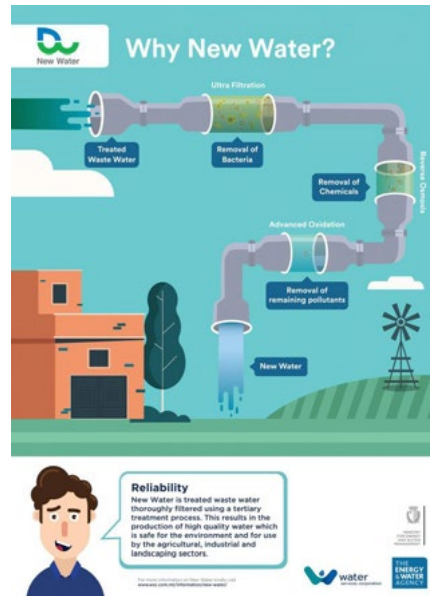


**MALTA IS A SEMI-ARID COUNTRY LOCATED IN THE CENTRE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA. THE SCARCITY OF WATER HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN ISSUE SINCE DOCUMENTED HISTORY AND MEETING THE DEMAND FOR BOTH MUNICIPAL WATER SUPPLY AS WELL AS THE NEEDS OF THE AGRICULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL SECTORS HAS ALWAYS PROVIDED AN IMPORTANT CHALLENGE.**

However, this challenge has also provided Malta with an opportunity to diversify and further develop its water supply infrastructure. This can be highlighted by the introduction of sea-water desalination technology in the 1980's, and the continued improvement of the operational efficiency of these desalination plants. Today, sea-water desalination reliably provides around 60% of the municipal water supply and has therefore become an important water resource to ensure the sustainability of Malta's water supply.

The Water Services Corporation is currently implementing a far-reaching national project producing New Water mainly for farming and agricultural purposes. This project is being financed through EU funds.

By means of polishing plants built within the sewage treatment plants at Ras il-Ħobż, Gozo, Iċ-Ċumnija I/o Mellieha and Ta' Barkat I/o Xgħajra, treated sewage is being turned into high-quality second-class water and many farmers are now benefitting from higher yields and longer-lasting crops by using New Water. This is mainly because the water is of the highest quality and unlike ground water does not contain



any salinity. The major one in Ta' Barkat, in the south of Malta, of which the distribution network is being supported through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, can produce 9,600 cubic metres per day

This water is produced by sophisticated reverse osmosis and ultra-filtration machinery ensuring product quality and security. A number of reservoirs in Malta and Gozo are being restored or built and a distribution infrastructure of around 60 km is being laid across the Maltese Islands. New Water is being dispensed through electronic dispensers, of which around 400 will eventually be commissioned, to reach clients all over the main agricultural areas in the vicinity of the plants. These

dispensers will also help in better managing the aquifer and reduce the number of water bowsers.

The New Water programme will see the development of an annual production capacity of 7 million m<sup>3</sup> of high-quality water suitable for safe crop irrigation. The project will hence have the capacity to potentially address up to 35% of the current total water demand of the agricultural sector. The New Water project is thus one of the key measures under Malta's Programme of Measures intended to enable the achievement of good groundwater quantitative status in all groundwater bodies in the Maltese islands by 2021.

Additionally, among its various benefits, this project establishes and facilitates a better distribution of water among farmers in the agricultural sector especially during periods of low demand and drought, as well as facilitating a better water supply network and connection among the same farmers.

The aim is to achieve a 'net zero-impact' on the natural water cycle, whereby groundwater being abstracted will be replaced, directly or indirectly, by means of a number of measures, including the production and subsequent delivery of new water.