

Rural Development Programme for Malta 2014-2020


**Monitoring Committee
6 December 2024**

Evaluation




**Co-funded by
the European Union**

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Thematic Evaluations | Completed

Thematic Evaluations	Submission date
Thematic Evaluation: Young Farmers	Dec-20
Thematic Evaluation: Soil – Erosion and Management (FA4C)	Mar-22
Thematic Evaluation – LEADER	Mar-23
Thematic Evaluation: Biodiversity (FA4A) *	Feb-24

Every year, an interim evaluation report is prepared and submitted in March. The first was in March 2019 and so far, we have submitted 6 IERs. Additionally, every year there is contribution towards the compilation of the AIR.

Thematic Evaluations | Ongoing

Thematic Evaluations	Submission date
Thematic Evaluation: Water *	Dec-24
Thematic Evaluation: Rural Roads (FA2A) *	Dec-25

* The focus of today's presentation.

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Thematic Evaluations | Upcoming



Thematic Evaluations	Indicative Submission date
Thematic Evaluation on the contribution of RDP interventions to diversification, creation and development of small enterprises and job creation (FA6A) (CEQ 16)	Mar-25
Thematic Evaluation on Operational Performance (CEQ 19)	Mar-25
Thematic Evaluation on the Technical Assistance (CEQ 20)	Mar-25
Thematic Evaluation on National Rural Network (NRN) (CEQ 21)	Mar-25
Thematic Evaluation on the contribution of RDP interventions to local development in rural areas (FA6B)CEQ 17)	Jun-25
Thematic Evaluation: Energy Efficiency (FA5B)	Jun-25
Thematic Evaluation on Priority 1 (CEQ 1 to 3)	Sep-25
Thematic Evaluation on the contribution of RDP interventions in supporting the entry of adequately skilled farmers into the agricultural sector and in particular, generational renewal (FA2B) (CEQ 5)	Sep-25
Thematic Evaluation on the contribution of the RDP interventions to improving the economic performance, restructuring and modernization of supported farms (FA2A) (CEQ 4)	Dec-25
Thematic Evaluation: Renewable Energy (FA5C)	Dec-25
Thematic Evaluation on the contribution of RDP to improving the competitiveness of supported primary producers (FA3A) (CEQ 6)	Dec-25
CEQ 22 to 30 will be completed following the thematic evaluations on relevant priorities.	Mar-26
Ex-post evaluation Template (SFC)	Apr-26
Final Evaluation Report 2025	Sep-26

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Main Challenges



The main challenges that we are encountering in our work are:

- Provision of data in relation to some specific **context indicators**, such as Farmland Bird Index, and Gross Nutrient Balance.
- **Lack of digitalised information**, e.g. business plans submitted as part of the application, and closure reports.
- **Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN)**: Limitations in the use of specific data such as FADN for specific categories such as young farmers; amount of pesticides and fertilisers used per parcel.
- **Counterfactual**: this is challenging for environmental indicators as there is lack of data on parcels not receiving funding.

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Evaluation Findings: Thematic Evaluation on Biodiversity



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Biodiversity | Methodology



- Description of local biodiversity including protected areas.
- Local policy context including Draft National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan to 2030 and National Agricultural Policy for Malta.
- Data from the Managing Authority and ARPA on contract status for AECMs
- GIS representation and analysis.
- Analysis of field data for AECMs.
- Interviews with key stakeholders.
- Interviews with selected beneficiaries.
- Collection of data on related indicator.

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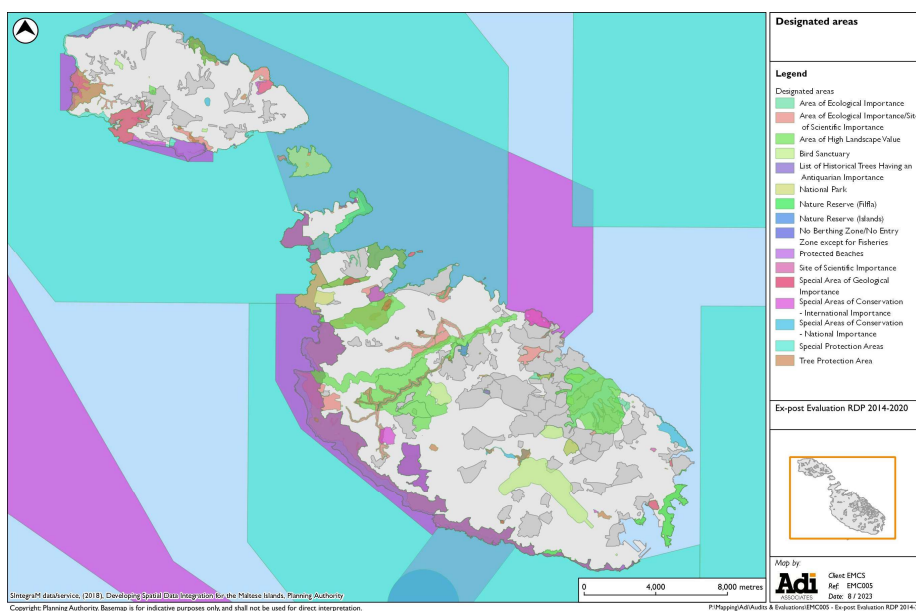
Biodiversity | Relevant Measures



- Measure 1: Knowledge transfer and information actions
- Measure 2.1: Advisory services (cross compliance)
- Measure 2.3: Training of advisors
- **Measure 4.4: Support for non-productive investments linked to the achievement of agri-environment-climate objectives**
- Measure 8.5: Investments improving the resilience and environmental value of forest ecosystems
- **Measure 10.1: Agri-environment-climate measures**
- Measure 10.2: Conservation of genetic resources
- **Measure 11.1: Conversion to organic farming**
- **Measure 11.2: Maintenance of organic farming**
- **Measure 13.3: Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints**
- Measure 16.2: Support for pilot projects & for the development of new products, practices, processes, and technologies

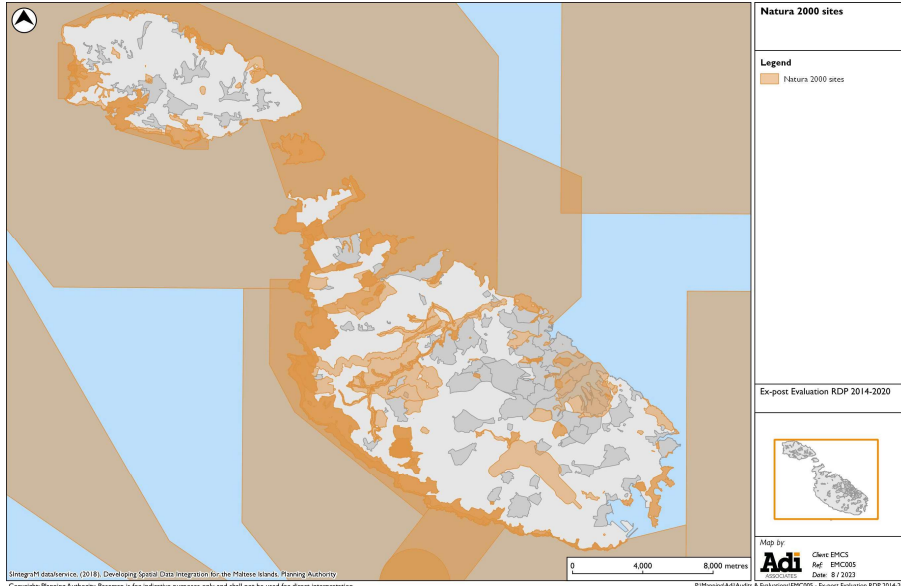
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Biodiversity | Protected Areas



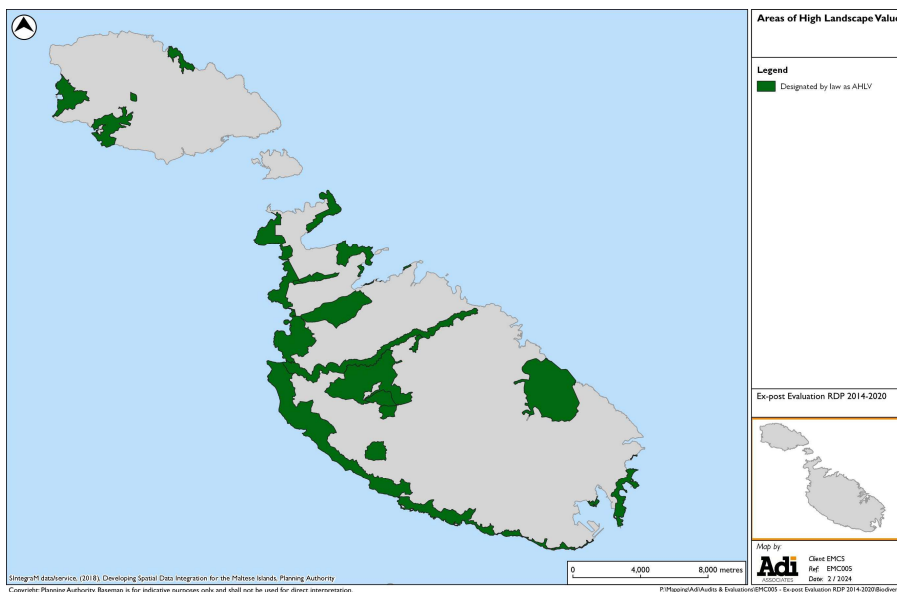
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Biodiversity | Natura 2000 areas



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Biodiversity | Areas of High Landscape Value



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Biodiversity | Results



- **CONTEXT:**

- Decrease in UAA from 11,445 ha in 2010 to 10,730 ha in 2020 (- 6.2%)
- The number of agricultural holdings decreased by 14.8 % from 12,268 in 2010 to 10,449 in 2020
- The agricultural labour force declined by 25.8 %, from 18,212 persons in 2010 to 13,511 persons in 2020.
- Only 23.7 % of the workers are under the age of 45 years
- Data from Agriculture Census https://nso.gov.mt/themes_publications/agricensus-2020/

- **RESULT INDICATOR:**

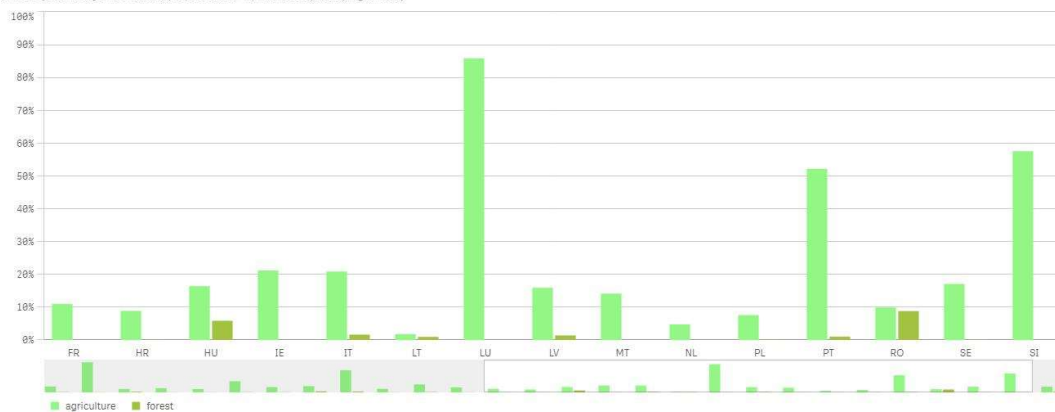
- R7/T9 - % of agricultural land under management contracts supporting biodiversity and/or landscapes
- EU Target: 19.2% (2022 value was 18.2%)
- RDP Target: 8.74% (2025)
- 2022 value: 14.1%

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Biodiversity | Result indicator for European countries



Share of land under contracts supporting biodiversity and/or landscapes and forest (%)
In 2021 (biodiversity and/or landscapes, focus area 4A, rural development programmes)



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Biodiversity | Common Context Indicators



The common context indicators under FA4A are:

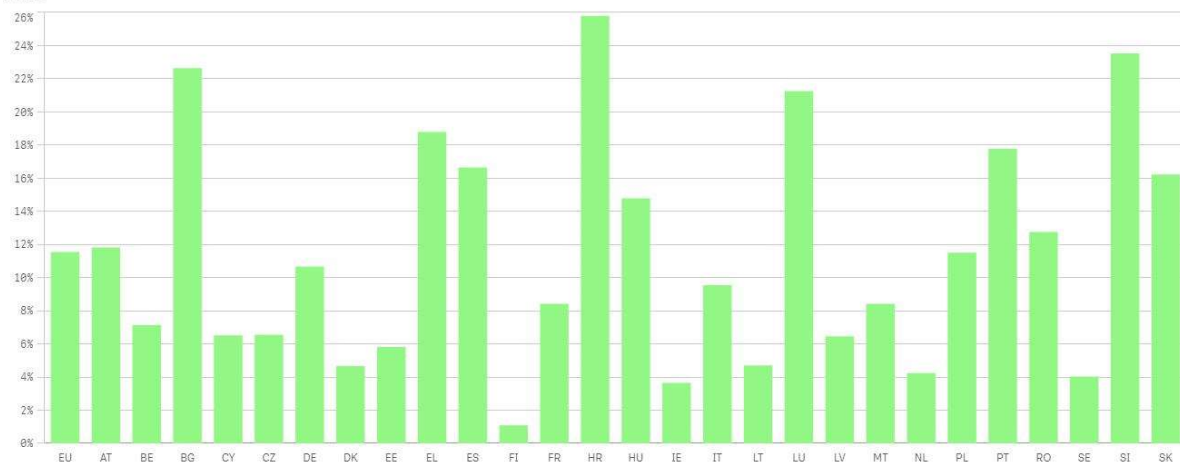
- CCI 34 - Natura 2000 areas: Malta: 8% (EU average is 12%)
- CCI 35 - Farmland Bird Index:
 - Malta baseline 2008: 100
 - Malta value 2013: 81.9
 - No further updates to date – WBRU responsible for computing index

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Biodiversity | Share of Agricultural Land in Natura2000 areas

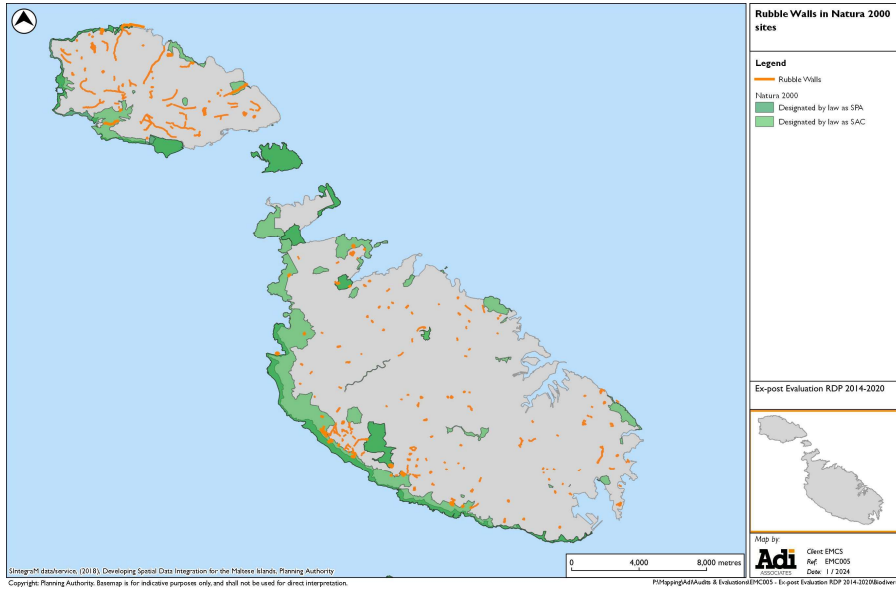


Share of agricultural area in Natura 2000 (%)
In 2021



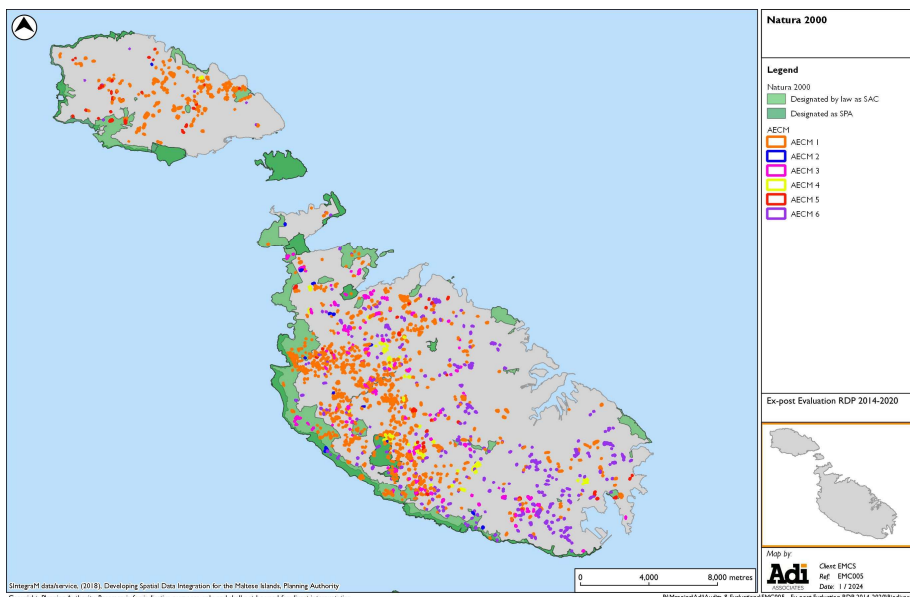
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Biodiversity | Spatial Analysis of Measures – M4.4

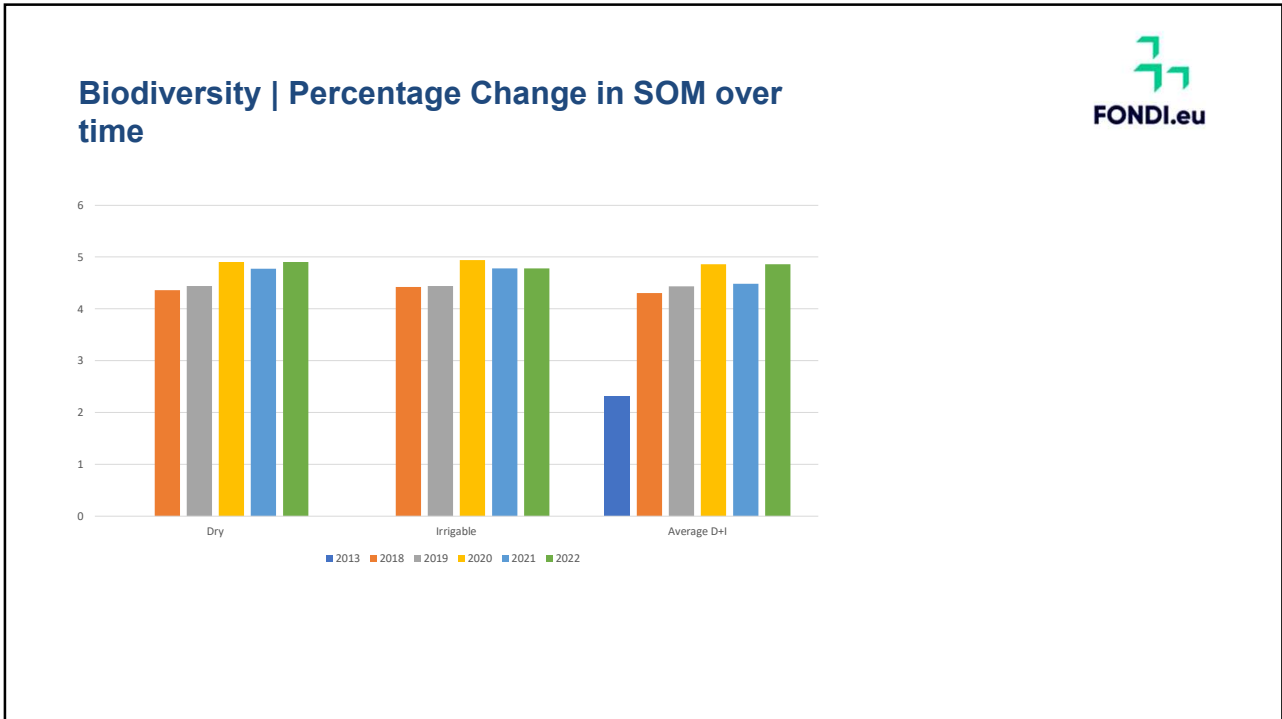


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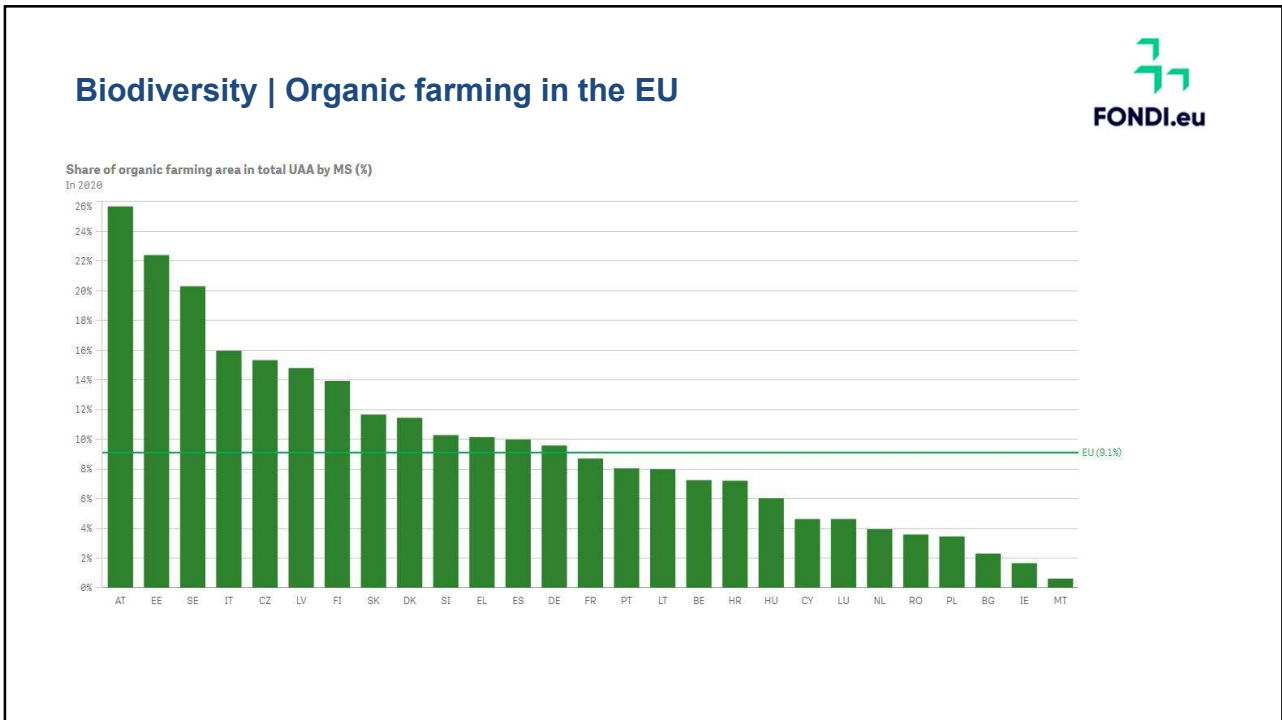
Biodiversity | Spatial Analysis of Measures – M10.1



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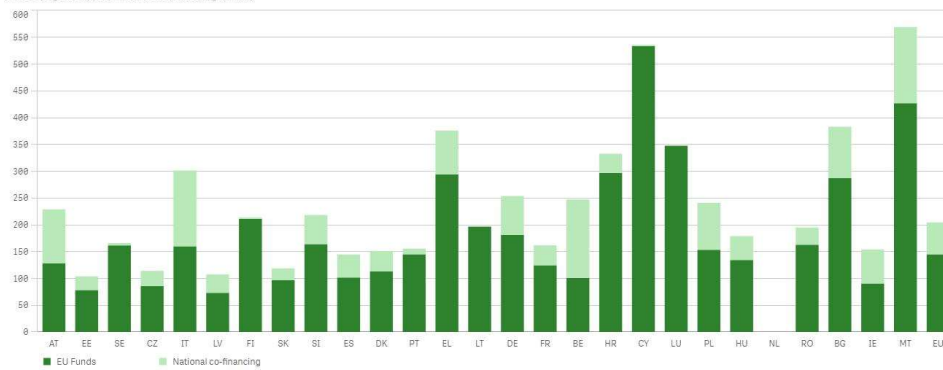


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Biodiversity | Average specific support per hectare



Average specific CAP support per ha (EUR/ha)
In 2021 (Organic support in rural development programmes)



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Biodiversity | Conclusions & Recommendations



CONCLUSIONS

- Result indicator for Malta achieved.
- Relatively low figure for Malta can, in part, be attributed to the low take up of organic farming in Malta.
- The most popular AECMs relate to soil management such as AECM 5 - so the actual impact on biodiversity is somewhat limited.
- Farmland Bird Index for Malta not computed for Malta since 2013 so no trends established.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Further allocation of funds to measures that have an impact on biodiversity including relevant AECMs.
- Incentives to parcels located in protected areas such as Natura 2000 sites and Areas of High Landscape Value.
- Proper incentives for organic farming (Malta's Action Plan for Organic Food) also through adequate rates of support through EU funds.
- Consolidation of knowledge and its transmission to farmers through quality advice on the potential benefits of schemes that benefit both the farmer and biodiversity.
- Computation of Farmland Bird Index.
- Use of GIS for all measures.
- Change from FADN to FSDN for environmental relevant information e.g. plant protection products / fertiliser used.

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THEMATIC EVALUATION ON Water

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CEQ 4: To what extent have RDP interventions contributed to increasing efficiency in water use by agriculture?

This thematic evaluation is related to **Focus Area 5A** with specific focus on **Measure 4.3**.

Key activities in 2024

- Data collection and data management
- Meetings

Challenges:

- Impact on water quality is likely to be longer term
- Trends from data would be difficult to obtain

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THEMATIC EVALUATION ON Competitiveness

23

CEQ 4: To what extent have RDP interventions contributed to improving the economic performance, restructuring and modernization of supported farms in particular through increasing their market participation and agricultural diversification?



This thematic evaluation is related to **Focus Area 2A** with specific focus on **Measure 4.3**.

Key activities in 2024

- Most of the work conducted in 2024 focused on discussions related to data collection and data management.
- An overview of the project closure reports has been undertaken to collect relevant information such as cost, surface area, challenges associated with implementation.
- Meetings were set up with the paying agency to determine whether the location of holdings which are within the vicinity of a certain range from the rural roads that have been financed can be identified.

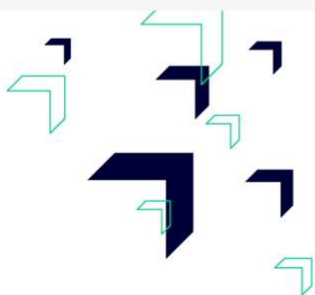
Challenges:

- At the project application stage, applicants submitted data on adjacent agricultural holdings impacted by the investment. Discussions are underway to determine whether data can be updated ex-post.
- The evaluators have been looking into whether it is possible to use the location of the holdings as a variable to determine the extent to which the economic standing of holdings has been affected through the implementation of the rural roads, using both GIS and FADN data. Further probing into the data will be undertaken.

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Thank you for your attention



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