

Citizen Summary

for Implementation Year 2025

Rural Development Programme 2014-2022

1. Introduction

In 2025, Malta' successfully concluded the implementation of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2022, with the full Programme allocation paid to beneficiaries. During the year under review, rural areas continued to benefit from support under the RDP, in what was the final year of implementation of the programme. Over the years, the RDP helped support farm modernisation, greener agricultural practices, improved infrastructure and stronger rural communities. In this final reporting year, the focus was on completing ongoing projects, closing the programme and making full use of the available funds.

The RDP has a total public budget of €196.1 million. This support is co-funded by the European Union and national funds, with additional support provided through the European Union Recovery Instrument (EURI), which is fully EU-funded. By the end of 2025, the full programme envelope had been allocated, and overall eligible expenditure reached a level above the programme budget, reflecting the high level of implementation achieved over the programming period.

In 2025, the final version of the programme was adopted. This update redistributed funds between measures to better reflect actual needs of the sector, implementation progress, demand and the transition to the CAP Strategic Plan.

These final adjustments helped ensure that the remaining programme resources could be directed where they were most needed, before closure. Over its lifetime, the RDP supported, among other things:

- Farm modernisation
- Young farmers' initiatives
- Training and advisory services
- New business initiatives
- Stronger rural communities.

2. Progress Achieved

2.1 Final year of implementation

As 2025 was the final year of implementation of the RDP, no new calls for applications were launched during the year. Instead, the focus was on successfully completing ongoing projects, processing final payments and closing the programme in line with the approved timetable.

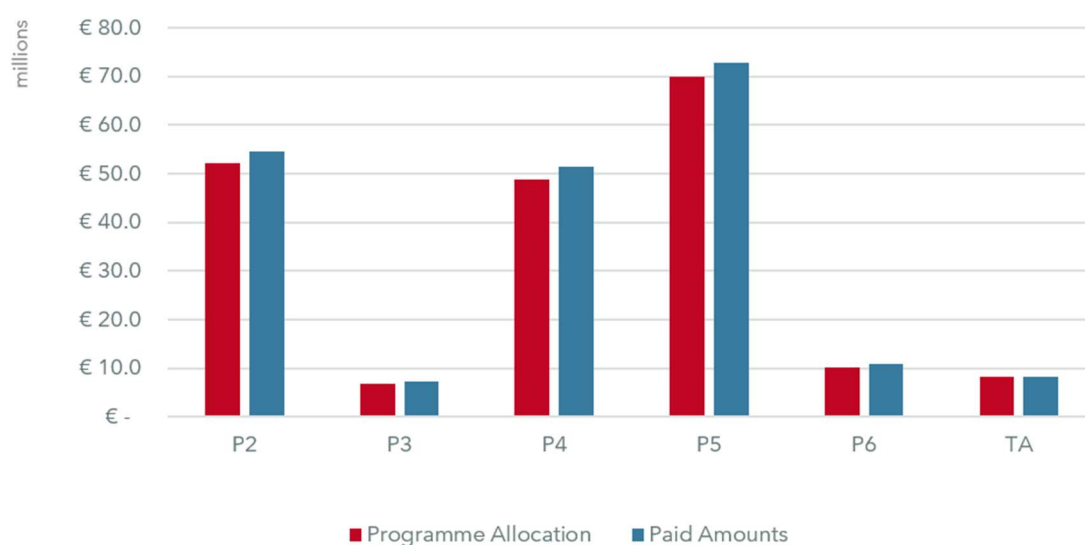
Even though no new calls were issued, implementation continued across a wide range of measures. Ongoing projects in training, advisory support, farm investment, environmental management, LEADER and innovation continued to progress, and additional beneficiary contracts were concluded under LEADER to support full use of the available budget.

2.2 Financial progress by the end of the programme

By the end of 2025, the RDP had reached its final stage, with cumulative eligible expenditure of approximately exceeding the total public allocation of €196.1 million. This shows that the programme closed with very strong financial implementation, translating funding into tangible benefits for Malta's farming sector and rural communities.

The programme not only used its full allocation, but in a number of areas also recorded expenditure above the revised budgets. This was the case across most programme priorities, particularly those linked to farm viability and innovation, food chain competitiveness, climate resilience and resource efficiency, and local development in rural communities as indicated in Figure 1, below.

FIGURE 1: PROGRAMME ALLOCATION AND PAYMENTS AS AT 2025



Note: P1 is not included in this table as it is considered as a horizontal priority, and its allocation is covered under the other priorities of the programme.

2.3 Supporting Farmers and Local Communities

In 2025, the RDP continued to deliver support across a wide range of areas, including training, advisory services, farm investment, environmental action, innovation and community-led local development through LEADER. A significant share of the programme's funding went towards **investment projects**, helping farmers modernise their operations, improve infrastructure and adopt more efficient practices. By the end of the programme, investment support accounted for the largest share of expenditure, while **land-based environmental support, training and advisory services** also made an important contribution, as shown in Figure 2.

This investment support covered a wide range of actions, from farm modernisation and agricultural infrastructure to investments in New Water, environmental restoration and afforestation -related measures.

Under **farm investment measures**, support helped agricultural holdings modernise their holdings through the purchase of new modern equipment, improve production systems and strengthen their long-term viability. By the end of the programme, this support had benefited around 250 projects. Furthermore, 90 young farmers were supported to carry out investments while taking over to become head of their respective agricultural holding.

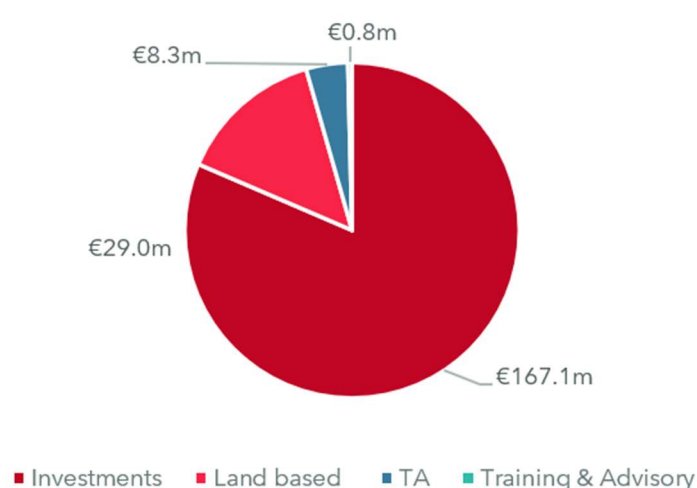
Support was also provided for projects related to the processing and adding value to primary agricultural products, with 19 projects supported. Supporting processors is essential to enabling the transformation of primary agricultural products into higher-value goods, thereby enhancing farmers' income and strengthening the overall agri-food value chain.

The RDP also supported investment in New Water, that is vital to enhancing water security and sustainability in agriculture, particularly in a context of increasing scarcity, enabling farmers to access reliable, quality water for irrigation, thereby supporting productivity, climate resilience, and long-term viability of the sector.

Environmental and afforestation investments also played an important role, supporting projects linked to planting of trees, green infrastructure, biodiversity restoration and wider environmental improvements in public spaces.

Across investment measures under the RDP, more than 950 beneficiaries were supported, excluding training and advisory services. In addition, Measure 22, which provided exceptional temporary support in response to the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, supported a further 328 beneficiaries.

FIGURE 2: TYPES OF SUPPORT UNDER THE RDP IN PAID EXPENDITURE



Support also reached **rural communities through LEADER**. By the end of the programme, more than 300 projects had been approved overall under LEADER. In 2025, although no new calls were launched, 19 projects were approved under earlier calls (refer to Table 1), helping ensure full use of the LEADER budget and maintaining momentum in locally led rural development. These projects reflected diverse local needs, including cultural identity, quality of life and local development.

TABLE 1: PROJECTS APPROVED IN 2025 UNDER LEADER BY LOCAL ACTION GROUP

Local Action Group	Approved Applications
Majjistral Group Foundation	2
Gozo Local Action Group	5
Xlokk Local Action Group	12
Total	19

Source: RD Investment Database, Managing Authority

Land-based measures also remained important. By the end of 2025, close to €29 million had been allocated to agri-environment commitments across various measures. This support helped farmers adopt more environmentally friendly practices linked to biodiversity, water management, soil protection and carbon conservation. It included the maintenance of trees, integrated pest management in vineyards and orchards, soil conservation, mechanical weed control, the introduction of bee boxes, and the preservation of indigenous Maltese species such as the Maltese Black Chicken, the ox, and carob and mulberry trees.

Training and advisory support also remained important throughout the programme. By the end of the programme, a more than 2,000 individuals had participated in training activities, surpassing the target of 1,500, while more than 700 individuals benefited from advisory services overall. In 2025 alone, more than 800 participations in training activities were recorded, and around 400 beneficiaries received advisory support. Together, these actions helped strengthen knowledge, practical skills and informed decision-making within the agricultural sector.

3. Keeping Stakeholders Informed and Involved

In 2025, the Managing Authority continued to keep stakeholders informed as the Rural Development Programme moved into its final stage. Although no new calls were launched, regular contact was maintained with beneficiaries to discuss progress, address implementation issues and support the delivery of approved projects.

Stakeholders were also involved through the programme's formal coordination structures. In October 2025, the Monitoring Committee met to review implementation progress, financial performance and evaluation updates, supported by a technical meeting in advance. An Annual Review Meeting was also held to take stock of programme progress. During the year, the Monitoring Committee was also consulted on the final programme modification, which involved budget shifts between measures to better reflect implementation needs.

Information also continued to be shared through the fondi.eu website, social media and public events, helping raise awareness of EU support for rural areas and agriculture. At the same time, staff from the Managing Authority, Paying Agency and Local Action Groups continued to receive training to strengthen programme management and support the transition to the CAP Strategic Plan.

4. Conclusion

With the conclusion of the RDP 2014–2022, its impact across Malta's agricultural sector and rural communities is clear and far-reaching. Beyond the financial allocations, the Programme has proven to be an indispensable tool in empowering farmers, protecting the environment, and strengthening local rural economies.

From modernising farm holdings and supporting young farmers, to afforestation initiatives and the creation of community spaces, the RDP has successfully translated strategic objectives into tangible outcomes. It has equipped the sector with the tools, knowledge, and support required to adapt and remain resilient in an increasingly challenging context.

Ultimately, the RDP has laid solid foundations for a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable agricultural sector and rural communities. Building on the results achieved, these efforts continue to inform and support future interventions, ensuring continuity and ambition in the development of Malta's farming and rural landscape.

5. Project Examples

Pictures below present a snapshot of a few projects financed under the RDP 14-22.

Training and Advisory Services



PICTURE 1: M1.1 TRAINING BY THE UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

The programme delivered a comprehensive set of courses covering key aspects of Maltese agriculture, including agrology, plant and animal production, and organic farming. It combined scientific, technical, and policy-oriented training to provide participants with a well-rounded understanding of both primary production systems and the broader agri-food sector.



PICTURE 2: M2.1 ADVISORY SERVICES BY AGRICONNECT

Advice focused on practical, farm-level support to improve sustainability and efficiency, including integrated pest management, crop-specific fertiliser planning, and livestock management practices. It also covered pest and disease control, soil and water-based nutrient management, and measures to enhance animal welfare, biosecurity, and environmental performance.

Investment Projects



PICTURE 3: M4.1 PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF GREENHOUSE

The beneficiary invested in a modern greenhouse on a farm in Xewkija, Gozo, to improve agricultural production and efficiency, aimed to increase crop yields, enable off-season production, and improve resource management, particularly water use through rainwater harvesting.

PICTURE 4: M4.1 INVESTMENT FOR THE MODERNISATION OF A DAIRY FARM

This investment aimed at modernising a dairy farm through investment in new equipment and systems, focusing on improving efficiency, productivity, and animal welfare by introducing a new milking parlour, better ventilation (fans), feed storage (silos), and equipment for cleaning and handling animals.

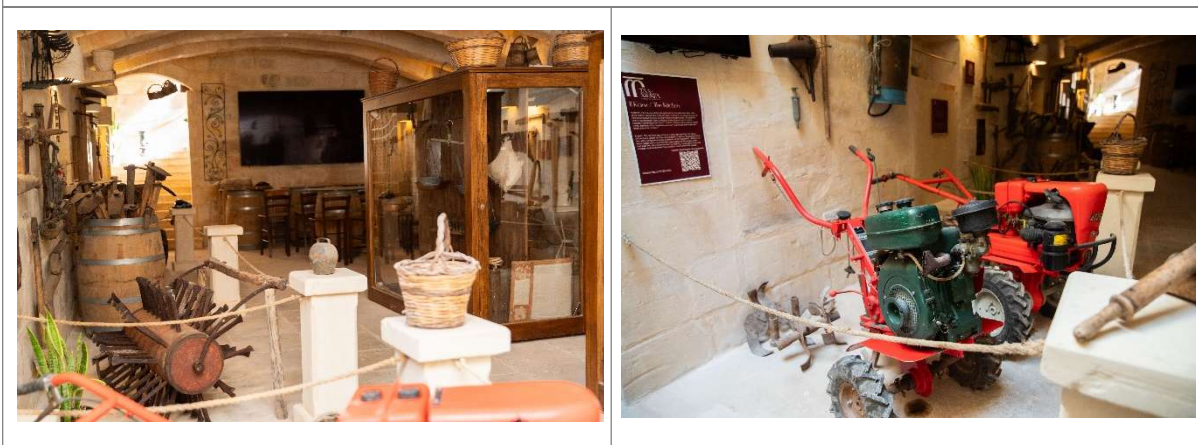


Diversification Projects under Measure 6.4



PICTURE 3: M6.4 SETTING UP OF A FARMHOUSE BY MARSOVIN LTD

This diversification investment was aimed at developing an agri-tourism experience linked to Marsovin's core wine production activities. It involved the rehabilitation of a farmhouse and farm shop at the Marnisi Estate, Marsaxlokk, to offer vineyard tours, wine-tasting experiences, events, and product sales, thereby adding value to primary production while expanding into rural tourism.



PICTURE 4: M6.4 INVESTMENT BY CARMELO BUSUTTIL (TAX-XIERFA)

This diversification initiative aimed at creating a small scale tourist and educational attraction centred on Maltese farming heritage, developing a visitor centre at featuring a traditional *senja* (mule-driven watermill), a display of farming tools, and an underground exhibition space, allowing visitors to experience historic agricultural practices while generating new income streams for the farmer beyond primary production.

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



PICTURE 5: M16.2 ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION HUB

The project established a national agriculture research and innovation hub to support modernisation of farming in Malta, focusing on linking researchers, government and farmers, running pilot projects and field trials, and introducing precision farming and AI-based tools to improve agricultural practices. The overall aim was to create a structured system for research, innovation, and knowledge transfer to improve productivity, sustainability, and decision-making in the sector.

LEADER: Community Projects



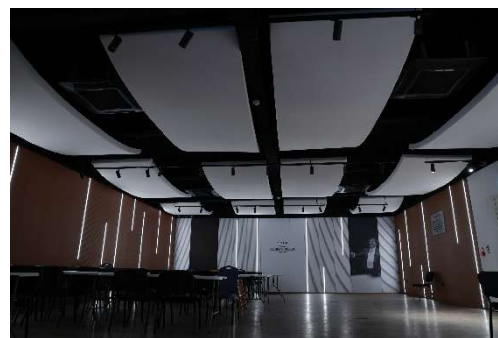
PICTURE 6: MAGF SUB-MEASURE 2 SAVIO COLLEGE

This project supported the refurbishment of an existing hall into a modern, multipurpose space for youth development, transforming it into a hub for educational, social, and community activities. It focused on upgrading the space with appropriate infrastructure, technology, and amenities to support workshops, training sessions, and events, while promoting skills development, inclusion, and engagement among young people.



PICTURE 7: GAGF SUB-MEASURE 4 VOICE FOR INCLUSION

This project supported the refurbishment of an existing hall in Ghajnsielem, Gozo, created a multi-functional therapy centre offering local support for children with disabilities and their families. The project introduced specialised therapy spaces, a sensory room, and equipment for different interventions helping improve access to essential services and reduce the need to travel to Malta.



PICTURE 8: GAGF SUB-MEASURE 3 SOCJETA FILARMONIKA LA STELLA

Refurbishment of underused spaces at Teatru Astra created a fully equipped cultural venue for artistic expression and visitor engagement. The project enabled the hosting of exhibitions, conferences, concerts and other events celebrating Gozo's identity, culture and arts.



PICTURE 9: MAGF SUB-MEASURE 1
GHALLIS

This project focused on repairing and preserving the historic 17th-century tower, including fixing damaged masonry, restoring walls and openings, improving lighting, and adding signage and educational materials, to preserve heritage and enhance tourism, education, and the local environment.



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