

## Name of Rural Network

National Rural Network  
Malta (NRN Malta)

## Contact Details

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## Mission Statement and Strategic Objectives of the Rural Network

The purpose of the National Rural Network (NRN) for Malta is to bring together parties that are either involved or interested in the actions and operations financed by the Rural Development Programme (RDP). The main role of the NRN is the development and enhancement of channels of communication through information activities and exchanges of experiences and methodology, with the aim of stimulating dialogue and improving the overall performance and success of the RDP on a local, regional, national and international basis.

The NRN acts as a consultative platform wherein a bottom-up consultation and dialogue is instigated. This allows rural actors develop a strong and effective strategy with, clearly defined priorities for the next programming period.

## Participants in the Rural Network

All rural stakeholders involved in the programming and implementation of the RDP, including the designated partners and members of the Monitoring Committee, are part of the NRN. In this way, the network comprises a broad representation of the organisations and administrations involved in all four axes of the RDP. These include beneficiaries and representatives of the rural population, representatives of national and local administrations, ministries and parastatal organisations, associations, local councils, Local Action Groups (LAGs), farmer co-operatives and producer's organisations, non-governmental organisations, professionally constituted bodies, commercial bodies and representatives from institutions involved in research and education.

## Network Structure

The NRN's structure includes a Steering and Coordination Committee. Members are appointed by the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs (MRRA) and represent a wide range of stakeholders, such as LAGs, ministry officials, farmers and representatives of NGOs, who are all invited to participate in the designation of the action plan and the coordination of network activities and discussions.

The Managing Authority (MA) within the MRRA is responsible for all the activities of the network. However, responsibility for the implementation of specific network tasks rests largely with member organisations.

The MA takes on the responsibility of running the network with the involvement of the following:

- A Steering Committee to manage the network, which is made up of:
  - » Chairperson;
  - » Secretary;
  - » Representative from the MRRA;
  - » Representative from the MA;
  - » Representative from the NRN (within the MA);
  - » Two members representing the farming sectors (one for livestock and one for crops);
  - » Representation from the LAGs (three LAG managers or an interim person until the former are appointed by the LAG);
  - » Representation from the NGOs environmental/rural sphere.

- A Coordination Committee consisting of:
  - » Chairman;
  - » Secretary;
  - » Three representatives from the MA;
  - » Manager of the NRN;
  - » Representatives from all the three LAGs (given their small number);
  - » Representatives of the key organisations involved in actions under the RDP.

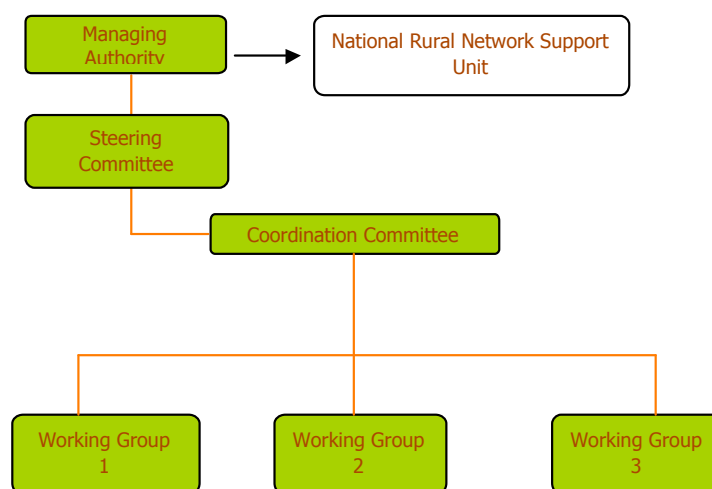
Recommended nominations would be as follows:

- Livestock – one member;
- Crop Sector – one member;
- Producer Organisations – one member;
- Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) – two members;
- Cooperatives – one member;
- Public Representatives – one member.

- » Technical experts are invited to attend meetings organised by the Coordinating Committee but do not necessarily need to be members of the Committee.

- Working Groups

- » These are very specific so as to be of direct interest to the actors involved. Working groups incentivise stakeholders to participate in action centred on common issues. Themes are agreed following discussions with LAGs. The working groups cater for a number of thematic areas relating to horizontal principles and aim to provide impetus, through the exchange of information and experiences.



The Network Support Unit (NSU) is set up within the administration of the MA. However, certain functions may be partially outsourced through one or more contracts, if necessary.

## Network Management

The Maltese NRN is expected to:

- Identify, share and promote good transferable practices;
- Provide information (newsletters, website, e-bulletin, database etc);
- Organise exchanges of experience and know-how (seminars, workshops, conferences);
- Prepare training programmes for LAGs (training programmes, workshops);
- Enhance and support networking between LAGs;
- Provide technical assistance for inter-territorial and transnational cooperation activities by Leader groups (field trips, exchanges);
- Participate in networking at EU level;
- Participate in European Network for Rural Development (EN RD) meetings and functions;
- Promote knowledge dissemination through the exchange of Research & Development (R&D) based experience, between stakeholders, authorities and expert networks;
- Promote method development including evaluation methods;
- Gather, analyse and disseminate information provided by rural actors as a basis for formulating the strategic priorities to be defined in the next programming period;
- Raise awareness of rural development possibilities offered by the programme.

The NRN Network Support Unit (NSU) is located within the MA and run by three full-time officers, acting as a focal point for coordinating the two committees and the different activities of the network. Some specific activities are outsourced when additional input is required such as:

- » Website development and management;
- » Gathering and disseminating examples of best practice;
- » Conference and workshop organisation;
- » Newsletter production;
- » Training of LAGs and other rural development actors.

The function of the NSU is to ensure the overall smooth implementation of network priorities and to:

- » Develop good relations with principal rural actors;
- » Manage the implementation of the action plan;
- » Identify appropriate participants for thematic workshops and other activities and issue invitations;
- » Maintain links with other NRNs and develop a transnational context;
- » Represent Malta at EU level meetings;
- » Develop briefs for outsourced activities and evaluate outcomes;
- » Manage the NRN budget;
- » Develop reports for the MA;
- » Develop rolling action plans for subsequent years.

The Steering Committee is the decision making body which outlines and plans the actions and activities of the network. It also proposes the thematic areas for discussion for each respective year, so that the rural stakeholders are given the opportunity to select the areas relevant to their activity. The MA, in collaboration with the Steering Committee, develops an action plan, which defines activities and methodologies for the effective delivery of necessary information.

The NSU supports the Coordination Committee through its various activities. The Coordination Committee has the function of coordinating activities linked to defined actions (such as setting up the working group and all related preparations. It is also responsible for drafting reports on the outcome of every meeting and submitting them to the Steering Committee for evaluation, in addition to further reporting to the MA. The Coordination Committee organises the necessary tools, actions and deliverables.

At least one annual conference is organised, which enables the Maltese NRN to learn from and share knowledge with, international colleagues and local stakeholders. It is an opportunity for informal networking, to identify transnational partners and create links with more experienced LAGs in other countries.

## Cooperation Interests of the Rural Network

The NRN is a newly established in Malta and thus could benefit from the experience of other networks. It is interested in cooperating with other networks so as to learn more about different themes, as this is the most effective way to strengthen the implementation of activities.

The Maltese NRN would like to set up a real platform to facilitate the pooling of resources (both knowledge and experience) between the different rural stakeholders, both on a local as well as international level. However, the NRN is in its inception phase and so its main goal is to integrate all stakeholder input and deal with a variety of interests, so as to formulate multifunctional sustainable policies.

### Network Budget for the period 2007–13:

Network budget	€	Budget breakdown	€
Total network funds	500 000.00	Work plan resources	375 000.00
National co-finance	125 000.00	Network running costs	125 000.00
EAFRD	375 000.00	Others (if appropriate)	-