

Funding 4 y EU

Issue 3

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From the Editors

Welcome to the third issue of *Funding 4 yEU*, a periodical e-Bulletin issued by Forum Malta fl-Ewropa. The much awaited Operational Programmes have been launched. These OPs will be Malta's roadmap and identify the priorities in which the structural and cohesion funds allocated for Malta for 2007-2013 will be invested. Further details below.

Read about Forum's first two EU funding information seminars which tackled the new CIP Programme and funding opportunities for education and training respectively. Moreover, we were also invited to address a very interesting seminar on EU funding which was organised by the Commission for the Church in Malta and Europe at the Archbishop's Curia for the Archbishop's Delegates, Heads of Diocesan Commissions and senior Curia officials.

As always, our issue will include funding-related news, open calls as well as some funding experiences from Malta. In this regard, Stephen Zerafa from the Water Services Corporation has submitted an interesting contribution about a successful ERDF project that seeks to improve the quality of drinking water. Another item features the experience of a farmer from Qrendi who maximised on EU funding under the RDP 2004-2006.

We trust you find it interesting!

Gabriella & Joe

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Cohesion Policy 2007-2013: Launch of Operational Programmes

Malta's Operational Programmes for Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 were launched officially on the 18th July, following approval by the European Commission. The Programmes represent Malta's Action Plan for the use of European Union Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund for the financial period 2007-2013.

Both documents are based on the objectives identified by the National Strategic Reference Framework document, which was approved by the European Commission in December 2006.

Prime Minister the Hon. Lawrence Gonzi and Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Finance, the Hon. Tonio Fenech, who also chairs the National Strategic Reference Framework Steering Committee, addressed the launch, which was attended by over 250 delegates from public, private and non-governmental organisations.



The launch was also addressed by the European Commission, which was represented by Peter Stub Jurgensen, Director DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities as well as by Alejandro Checchi Lang, Director DG Regional Policy.

Operational Programme I, entitled 'Investing in Competitiveness for a Better Quality of Life', outlines the priorities for

the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund, namely: Enhancing Knowledge and Innovation; Promoting Sustainable Tourism; Developing the Trans-European Networks (TEN-T), Upgrading Services of General Economic Interest; Safeguarding the Environment; Urban Regeneration and Technical

Assistance.

It identifies seven major projects which are to be funded by ERDF and the Cohesion Fund namely: two large projects focusing on Improving the TEN-T Road Infrastructure; an air quality project focusing on the Reduction of Emissions from the Delimara Power Station; an Urban Waste Water Treatment Plant for the South of Malta; Waste Management Infrastructure includ-

ing the Rehabilitation and Restoration of Landfills; and an Integrated Water Management Approach to Flood Relief and Water Conservation.

Operational Programme II, entitled 'Empowering People for More Jobs and a Better Quality of Life', outlines the priorities for the European Social Fund (ESF), namely: Improving Education and Skills; Investing in the Employability and Adaptability of the Workforce; Promoting an Equal and Inclusive Labour Market; Strengthening of Institutional and Administrative Capacity and Technical Assistance.

Both Programmes also foresee a number of aid schemes for enterprises as well as schemes aimed at supporting parents and companies with regard to childcare. OP I also foresees increased support to households in the areas of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

The Launch marks the start of the implementation process. The first calls for projects under both Programmes have also been launched and ad hoc debriefing sessions are being organised by the Planning and Priorities Division, within the Office of the Prime Minister.

The OPs may be downloaded from www.ppcd.gov.mt

CIP: Funding Opportunities for Competitiveness & Innovation

During a seminar organised by *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa*, it has been acknowledged that the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) aims to encourage the competitiveness of European enterprises, support innovation while encouraging the use of information and communications technologies, promote the increased use of renewable energies and energy efficiency, as well as provide better financial accessibility to small and medium-sized enterprises.

The CIP budget totals €3.2 billion for the period 2007-2013 and is structured around three operational pillars: Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (€2.166 billion), ICT Policy Support Programme (€728 million) and Intelligent Energy Programme (€727 million).

This seminar was addressed by Vilmos Budavari from the European Commission (EIP and Financial Instruments), Bernard Agius (ICT Policy Support Programme) and Daniele Fantechi (IEE)

Presentations delivered during this event can be downloaded from the Events section of our website www.forummalta.gov.mt



Part of the audience present at the half-day seminar on CIP, organised by *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa*. Inset shows Vilmos Budavari from the European Commission

Education & Training - Exploring Funding Opportunities

Another very successful conference on EU funding was held on the 10th July 2007, focusing on opportunities for the education and training sector. The overwhelming response shown by participants is clear evidence of the need for information on funds available during the 2007-2013 programming period as well as of a keen interest to share experiences relating to EU funding.

Dr Gabriella Pace, Forum Chief Executive, explained that in its key messages for the European Spring Council 2007, the Education Council had stressed the importance of education and training as a prerequisite for a well-functioning knowledge triangle based on education, research and innovation.

Opening addresses were delivered by the Hon. Louis Galea and the Hon. Michael Frendo. Minister Galea said that Government has identified four main areas of development: enterprise and infrastructure, investment in research, innovation and ICT, sustainable tourism, and urban regeneration for a better quality of life. He stated that Government has allocated a total of €170 million to these areas from the EU 2007-2013 funding programmes.

Minister Frendo commended Forum for its hard work and for its leading role in organising funding seminars for civil society on the opportunities available as well as for its efforts to disseminate the experiences of Maltese beneficiaries.

This conference was also addressed by Joseph-Lynn Micallef, Forum Funding Support Officer, who provided tips and traps on EU funding. Jeanette Busuttill, Programme Manager - EUPA spoke about the Youth in Action Programme. Mauro Miceli & Gabriella Agius from EUPA spoke about the Grundtvig and Leonardo measures respectively

Alison Mizzi, Senior Manager from the PPCD, provided an overview of the assistance which can be provided by the European Social Fund.

Presentations delivered during this event can be downloaded from the Events section of www.forummalta.gov.mt



Part of the audience present at the Conference on funding opportunities for education and training. This was the second in a series of EU funding-related seminars being organised by *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa*

EU Funding News

FP7 Made Easier!

Enterprises and other actors wishing to establish a project under FP7, can now benefit from a tool which will make life easier. DESCA—the simplified Model Consortium Agreement—has released its Version 1.

DESCA is a comprehensive, modular consortium agreement for the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). Initiated by key FP7 stakeholder groups, and co-developed with the FP community, it offers a reliable frame of reference which seeks to balance the interests of all of the main participant categories in FP research projects: large and small firms, universities, public research institutes and RTOs.

The main assets of DESCA are: (1) Alternative modules for large projects and small projects; (2) an optional module for projects with a strong software focus; and (3) Optional clauses in the IPR section. DESCA aims to be user-friendly, in fact its wording aims to be accessible and easy to understand for both scientists and lawyers.

Further information about this initiative is available on <http://www.desca-fp7.eu/DESCA/descahome.htm>



New LIFE Website Now Online



The LIFE website has been completely renewed, with a more thematic approach and user-friendly look and feel. The new design was influenced by the findings of an online user survey carried out in mid-2006. The main menu offers access to seven main sections: (a) news; (b) funding; (c) publications; (d) toolkit; (e) contact; (f) LIFE site map; (g) LIFE by theme (with nine main themes to choose from). Entries in the LIFE project database, LIFE best projects and LIFE by country are provided on every page. The site is news-centred with a handful of stories on the homepage, an invitation to read more, highlights, events and the LIFE newsletter. It may be accessed on <http://www.ec.europa.eu/environment/life/index.htm>

Maximising on EU Funds: Experience of a Livestock Breeder

Oswaldo Zammit, Funding Coordinator—Forum Malta fl-Ewropa

Paul Sacco, whose farm is located in Qrendi, identified the need to invest in more technological equipment in order to perform his job in a faster and less tiresome manner. He therefore applied for assistance under the measure targeting Investment in Agricultural Holdings.



His proposal was successful and after signing the contract, Mr Sacco initiated the project. His project included the acquisition and installation of zoo-technical equipment, removal of manure system and zoo-technical dejection. This equipment, together with the acquisition of soft mattresses for cattle, ensures better animal welfare

and a better working environment. He also applied for a TMR machine which is used to feed and mix the fodder for the cattle. Mr Sacco was also allocated money for the foundation work of a shed.

This project was finalised successfully and Mr Sacco was allocated 50% of the money invested in this project. Mr Sacco had also applied for the Meeting Standard measure which aimed to provide financial aid to help livestock breeders adapt their stor-

age capacity for manure and slurry to the requirements of the EU's Nitrates Directives.



Mr Sacco also applied for the *Ad hoc* measure which sought to provide temporary support to full-time farmers, thereby enabling them to adjust to the changes in the market environment resulting from the dismantling of levies upon accession.

EU-Funded Project on the Quality of Drinking Water

Stephen Zerafa, Head of Public Relations—Water Services Corporation

Potable water in Malta is provided through two main sources namely, groundwater extraction and seawater desalination. The quality of the former is not as good as that of the latter, so in order to ensure that EU and local health standards are met, the water from these two sources is blended to provide a good quality mix according to the aforementioned requirements. The current annual demand is in the region of 34 million m³ per year, of which approximately 60% is produced from the three main Reverse Osmosis plants at Pembroke, Lapsi and Cirkewwa.

Malta is obliged to respect the parametric levels set out by the EU Drinking Water Directive (Dir 98/83/EC). In its drive to improve water quality, the high level of groundwater extraction cannot be realistically sustained for a number of reasons. Continued high levels of extraction will negatively affect the long-term sustainability of the water table and will definitely jeopardize Malta's chances of achieving its commitments as stipulated in the water quality *acquis*. The only viable alternative to improve water quality is, therefore, to invest heavily in seawater desalination to provide superior water quality with a higher blending potential.



The upgrade to the RO plants will not only improve drinking water quality, but will also ease the pressure on underground sources.

In 2003, the WSC submitted an application for EU assistance for the co-funding of a project entitled "Drinking Water Quality Project - Malta" (DWQP) under the ERDF, Malta Objective 1 Programme 2004-2006.

By means of state-of-the-art equipment installed in the Reverse Osmosis plants, the

project aims to: increase the production capacity of the RO Plants; improve the quality of desalinated water; decrease the energy utilized to desalinate sea water; and decrease the reli-

ance on groundwater. The proposals submitted by WSC were accepted and funding of €6 million was obtained under the structural funds.

Special new membranes which are the heart of any reverse osmosis system, will increase the production capacity of the RO plants from 70,000 m³/day to 97,000 m³/day. The electricity consumption is also expected to decrease markedly, resulting in an annual saving of approximately 13 million units. This is mainly attributed to the installation of highly efficient pumping and innovative energy recovery devices procured under this EU funded project.

The table below highlights the improvements to be achieved upon completion of this project.

<u>Indicators</u>	<u>Current Scenario</u>	<u>After Project Completion</u>	<u>Improvement</u>
Nominal Capacity of RO Plants	70,000 m ³ /day	7,000 m ³ /day	38.6%
Chloride Level	250 mg/l	150 mg/l	40%
Specific Power	5.5 kWhr/m ³	4.4 kWhr/m ³	20%

N.B. Figures above are at full operating capacity.

This project will not only enable the Water Services Corporation to achieve national obligations, but also meet increasing public awareness and consumer demands. The WSC is expected to start reaping the benefits of this investment towards the end of 2007.



Around 60% of the existing permeators will be replaced.

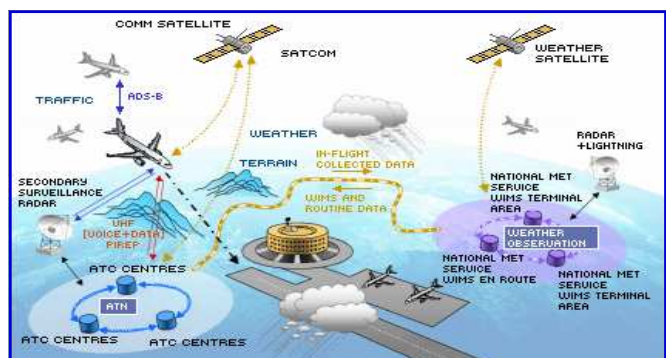
The FLYSAFE Project

by Julian Micallef, Civil Society Coordinator—Forum Malta fl-Ewropa

Boarding a plane reminds you of how much effort is made to ensure wellbeing at all times. Research on safety avionics for commercial aircraft continues and the University of Malta and Air Malta plc are participating in a consortium, headed by the Thales Avionics group, of 35 leading industry and research organisations in a project called *FLYSAFE* funded by the EU's FP6 programme. Partners include BAE Systems, Airbus, Rockwell Collins, Diehl Avionics, DLR, NLR, UK Meteo, Cranfield University and Darmstadt University.

The four-year long project, which is expected to conclude in 2009, is tackling three types of common hazard sources in a bid to make flying holistically safer. The total value of the project proposal was in excess of €50 million. The University of Malta, together with Cranfield University, is responsible for the development of warning systems for crews in case of an immediate collision danger on the ground or in the airport terminal area.

Dr. Ing. David Zammit Mangion from the Faculty of Engineering describes participation as "hard work but extremely rewarding" with good planning.



Air Malta, on its part, is providing end-user input – a crucial contribution to the success of the programme. The participation of the University of Malta, Air Malta and Cranfield University is worth €1.3 million.

Next time you travel by air or watch a plane you may comfort yourself with the knowledge that the next generation of safety systems are being researched now.

Some Open Calls

Rural Development Department launches the Meeting Standards Measure

The Rural Development Department, within the Maltese Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment, is once again launching the Meeting Standard measure. The principal aim of this measure is to provide partial support to help livestock breeders adopt to demanding standards based on Community Legislation. In Malta's particular case, aid shall be limited to the observation of the Nitrates Directives that is to help farmers adopt their storage capacity for manure and slurry to the requirements of the Nitrates Directives.

The Rural Development Department will be receiving these applications from 16th July till 28th September 2007.

Further details are available on http://www.agric.gov.mt/Rural%20Development/rural_dev%20measures%20ad%20hoc.htm

eContentplus

Call for proposals for indirect actions under the multi-annual Community Programme to make digital content in Europe more accessible, usable and exploitable. (The eContentplus Programme)

The present call is open for proposals for indirect actions addressing the following areas and the following activities: Best practice networks for geographic information, best practice networks for educational content, targeted projects for educational content, digital libraries, best practice networks for digital libraries, targeted projects for digital libraries, targeted projects for scientific/scholarly content, reinforcing cooperation between digital content stakeholders, & a thematic network on language resources.

Budget: - The total budget earmarked for co-financing indirect actions is EUR 46,7 million.

Deadline: - 4 October 2007 at 17:00 (Luxembourg local time).

Further information: - The full text of the call for proposals and the application forms are available on the following web site: <http://ec.europa.eu/econtentplus>

ERDF & ESF Calls

The Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division within the Office of the Prime Minister has launched a call for applications for funding under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF)

The call for proposals under the ERDF is restricted to project proposals under the following Priority Axis and Focus Area of Intervention:

Priority Axis 1	Focus Area - Enterprise Infrastructure Focus Area - Investment in RTDi and RTDi-related Infrastructure and ICT
Priority Axis 2	Focus Area - Product Development Focus Area - Niche Market Development and Branding
Priority Axis 6	Focus Area - Internal Mobility Focus Area - Education, Social and Health-related Infrastructure

The call for proposals under the ESF is restricted to project proposals under the following Priority Axis and Focus Area of Intervention:

Priority Axis 2	Focus Area 1 - Continuous Training and Education
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Application forms, guidance notes and the Operational Programmes I and II are available on the PPCD website: www.ppcd.gov.mt (useful links and downloads).