

Directorate	Diversification & Competitiveness Directorate within the Rural Development Department of Malta <a href="https://agriculturecms.gov.mt/en/agric/Pages/missionstatement.aspx">https://agriculturecms.gov.mt/en/agric/Pages/missionstatement.aspx</a>
Role of the directorate	<p>This Directorate plays an important role for economic growth. Changes in consumer demand brought the need for farmers to shift from traditional trends that are no longer relevant and start seeking new opportunities. Farmers are being encouraged to diversify their products and find alternative ways to better their income and be able to pass a vibrant farm economy to the next generation.</p> <p>Some work and services offered by this Directorate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist producer groups, producer organisations, farmers and growers in finding new market niches in the agro-food industry, and in European markets.</li> <li>• Conservation and commercialisation of local fruit trees, plant/crop varieties and animal breeds</li> <li>• The diversification of traditional crops by promoting alternative competitive value chains of high value products.</li> <li>• Invest in research and trials so that farmers/growers can shift from traditional crops and try alternative products that are more competitive and give a higher return in today's market</li> <li>• Coordinating agriculture extension service giving technical advice on how to improve in productivity and competitiveness, also in view of climate change challenges.</li> </ul>
Main interest	Interested in joining in project proposals as partners in any projects dealing on agricultural aspects under the <i>Environment and resource efficiency</i> and <i>Research and Innovation</i> themes of the Interreg Europe Programme.
Other interests	Interested to work as project partners on a project which deals with the steady decline of wild bee population. The project could address the reasons of this decline which mainly emerge from the use of certain pesticides but could also be due to some bad agricultural practices. The project could tackle the main culprits of this decline. The project will develop an Action Plan on how to restore bee populations around the EU.
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