

	MaYA Manifesto	Status	Comments
1	<b>Assisting in the setting up of a task force to tackle agroalimentary fraud</b>	Long Term	Maltese farmers and agri-entrepreneurs need to be given a fair playing field in relation to local products. Competing with producers from other countries already puts local farmers at a disadvantage due to the small scale nature of their production. As we stand, it is useless investing in local growers and genuine producers when the country is still unequipped to tackle agro alimentary fraud. Customers cannot make an informed decision when fraudulent products are constantly found at retail outlets and catering establishments. The already existing quality mark, although important, does not tackle traceability issues. More investment needs to be made even when it comes to the tourism product so that anything that is marketed as 'local' (words such as Maltese, Traditional, Local) is truly authentic. In this way the sale of such products and services would be actually supporting a Maltese farmer or breeder. We recommend that responsible authorities set up a task force backed by enforceable legislation to tackle this issue of food fraud.
2	<b>Engage in national educational and awareness campaigns</b>	Ongoing	MaYA Foundation agrees with proposals being put forward with regards to Maltese local products. We believe that awareness with the general public needs to be given more importance as it will in turn reflect on the demand. The Foundation may be included as an organisation that collaborates with various entities to provide awareness. Focus is being made on education about local agriculture within post secondary institutions. We are hence putting forward a suggestion that would include education about Maltese agriculture even earlier - amongst primary and secondary levels of education. Last but not least, the dissemination of information is believed to be of paramount importance. Such dissemination needs to focus not only through mainstream media and organised festivities, but also through community-based projects and social media. A suggested action to achieve these aims could be an MoU between MaYA Foundation and MESDC.

3	<b>Liaise between stakeholders to improve supply chain management</b>	Long Term	As referred to on pg. 174, the need for more leaders within the agricultural sector and effective operational groups is believed to be a way forward to improve the whole sector. Opportunities need to be set up to strengthen and assist cooperation initiatives, limiting bureaucracy and obstacles imposed by the current mentality. Cooperation funding initiatives need to be given more importance as from the onset of the EU programming period so as to stimulate their creation and successful implementation.
4	<b>Creation of an authenticity mark for the catering industry</b>	Short Term	The catering and tourism industry are still not being exploited to their full potential. The already existing quality mark does not tackle traceability and authenticity. Catering and tourism establishments are very often boasting about a particular offering as local when in reality little or none of the ingredients are truly Maltese. This is hindering local farmers from benefiting, while betraying the loyalty of customers who blindly believe the label and marketing. On the other hand, such an authenticity mark would also benefit those restaurateurs who go the extra mile to source products locally, since their services will be sought after more than those who do not deserve to display the certification. Reference needs to be made to Point 1 regarding food fraud.
5	<b>Encourage capacity building to manage better EU and National funds</b>	Short Term	EU funding is considered to be crucial for the future of farming in Malta. Investment is one of the top priorities of active farmers. Following the experience of three different rural development plans for Malta, it is being recommended that more human resources managing rural development funds should be allocated to ensure a successful implementation of the plan. Various entities managing funds are often understaffed and have high staff turnover due to low salaries not matching the demands of job requirements. The Policy needs to give more priority to proper funding administration.

6	<b>Tackle land management issues</b>	Short Term	Land availability issues are still an entry barrier for young farmers. Prices of fertile land are rocketing and the chances for a young farmer to acquire his or her own land are very low. Government authorities need to be given the legal framework and power for reclaiming government-owned land which would be being leased to individuals who neglected the land over the years. Factors showing serious degradation include; dismantled rubble walls, uncultivated fields, and derelict objects present on the land.
7	<b>Push for stronger representation of agriculture at parliament and government institutions</b>	Long Term	The Policy needs to ensure proper representation of agriculture in the Maltese higher institutions, namely Parliament. For the past few years, agriculture has not been represented by a ministry in its own right but has rather been lowered as a branch within another ministry. This has reduced the importance of agriculture and does not provide the sector with proper representation within the Maltese Parliament. Also, within educational institutions, the term agriculture has been replaced by other terms which could create a deviation from what it really means. A case in point is what happened at the University of Malta and at MCAST. Since a national policy for agriculture is being launched, institutions should reintroduce the encompassing term 'agriculture' to name departments and institutes related to this science.
	<b>Other considerations:</b>		
A	New Water		This aspect is a positive way forward for Maltese agriculture. However several farmers and supporters of the MaYA Foundation have put forward their concerns about the availability of this new source of water. The distribution of such a resource is still unclear and logistics need to ensure that all farmers are given an equal opportunity. At the moment, those farmers who are lucky enough to be located close to the pipes carrying new water are at an advantage compared to the rest.

<b>B</b>	Bore holes		Several articles on local media have mentioned the issue of bore hole water being utilised for scopes other than agriculture. SEWCU the local organisation researching this aspect has already issued data and communicated statements related to this matter. It is unfortunate that a small number of boreholes are extracting enormous quantities of water which is not being utilised for agricultural purposes, in spite their owners being registered as farmers. Such data is available and the policy should ensure that water originating from aquifers should be made available to genuine farmers and the data collected from them is separated from those being extracted for other uses.
<b>C</b>	Representation of young farmers in Europe		The Malta Youth in Agriculture Foundation is the only local organisation focusing on the interests of young farmers. To date, the organisation does not have a representation in the EU. Other organisations at EU level have close relations with EU institutions and are given various opportunities to keep their voices heard. At the moment very little efforts are being made from local authorities to assist young farmers to be part of the whole network. An MoU with MESDC (as referred to in point 2) will ensure that MaYA Foundation is present on various EU platforms to represent young farmers and the agriculture industry.
<b>D</b>	Employment issues		Several issues related to employment have been mentioned in the draft policy. MaYA Foundation is suggesting that incentives should be made available to encourage more females and youths to be counted in the sector. It is common knowledge that spouses and children assisting in family farming activities are sometimes unregistered and therefore not being statistically visible as part of the workforce. Numbers make a difference when lobbying for funds and other issues. The fact that many workers in agriculture are being kept invisible is resulting in an unclear picture of the general workforce in the sector.

E	GDP		The GDP is a crucial indicator of the importance of any sector. In the case of agriculture, the GDP keeps decreasing over time. This is certainly not a positive factor which indicates that much more needs to be done. Stakeholders have legal obligations to declare financial transactions. Incentives to increase production and hence declared output of enterprises could stimulate the sector thus increasing its share in the National GDP.
F	Upgrading of legislation		Legislation in some aspects of agriculture has become obsolete. Land tenureship is one of the areas where legislation is hindering the transfer of land to individuals who really wish to work the land for agricultural purposes. Another legislative aspect which needs to be tackled is the source of milk with which the local cheese (the <i>gbejna</i> ) is made. At the moment, the legislation indicates that the <i>gbejna</i> may be made out of sheep milk, goat milk or a mixture of both. Research has proven that originally the <i>gbejna</i> was made with sheep milk only. Therefore the policy needs to ensure that legislation is safeguarding the best interests of farmers and not hindering their progress.
G	Supporting documents		Reference is being made to research conducted about local bees and honey. MaYA Foundation is suggesting the inclusion of a recently published research paper (August 2017) related to the indigenous honey bee <i>Apis mellifera ruttneri</i> . The title of the research paper is as follows: "Thorough morphological and genetic evidence confirm the existence of the endemic honey bee of the Maltese Islands <i>Apis mellifera ruttneri</i> : recommendations for conservation" Authors: Marion Zammit-Mangion, Marina Meixner, David Mifsud, Sheryl Sammut & Liberato Camilleri