Article 1 Title: We’re taking off!

The Energy and Water Agency is proud to officially announce the launch of the RBMP LIFE MALTA Website.

Our new website provides a clear message of who we are, where our values lie, the partners we are working with, the RBMP LIFE Malta project’s actions we are taking care of, and other complementary projects. In addition, a dedicated section on Related EU Projects hosts a library of papers and content with the objective to provide and simplify the process by which information on EU projects related to the eighteen (18) concrete actions can be found. In other words, the website shall be a central source of information, and platform which displays what is being done under the LIFE 16 IPE MT 008 Project – Optimising the implementation of the 2nd River Basin Management Plan in the Malta River Basin District.

The Energy and Water Agency intends to turn this website into an effective tool for the project beneficiaries, stakeholders and the general public, so that each of these users can remain abreast through regular updates and active dialogue. The integrated approach being adopted through this project, will help the Energy and Water Agency with the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and ensure the optimised management of all water resources on the Maltese Islands.

Article 2: Learning and understanding the perception and awareness on water resources management in the Maltese Islands (Action A.4)

The Energy and Water Agency is going to undertake a perception survey in order to identify the main concerns of water-users and economic operators on the national water sector, and the actions/developments being proposed under the LIFE IP and the 2nd River Basin Management Plan.

In order to have a good initial understanding of the perception and awareness on water resources management in the Maltese Islands, twelve (12) focus groups among four (4) different stakeholders (Maltese residents, representatives from the services sector, farmers, and foreign residents) are going to be organised. The gathering of the focus group responses will facilitate the design of a larger representative study to understand the Maltese people’s attitudes, perception, awareness and opinions on water resources management. The topics which will be addressed during the focus group sessions are the following:

* Water use & Demand Management
* Management of conventional and Non-conventional water resources
* Perceived benefits and barriers of Water conservation
* Provision of water services & Cost of Water
* Water Quality
* Reuse of Water

Focus groups are an important method to explore the above topics because they allow for extensive probing (such as imagery and word association), group discussion, and observation of emotional reactions. The focus group results are expected to be available during the first quarter of year 2019.

Article 3: The Assessment of the Sectoral Water Demand in the Maltese Islands (Action A.1)

The Energy and Water Agency is currently developing an econometric model of future sectoral water demand in the Maltese Islands. The objective of this action is to characterise present and future national water demand by the most important water use sectors in the Maltese Islands, namely, the domestic, agricultural and industrial/commercial sectors. Past data on domestic, agricultural and industrial/commercial sectors is being analysed to develop projected demand forecasts for the next 50 years. The forecast will be tested for sensitivity to different assumptions and prevailing trends on the basis of a number of socio-economic and environmental factors, whilst taking into account the different scenarios for water demand evolution for each sector.

The assessment of water demand is a key management tool and a prerequisite for good water resources planning. The benefit of such assessments is to provide essential information to support planners throughout the decision-making process on strategic planning and investment appraisals for water supply development.

Article 4: Water Educational Campaign: Water Conservation and Sustainability

Presently, the Energy and Water Agency is developing and implementing a water educational programme to raise awareness on the scarcity of natural water resources in the Maltese Islands and also promote water conservation to the younger generations.

The programme consists of a number of components which include;

(a) the development of water educational modules,

(b) the branding, design and printing of water conservation educational material to be used in schools and the community outreach programmes,

(c) the provision of training through a number of targeted workshops to staff/educators within schools, and

(d) the organisation of specific awareness raising events, such as the annual activities in commemoration of the Water Day initiative (21st March).

Furthermore, through this action, the realisation of a number of water conservation projects in a number of schools in Malta and Gozo is central. These projects, apart from reducing the overall water consumption of the schools through increased water efficiency, will definitely help in raising the awareness of the students, their families and the community, on the significant water management issues faced by the Maltese Islands.