



Smart Agriculture for Resource Efficiency

Training Activity in Malta

PROGRAMME: ERASMUS+

KEY ACTION: SMALL-SCALE PARTNERSHIPS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND
TRAINING (KA210-VET)

REFERENCE NO: 2024-2-PL01-KA210-VET-000289700

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SARE

Smart Agriculture
for Resource Efficiency



Project Information

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General Information

Partner's Name: European Institute for Emerging Technologies

Dates: 18.05.2026 – 25.05.2026

Place: MCAST, Institute of Applied Sciences, Centre of Agriculture, Aquatics and Animal Sciences, Luqa Road, Qormi QRM 9075

Format: Blended training model combining in-person sessions with guided self-study tasks using SARE resources and the SARE DigiHub

Number of participants: 10 participants

Target group reached: Agricultural practitioners, farmers, and one trainer linked to the agricultural sector

The Maltese National Training Activity was delivered over five training days. The first four training days consisted of 6 hours of in-person training from 09:00 to 15:00, supported by one hour of guided self-study work per day. The final training day consisted of a 4-hour in-person session from 09:00 to 13:00, bringing the total training duration to 32 hours.

All in-person sessions were delivered physically at MCAST, Institute of Applied Sciences, Centre of Agriculture, Aquatics and Animal Sciences, Luqa Road, Qormi. The guided self-study component was completed independently by participants using the SARE DigiHub and related learning materials.

Training Activity Description

Background and Purpose of the Training

The National Training Activity in Malta was implemented as part of the Erasmus+ SARE project, Smart Agriculture for Resource Efficiency. The activity aimed to strengthen the knowledge, skills, and awareness of Maltese agricultural stakeholders in relation to smart agriculture, resource efficiency, and sustainable farming practices.

The training was designed to respond to current challenges faced by the agricultural sector, particularly in Malta. These include water scarcity, limited agricultural land, rising input costs, climate pressures, the need for more efficient use of resources, and the growing importance of digital skills in modern agriculture.

The training also supported the wider aims of the SARE project by promoting the use of open educational resources, practical training materials, and the SARE DigiHub as tools for continued learning. Participants were introduced to digital and green approaches that can support better decision-making, improve resource use, and contribute to more sustainable agricultural practices.

The Maltese activity placed particular emphasis on practical relevance. Rather than presenting smart agriculture as a purely technological concept, the sessions focused on how farmers and agricultural practitioners can select appropriate tools based on real farming needs, available resources, and local conditions.

Participant Profile and Recruitment

The training involved 10 participants from Malta. All participants were aged 18 or over and were connected to agriculture either through practice, training, or professional involvement. The same 10 participants attended the full five-day activity.

The participant group was composed as follows:

Role	Number of participants	Share
Agricultural practitioner	7	70%
Farmer	2	20%
Trainer	1	10%

Participants were recruited through coordination with an MCAST agribusiness lecturer. This approach helped ensure that the group was directly connected to agriculture and could benefit from the project's focus on smart, sustainable, and resource-efficient farming.

The selected participants had a relevant interest in agricultural innovation, farm management, sustainability, or applied agricultural practices. This made the training suitable for exploring both practical and strategic issues related to smart agriculture in Malta.

Training Methodology and Learning Approach

The Maltese training activity used a blended learning approach. The main component consisted of face-to-face sessions delivered at MCAST, which was supported by guided self-study tasks completed independently by participants.

The in-person sessions combined presentations, structured explanations, group discussions, reflection activities, and Malta-focused examples. The guided self-study tasks encouraged participants to use the SARE DigiHub, revisit key resources, and reflect on how the topics discussed could apply to real agricultural contexts.

The methodology was based on the following principles:

- Short theoretical input followed by discussion and reflection
- Practical examples linked to Maltese agriculture
- Use of SARE Activity 3 and Activity 4 outputs
- Focus on digital tools as decision-support systems
- Emphasis on water efficiency, resource management, and sustainable practices
- Discussion of adoption barriers such as cost, digital skills, trust, and practical usability
- Encouragement of continued learning through the SARE DigiHub

Participants were introduced to the SARE project website, the SARE DigiHub, and the training materials developed under Activity 4. These resources were presented as tools that participants could continue using after the end of the training.

Agenda for 5-Day Training Programme

The programme covered 32 hours in total. It was delivered across five training days between Monday 18 May 2026 and Monday 25 May 2026. The first four training days each consisted of 6 hours of in-person training and one hour of guided self-study. The final day consisted of a 4-hour in-person session.

Date	Topic	Activities	Duration
Day 1: Monday 18.05.2026	SARE project introduction and foundations of smart and sustainable agriculture	09:00–09:30 Registration, participant list and welcome. 09:30–10:15 Introduction to SARE objectives, partnership and expected results. 10:15–11:15 Presentation of SARE website and SARE DigiHub. 11:15–11:30 Break. 11:30–13:00 Introduction to smart agriculture, sustainability and resource efficiency. 13:00–14:00 Discussion on Malta’s agricultural challenges, including water scarcity and small farm scale. 14:00–15:00 Reflection on current practices and participants’ expectations. Self-study task: review selected SARE DigiHub resources & identify one topic relevant to own work.	7 hours
Day 2: Tuesday 19.05.2026	Resource efficiency, water management and farm-level sustainability	09:00–09:15 Recap of Day 1. 09:15–10:45 Resource efficiency in agriculture: water, energy, inputs and waste reduction. 10:45–11:00 Break. 11:00–12:30 Irrigation efficiency, water losses and practical approaches to water saving. 12:30–13:15 Discussion on water use in the Maltese context. 13:15–14:15 Soil health, crop planning and sustainable use of resources. 14:15–15:00 Group reflection and questions. Self-study task: identify one possible water, energy, or input-saving measure applicable to a farm or agricultural setting.	7 hours
Day 3: Wednesday 20.05.2026	Smart agriculture tools and digital decision-making	09:00–09:15 Recap of Day 2. 09:15–10:45 Digital tools in agriculture: sensors, weather data, soil data, platforms, drones and advisory tools. 10:45–11:00 Break. 11:00–12:30 Turning data into farm decisions: irrigation, fertilisation, pest management and crop planning. 12:30–13:15 Discussion on digital skills and technology adoption. 13:15–14:15 Barriers and enablers: cost, connectivity, trust, usability and maintenance. 14:15–15:00 SARE DigiHub resources and reflection. Self-study task: explore one digital tool or DigiHub resource and consider its relevance to Maltese agriculture.	7 hours

Day 4: Thursday 21.05.2026	Sustainable farming and applied agribusiness decisions	09:00–09:15 Recap of Day 3. 09:15–10:45 Sustainable farming practices: soil protection, crop rotation, integrated pest management and responsible input use. 10:45–11:00 Break. 11:00–12:30 Agribusiness decision-making: selecting the right technology for the right farming problem. 12:30–13:15 Discussion on costs, benefits and realistic adoption in Malta. 13:15–14:30 Malta case study: small-scale farm, limited budget, water cost and low-cost technology choices. 14:30–15:00 Reflection on smart agriculture as a practical business decision. Self-study task: prepare a simple action idea based on a SARE resource or training topic.	7 hours
Day 5: Monday 25.05.2026	Application, review, evaluation and certification	09:00–09:30 Recap of the training and discussion of self-study tasks. 09:30–10:30 Review of main learning outcomes across the three themes: Smart Agriculture, Resource Efficiency and Sustainable Farming. 10:30–11:30 Group discussion on Malta-specific implementation challenges and opportunities. 11:30–12:00 Summary of SARE DigiHub use and future access to resources. 12:00–12:30 Evaluation questionnaire completion. 12:30–13:00 Closing, Europass certificates and next steps.	4 hours

Description of the Training

At the start of the activity, participants were introduced to the SARE project, its Erasmus+ framework, partner organisations and main project outputs. The training explained that SARE aims to support the development of digital and green competences in agriculture through practical training materials, open resources and an online learning platform.

The three main thematic areas of the project were presented throughout the training:

- Smart Agriculture
- Resource Efficiency
- Sustainable Farming

These themes were treated as connected rather than separate. Participants were encouraged to understand how digital tools can support resource-efficient decision-making, and how sustainable farming practices can improve both environmental and economic outcomes.

Activity 3: SARE DigiHub

Participants were introduced to the SARE DigiHub as the main online platform developed by the project. The DigiHub was presented as a central access point for training resources, best practices, downloadable materials, PowerPoints, videos and quizzes.

During the sessions, the DigiHub was demonstrated live. Participants were shown how to access the platform, where to find the main sections, and how to use the resources after the training. The DigiHub was also used as part of the guided self-study tasks, allowing participants to explore project resources independently.

The DigiHub was presented not only as a repository of materials, but also as a tool for continuous learning. Participants were encouraged to return to the platform after the training to revise topics, explore further examples, and access resources in different project languages.

Activity 4: SARE Training Materials

The training was based on the SARE Activity 4 training materials developed by the project partners. These materials covered Sustainable Farming, Resource Efficiency and Smart Agriculture.

The Sustainable Farming content introduced participants to practices that can support environmental protection and long-term farm viability. Topics discussed included soil protection, crop rotation, crop diversification, integrated pest management, responsible input use and the importance of maintaining soil health.

The Resource Efficiency content focused strongly on water, energy and input efficiency. This was particularly relevant in the Maltese context due to water scarcity, high production pressures and the importance of reducing unnecessary losses. Participants discussed how water and energy are used on farms, where losses may occur, and how practical solutions can support improved efficiency.

The Smart Agriculture content introduced participants to digital tools and data-driven approaches. These included IoT sensors, weather and soil data, digital platforms, drones, advisory tools and basic decision-support systems. Rather than focusing only on advanced technologies, the training also considered low-cost and realistic solutions suitable for small-scale farms.

A specific emphasis was placed on choosing technology according to the farming problem. Participants discussed how agribusiness decisions should begin with the identification of a real problem, such as water cost, irregular crop growth, labour pressure or input waste, before selecting a technological solution.

Malta-Specific Focus

The Maltese training activity included repeated discussion of local agricultural realities. Participants reflected on Malta's small farm sizes, limited land availability, water scarcity, rising costs, and the practical challenges of adopting new technologies.

One applied case study focused on an independent Maltese farm with a limited budget of €5,000, high water costs, irregular crop growth and limited digital experience. Participants discussed possible technology choices and considered why low-cost soil moisture sensors connected to basic drip irrigation could be more appropriate than expensive or complex tools such as drones or advanced software.

This case study helped reinforce one of the main messages of the training: smart agriculture is not about using the most expensive technology, but about choosing the right tool at the right time to solve the right farming problem.

Results and Learning Outcomes Achieved

The Malta National Training Activity achieved its planned output of training 10 participants connected to the agricultural sector. The full group remained consistent across the five training days, supporting continuity and enabling participants to engage progressively with the three main SARE themes.

Based on the training delivery, facilitator observations and evaluation questionnaire results, the following learning outcomes were achieved:

- Participants improved their understanding of Smart Agriculture and its practical relevance to farm management.
- Participants became more aware of how digital tools can support farming decisions, especially through weather data, soil data, digital platforms and simple monitoring tools.
- Participants strengthened their understanding of resource efficiency, especially in relation to water use, irrigation planning, energy use and input reduction.
- Participants improved their awareness of sustainable farming practices, including soil health, crop planning, integrated pest management and responsible resource use.
- Participants became familiar with the SARE DigiHub and recognised it as a useful platform for post-training learning.
- Participants reflected on Malta-specific barriers to smart agriculture adoption, including cost, digital skills, water scarcity, small farm scale and the need for practical support.
- Participants developed a clearer understanding of how smart agriculture can be approached as an agribusiness decision, considering cost, benefit, usability and long-term relevance.

Training Evaluation

At the end of the final session on Monday 25 May 2026, all 10 participants completed the evaluation questionnaire on paper. The questionnaire assessed participant profile, digital skills before and after training, learning outcomes, training delivery, DigiHub feedback, impact and overall satisfaction.

The results indicate a very positive outcome, with strong satisfaction levels, clear improvement in self-assessed digital skills and high perceived relevance of the training content.

Digital Skills Before and After Training

Digital skill level	Before training	After training
Very low (0–25%)	1 participant	0 participants
Basic (26–50%)	5 participants	1 participant
Intermediate (51–75%)	4 participants	5 participants
Advanced (76–100%)	0 participants	4 participants

The evaluation results show a clear improvement in participants' self-assessed digital skills. Before the training, 6 out of 10 participants assessed their digital skills as very low or basic. After the training, only 1 participant selected basic, while 9 out of 10 participants assessed their skills as intermediate or advanced.

This indicates that the training helped participants feel more confident in understanding and engaging with digital tools related to agriculture. The improvement is especially important because digital competence is one of the key foundations for adopting smart agriculture practices.

Learning Outcomes and Thematic Results

The learning outcomes were evaluated using a five-point scale, where 5 represented “Strongly Agree” and 1 represented “Strongly Disagree”.

Theme: Smart Agriculture and Digital Tools

Learning Outcome	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Average
Q5. Understand what Smart Agriculture means in practice.	5	5	0	0	0	4.5/5
Q6. Identify digital tools that can support farming activities.	3	6	1	0	0	4.2/5
Q7. Use data such as weather, soil or crop data for decision-making.	5	3	2	0	0	4.3/5
Q8. Identify at least one smart solution applicable to my work.	5	3	2	0	0	4.3/5

The results for Smart Agriculture and Digital Tools were positive. All participants agreed or strongly agreed that they understood what Smart Agriculture means in practice. Strong results were also recorded for identifying digital tools, using data for decision-making and recognising a smart solution applicable to participants’ own work.

The presence of some neutral responses in the more technical items suggests that future training could further strengthen practical demonstrations of digital tools, especially for participants with less prior experience.

Theme: Resource Efficiency

Learning Outcome	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Average
Q9. Identify ways to improve water efficiency.	2	5	2	1	0	3.8/5
Q10. Understand how to reduce energy consumption.	3	5	2	0	0	4.1/5
Q11. Improve the use of fertilisers and other inputs.	2	4	4	0	0	3.8/5
Q12. Apply simple strategies to reduce waste.	4	3	3	0	0	4.1/5

The Resource Efficiency results were generally positive, although slightly more varied than other areas. Participants responded well to the concepts of energy reduction and waste reduction, while water efficiency and input optimisation showed somewhat lower averages.

This does not indicate a negative result overall, as most responses were still positive. However, it

suggests that future training could include more practical demonstrations and concrete farm-level examples on water-loss reduction, fertiliser management, and simple monitoring methods. Given Malta's water-related challenges, this area remains especially important for continued training and support.

Theme: Sustainable Farming Practices

Learning Outcome	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Average
Q13. Understand environmentally sustainable farming practices.	4	6	0	0	0	4.4/5
Q14. Recognise the importance of soil health.	6	3	1	0	0	4.5/5
Q15. Understand principles such as integrated pest management.	4	4	2	0	0	4.2/5
Q16. Understand how sustainability aligns with EU policies.	1	6	3	0	0	3.8/5

The Sustainable Farming results indicate that participants developed a strong understanding of environmentally sustainable farming practices and the importance of soil health. Soil health received one of the strongest responses in this section, with 6 participants selecting "Strongly Agree".

The item related to alignment with EU policies received a lower, though still positive, average. This suggests that participants understood the practical value of sustainability but may require further explanation of how these practices connect to wider EU frameworks such as the European Green Deal, Farm to Fork Strategy and the Common Agricultural Policy.

Training Delivery Evaluation

Learning Outcome	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Average
Q17. The training was well organised.	9	0	1	0	0	4.8/5
Q18. The trainer explained concepts clearly.	8	2	0	0	0	4.8/5
Q19. The content was relevant to my work.	6	4	0	0	0	4.6/5
Q20. Practical examples were useful.	9	1	0	0	0	4.9/5
Q21. The balance between theory and practice was appropriate.	7	3	0	0	0	4.7/5
Q22. The training materials were easy to understand.	7	3	0	0	0	4.7/5

The training delivery was evaluated very positively. The strongest result was recorded for the usefulness of practical examples, with an average of 4.9/5. Organisation, trainer explanations, balance between theory and practice, and clarity of training materials also received very high scores.

This confirms that the training format was appropriate for the Maltese participant group and that the combination of presentations, discussions, local examples and self-study tasks was effective.

SARE DigiHub Evaluation and Feedback

Learning Outcome	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Average
Q23. The DigiHub is easy to use.	5	5	0	0	0	4.5/5
Q24. The content is relevant to my needs.	7	2	1	0	0	4.6/5
Q25. I would use the DigiHub after the training.	9	0	1	0	0	4.8/5
Q26. The DigiHub supports further learning.	4	5	0	1	0	4.2/5

The SARE DigiHub was received positively by participants. All participants agreed or strongly agreed that the platform was easy to use. The content was also considered relevant, and 9 participants strongly agreed that they would use the DigiHub after the training.

The slightly lower result for the DigiHub's role in supporting further learning suggests that while participants appreciated the platform, some improvements could make it even more accessible and practical. These improvements are reflected in the qualitative feedback, where participants suggested more Malta-based examples, short videos, practical templates, improved search functions and simple interactive tools.

Training Impact

Learning Outcome	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Average
Q29. The training improved my digital skills.	8	2	0	0	0	4.8/5
Q30. The training increased my awareness of smart agriculture.	8	2	0	0	0	4.8/5
Q31. The training improved my understanding of resource efficiency.	6	4	0	0	0	4.6/5
Q32. The training increased my interest in sustainable practices.	8	2	0	0	0	4.8/5
Q33. The training will help me in my work.	9	1	0	0	0	4.9/5

The impact results were very strong. Participants reported improved digital skills, increased awareness of smart agriculture, better understanding of resource efficiency and stronger interest in sustainable

practices.

The highest impact score was recorded for the statement that the training will help participants in their work, with an average of 4.9/5. This confirms that the training was perceived as relevant and applicable to the participants' agricultural contexts.

Overall Satisfaction and Recommendation

Indicator	Result
Satisfied	10 participants (100%)
Neutral or Dissatisfied	0 participants (0%)
Would recommend: Yes	10 participants (100%)
Would recommend: Maybe	0 participants (0%)
Would recommend: No	0 participants (0%)

All 10 participants stated that they were very satisfied with the training. In addition, all 10 participants stated that they would recommend the training to others.

This confirms a very high level of satisfaction and indicates that the content, delivery style and practical relevance of the training were well received by the Maltese participant group.

Qualitative Feedback from Participants

Feedback area	Main points raised by participants
Most valuable aspects	Learning about digital solutions; relevance to small-scale farming; practical examples; case studies; water-saving focus; irrigation discussion; making smart agriculture easier to understand; examples linked to Maltese farms.
DigiHub strengths	Easy access to resources; downloadable materials; good examples and explanations; relevance to small-scale farming; Maltese translations; clear information on digital tools; easy to understand; useful for continued learning.
Suggested DigiHub improvements	Better user interface; more practical templates; easier search and filtering; more Maltese examples; more short videos; simple step-by-step guides; realistic budget case studies; simple water-saving calculator.
Suggested training improvements	More practical examples; more information on costs; more examples from the Maltese agricultural sector; more beginner-friendly explanations; more discussion time; follow-up support; more field examples; slower explanation of digital tools; more hands-on activities.
Additional comments	Participants described the training as relevant to Malta, useful for future agricultural work, and helpful in connecting farming with technology. Several participants highlighted water efficiency, the use of the DigiHub, and the balance between practical farming and digital tools.

The qualitative feedback supports the quantitative findings. Participants particularly valued the practical nature of the sessions, the Malta-specific examples, and the focus on water efficiency. The responses also show that participants appreciated the DigiHub as a resource they could return to after the training.

At the same time, participants suggested that future training could be further strengthened through more practical demonstrations, more local case studies, clearer beginner-level guidance, and additional discussion of costs and adoption barriers.

Evaluation Conclusions

The evaluation confirms that the SARE Training Activity in Malta achieved its main objectives. The activity reached the planned number of 10 participants, delivered the required 32-hour training programme, introduced participants to the SARE project outputs, and supported learning across the three core themes of Smart Agriculture, Resource Efficiency and Sustainable Farming.

The results show that participants' self-assessed digital skills improved clearly after the training. Before the activity, most participants placed themselves in the very low or basic digital skills categories. After the activity, nearly all participants assessed themselves as intermediate or advanced. This indicates that the training contributed positively to digital confidence and awareness.

The strongest results were observed in the areas of overall satisfaction, practical examples, relevance to participants' work, improved digital skills, increased awareness of smart agriculture, and perceived usefulness for future work. Participants also responded very positively to the SARE DigiHub and indicated that they would use it after the training.

Some areas showed slightly lower, though still generally positive, results. These included water efficiency, fertiliser and input optimisation, and understanding the connection between sustainable farming and EU policies. These results suggest that future training could benefit from more practical demonstrations, clearer step-by-step examples, and more explicit links between farm-level practices and wider EU sustainability frameworks.

The main follow-up recommendations are:

- Continue promoting the SARE DigiHub as a central resource for post-training learning.
- Add more Malta-based case studies, especially linked to small-scale agriculture and water efficiency.
- Develop more short videos and step-by-step guides for users with different levels of digital confidence.
- Include practical templates, such as simple water-use tracking sheets or cost-benefit planning tools.
- Provide more practical demonstrations of soil moisture monitoring, irrigation planning and farm data use.
- Include more discussion on costs, return on investment and realistic technology adoption.
- Consider adding simple interactive tools, such as a water-saving calculator or farm resource-efficiency checklist.
- Strengthen the link between sustainable farming practices and EU policy frameworks in a practical and accessible way.

Conclusions

The National Training Activity in Malta was successfully completed between Monday 18 May 2026 and Monday 25 May 2026 at MCAST, Institute of Applied Sciences, Centre of Agriculture, Aquatics and Animal Sciences, Luqa Road, Qormi. The activity reached the planned number of 10 participants and delivered a 32-hour blended training programme.

The training was implemented by EIET and combined in-person sessions with guided self-study tasks. The same 10 participants attended the full activity, and all participants completed the final evaluation questionnaire on paper at the end of the last session. Europass certificates were issued to all participants.

The activity directly supported the SARE project objectives by improving participants' digital and green

skills, increasing awareness of smart agriculture, promoting resource-efficient practices, and encouraging the use of the SARE DigiHub and project training materials.

The evaluation results demonstrate that the training was highly successful. All participants were very satisfied, and all participants stated that they would recommend the training to others. Participants particularly valued the practical examples, the focus on Maltese agricultural realities, the attention to water efficiency, and the way digital tools were linked to real farming decisions.

The Malta activity also highlighted the importance of localising smart agriculture training. In the Maltese context, issues such as water scarcity, small farm scale, rising costs and limited digital confidence remain central to adoption. Future use of the SARE materials should therefore continue to emphasise practical, affordable and locally relevant solutions.

Overall, the National Training Activity in Malta successfully contributed to the SARE project's mission of supporting smart, sustainable and resource-efficient agriculture through education, digital tools and practical knowledge transfer.

Evidences







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