CORENET Good SFSC Practice No 33	
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Insert photo or any visual image or diagram e.g. SNA diagram/Word or Image Collage (Optional)	
Short title in English	**The Farmers Central Cooperative Society Ltd. (F.C.C.S)**
Choose relevant advertising categories below* and provide short explanation:	
a Business planning and strategy:	Cooperative management and advisory support enable collective marketing, commercial planning and improved market access for small-scale farmers.
b Distribution and logistics:	FCCS coordinates produce aggregation, grading, storage, transport and distribution, enabling farmers to supply larger buyers efficiently.
c Regulatory compliance:	Support from the cooperative, Koperattivi Malta and public institutions addresses market requirements, quality management and relevant regulatory obligations.
d Better partnering:	FCCS brings together seven primary cooperatives and facilitates commercial relationships with retailers, hospitality operators and institutional partners.
e Technology:	Participation in the Syneco initiative provides opportunities for technical innovation in circular agriculture and resource recovery.
f Production & processing:	FCCS acts as a professional produce handling and marketing hub, receiving fresh agricultural produce from hundreds of Maltese farmers. Through coordinated collection, sorting, grading and quality assessment, FCCS ensures that produce is directed towards the most suitable markets and buyers, maximising commercial opportunities and improving market access for local farmers.
g Packaging:	FCCS manages produce packaging according to local market regulations and the requirements of commercial buyers. Fresh local produce is generally handled in the legally designated green Pitkali crates, which identify its Maltese origin. For supermarket chains such as Lidl and SPAR, FCCS also handles produce using retailer-supplied, branded boxes, ensuring compliance with buyer specifications and facilitating direct distribution through established retail channels.
h Branding and marketing:	FCCS undertakes limited direct marketing, as demand for local produce already exceeds supply. Major supermarket chains lead branding and promotional efforts, while FCCS focuses on coordinating supply and meeting buyers' requirements.

Basic information on knowledge and advice provided: e.g. private or public funded organization/advisor, peer to peer knowledge exchange, etc.	FCCS benefits from cooperative, public-sector and project-based advisory support. Koperattivi Malta provides guidance on cooperative governance, organisational development and commercial coordination, while the Malta Food Agency contributes support relating to wholesale market operations and regulatory requirements. Knowledge exchange takes place through regular cooperative meetings, direct communication between management and farmers, and practical feedback on produce quality, market requirements and commercial opportunities. Project-based collaboration, including the Syneco initiative, provides additional technical expertise in circular economy practices and agricultural innovation. Advisory support is delivered through direct consultations, meetings, workshops and project activities. Further specialised advice is needed in branding, digital marketing, consumer engagement and systematic impact monitoring.
**See The CORENET SFSC Charter 14. C SFSC ADVISING.*	

Short summary for practitioners in English on the (final or expected) outcomes (1000-1500 characters, word count – no spaces). *Do not complete if the summary below is completed in English* **This summary should be as interesting as possible for farmers/end-users, using a direct and easy understandable language and pointing out entrepreneurial elements which are particularly relevant for practitioners (e.g. related to cost, productivity etc). Research oriented aspects which do not help the understanding of the practice itself should be avoided.**	Small-scale farmers often face difficulties accessing large retailers, organising transport and negotiating favourable prices. In Malta, the Farmers Central Cooperative Society (FCCS) demonstrates how collective organisation can help overcome these challenges. Established in 1947, FCCS brings together seven primary cooperatives representing over 800 farmers. Through its operations at the Pitkali wholesale market in Ta' Qali, it coordinates the collection, grading, storage, marketing and distribution of locally grown fruit and vegetables. Shared logistics and collective sales arrangements enable farmers to reach supermarkets, restaurants, hotels and other commercial buyers. In 2024, FCCS reportedly handled approximately 15,000 tonnes of produce, generating around €14.3 million in turnover. Advisory support from Koperattivi Malta, the Malta Food Agency and project partners contributes to cooperative governance, commercial coordination and innovation. Regular exchanges between management and farmers help communicate buyer requirements and market opportunities. Participation in the Syneco initiative also demonstrates opportunities for circular agricultural practices. The main lesson is that farmers can strengthen their market position by pooling produce, sharing infrastructure and coordinating sales. Further investment in digital marketing and consumer awareness could increase the visibility and value of locally produced food.
	Main results/outcomes of the activity (expected or final)
	FCCS has established a commercially sustainable, farmer-owned model that strengthens farmers' bargaining power and provides a reliable route to market. Its longstanding operations have helped maintain the viability of local agricultural production, while building trusted commercial relationships with major buyers. The cooperative also demonstrates how professional management, shared infrastructure and continuous adaptation to market demands can support the long-term resilience of small-scale farming in Malta.
	The main practical recommendation(s): what would be the main added value/benefit/opportunities to the end-user if the generated knowledge is implemented? How can the practitioner make use of the results?
	Farmers and producer organisations should consider pooling resources and coordinating sales through cooperative structures rather than operating individually. The FCCS experience highlights the benefits of professional produce handling, shared logistics and strong relationships with commercial buyers. By matching produce quality and availability with market requirements, cooperatives can reduce individual marketing burdens, improve negotiating power and create more reliable sales opportunities. The key is to prioritise farmers' interests while maintaining efficient, commercially sustainable operations.
	Further information/references:
	www.fccs.mt

Actors, stakeholders	Farmers Central Cooperative Society (FCCS); seven primary member cooperatives (Dingli, Mġarr, Qormi, Rabat, St Paul's Bay, Siġġiewi/Żebbuġ and Żabbar); over 800 participating farmers; Koperattivi Malta; Malta Food Agency; supermarkets and independent retailers; hotels, restaurants and catering establishments; Syneco project partners
Region, Country	Ta Qali, Malta
Media attachment (e.g. video) or other attachment (e.g. benchmarking data)?	N/A
Short title in native language	**Koperattiva Centrali tal-Bdiewa**
Short summary for practitioners in native language (*can be the language of the coordinator / one of the partners - otherwise in English*) (1000-1500 characters, word count – no spaces).	Kooperazzjoni bejn il-Bdiewa għal Aċċess Aħjar għas-Suq - L-Esperjenza tal-FCCS f'Malta. Il-Farmers Central Cooperative Society (FCCS), imwaqqfa fl-1947, tiġbor fiha seba' kooperattivi li jirrappreżentaw aktar minn 800 bidwi Malti. Permezz tal-Pitkalija f'Ta' Qali, l-FCCS tieħu ħsieb il-ġbir, l-għażla, il-ħażna u l-bejgħ tal-prodotti agrikoli lil supermarkets, ristoranti u xerrejja oħra. Fl-2024, l-FCCS irrappurtat madwar 15,000 tunnellata ta' prodotti u fatturat ta' €14.3 miljun. Bl-appoġġ ta' Koperattivi Malta, il-Malta Food Agency u sħab oħra, il-kooperattiva tkompli ssaħħaħ il-ħidma tagħha u tadatta għall-ħtiġijiet tas-suq. L-FCCS turi kif il-kooperazzjoni bejn il-bdiewa, flimkien ma' ġestjoni professjonali u relazzjonijiet kummerċjali b'saħħithom, tista' ttejjeb l-aċċess għas-suq u ssaħħaħ il-pożizzjoni tal-bdiewa Maltin.