

MEMORANDUM FOR CABINET BY THE
HON. MINISTER OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE

Development of the Lower Coralline Limestone

Aquifer

As Hon. Ministers are aware a W.H.O. Project is currently being implemented with the chief aim of utilizing wastes and improving the water supply. Within the framework of this project suggestions have been made for a comprehensive programme to drill new boreholes and thus develop the lower coralline limestone aquifer.

The present extraction of water from natural sources has to be drastically reduced as soon as possible because of the dangerous deterioration of the ground water aquifer through increased salinity. It is essential that all possibilities of obtaining water from sources which have up to now not been tapped, as in the case of the lower coralline limestone aquifer, be explored.

The suggestions made by W.H.O. experts consist in the drilling of 48 new boreholes, 28 of which would be considered as production boreholes and 20 as exploration boreholes. The drilling programme involves highly advanced equipment and techniques which are not available in Malta and which the experts suggest could be obtained within the framework of the bilateral agreements signed by Malta with a number of countries and more specifically with the Federal Republic of Germany.

The cost of the programme is estimated to be approximately £416,000 and if the foreign assistance mentioned in the preceding paragraph is considered desirable and would be forthcoming, the financing of the programme would be as follows:-

Foreign Assistance:- £108,560
representing Drilling and ancillary
equipment, cost of 28 submersible pumps,
2 drillers for training local staff and
1 geologist.

Local Funds:- £306,000
representing wages of local staff,
pumping mains, buildings, measuring
equipment, electricity, fuel and
other attendant costs.

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As regards the Malta counterpart funds, the Manager, Water works Department estimates that the local costs would not necessarily reach the figure indicated for the following reasons:-

- (a) Wages amounting to £28,000 could be saved by recruiting 50% of the men required from his existing personnel; and
- (b) Other expenses at £282,400 would arise only if all the 28 boreholes prove productive.

The programme is estimated to need two years for its completion.

Hon. Ministers are accordingly asked to agree to the programme as outlined above, to the provision of the necessary funds and to a request being made to the German Government (through the Ministry of Commonwealth and Foreign Affairs) for the technical assistance indicated earlier.

MTIA 1054/70

5 March, 1970.