My research was focused on the characterisation of the Maltese honey bee using both morphometric and mitochondrial DNA analysis. Being a scientific study, this research project required the use of a vast number of chemicals and other consumables and thus included many expenses. My research was also well overdue and of great interest to the Maltese Islands, especially when honey bees around the world are experiencing major decline. Furthermore, the unregulated and undocumented importation of honey bee nucs in the Maltese Islands has greatly endangered the identity of such an important, endemic subspecies. This study therefore serves as a platform and encouragement for the proper conservation of the Maltese honey bee. This was all possible with the aid of the Master it! Scholarship, part-financed by the European Social Fund, which was awarded to me in September 2013. This programme was critical in establishing the genetic and morphometric characteristics of the Maltese honey bee, *Apis mellifera ruttneri*, as well as showing evidence for a potential subpopulation, which merits further study. In addition, the 17% introgression from the Italian subspecies, exposed by this study, will hopefully promote the conservation of our Maltese honey bee. The results in this study are expected to be published in an international journal shortly.

It was a privilege to carry out such important research, which not only enhanced my knowledge with regards to science and laboratory skills but has also give unique information on our native honey bee. The latter has a long history of association and is still considered to be of great importance nowadays. The financial support offered by the Master it! Scholarship supported me throughout my studies, without which I could not financially sustain the project. I feel that this scheme is a step forward for students who want to continue their studies, which in turn contributes to improve our economy, knowledge and promotes the investigation of innovative ideas. These would improve our standard of living. With specific reference to this study, the Master it! scholarship scheme has contributed to the greater knowledge of an environmental related issue. I would like to show my deepest gratitude towards the Master it! Scholarship board and all the persons involved in the setting up of this scheme.

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