



MINISTRY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT,  
THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

# **Sustainable Development Annual Report 2014**

March 2015

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## 1.0 Background

Malta's Sustainable Development Act (Cap 521) was enacted in 2012 with the purpose of providing a legislative framework through which government can integrate sustainable development in its operations as well as raising awareness on sustainable development issues across all strata and sectors of government and society in general. The Act provides for the establishment of three structures to drive the sustainable development agenda. These are namely the Competent Authority which is responsible for a number of functions as defined by the Act; the Guardian of Future Generations entrusted with promoting sustainable development principles and safeguarding the interests of future generations; and the Sustainable Development Network responsible for promoting sustainable development locally.

In 2013, the responsibility for the Sustainable Development Act was assigned by the Prime Minister to the Ministry for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change (MSDEC) who therefore became the Competent Authority for purposes of the same Act. MSDEC then immediately ensured that all the structures established by the Act were setup, together with the necessary administrative support.

## 2.0 Scope

Part IV, Article 14 of the Sustainable Development Act requires the Competent Authority to produce a report to be submitted to the Minister in charge of the Sustainable Development, delineating generally the activities carried out by the Competent Authority during the previous financial year. In terms of the Act the Minister shall cause a copy of the report to be laid on the Table of the House of Representatives and a debate held thereon as soon as practicable.

This Annual Report provides information about the work undertaken by MSDEC concerning sustainable development throughout, 2014, the second effective year of implementation of the SD Act. The report also aims to enable all interesting stakeholders to gain a good understanding of how sustainable development is planned to be mainstreamed. In this context it is all the ministries across Government, together with their respective departments and entities that, through their programme of works contribute towards ensuring sustainability.

Towards the end of 2014 the Competent Authority sought and obtained approval for the creation of an ad hoc Directorate for Sustainable Development so as to strengthen the organisational set-up and give a greater impetus to the sustainable development agenda.

The new director is expected to be engaged in 2015 and will also have the task of building and enhancing capacity both within MSDEC and also across the other Government Ministries to ensure effective mainstreaming of sustainable development parameters across Government policy making. The structure aims at providing the necessary components to facilitate sustainable development implementation across the board, particularly given the collective impetus each Ministry needs to make to ascertain the achievements of common objectives.

## 3.0 Initiatives and Policy Integration

### 3.1 Initiatives

A number of initiatives have taken place during 2014 that contributed towards momentum build-up in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Act.

The Guardian of Future Generations and the Sustainable Development Network held one joint meeting during the course of 2014. The joint meeting was aimed at outlining the priority topics of both bodies as well as joint opportunities for the two bodies together with resources required for the bodies to function.

The Guardian of Future Generations and the Sustainable Development Network met Hon. Leo Brincat, Minister for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change on 31st January. An exchange of views over different matters ranging from the input that both the Guardian of Future Generations and the Sustainable Development Network can give to different initiatives to queries on the roles of both bodies.

The Network met at least every quarter during 2014 as prescribed by the SD Act. Mr. Marco Cremona, member of the Network resigned and Ms Graziella Cavlan was appointed in his stead.

The current policy of the Chairman is to focus in depth on one of the four pillars of SD per meeting, therefore adopting either a social, economic, environmental or a cultural theme per meeting. All subject-specific agenda items are introduced by invited experts in that particular field. This is expected to continue into 2015. Current policies were discussed as well as the SD Network Work Programme which was based on:

- The Reporting System of the Focal Points
- The context and function of the National Research and Innovation Strategy 2020
- The review of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD)
- National and global trends analysis and adaptation

During the summer of 2014 the Guardian of Future Generations carried out a consultation exercise with the Sustainable Development Focal Points through the facilitation of the MSDEC Permanent Secretary's Office to gather information related to Gender Mainstreaming and Financial Sustainability in view of the intention to pursue this field in terms of raising awareness. The Guardian enquired about:

- policies and measures being considered, planned or implemented in the areas of health, pensions, education and social benefits, as well as in the fiscal framework, with a view to assessing the extent to which these constitute financially sustainable solutions likely to safeguard the interests of Malta's future generations.
- policies and programmes being considered, planned or implemented across Government as part of a gender mainstreaming strategy;
- the manner in which the relevant Ministries, Departments and entities - as well as the individual employees involved in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies - are being held accountable vis-a-vis the gender mainstreaming responsibilities set out in OPM circular 15/2012.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore the Ministry has commenced an internal review of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD). Revision of the said strategy in line with national, European Union and international developments is a function of the Competent Authority as established by Part II, Article 2the SD Act .The emerging rationale based on a review of the strategic measures of the current NSSD is driving the review in order to develop the next NSSD. It will provide a holistic, integrated and strategic policy framework for sustainable development within a set time-frame. The NSSD complements Government's social, environmental and economic goals and trends.

As an overarching national strategic document, the NSSD is intended to guide all aspects of Government policies, plans and programmes. It also provides a framework of principles and key themes which aim at offering an increased integrated approach towards decision-making and decision-taking.

The sustainable development principles on the basis of which the NSSD review is being carried out are, revealed through the following four key guiding documents:

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Guidelines Strategies for Sustainable Development – OECD (2001)
Guidance in preparing a National Sustainable Development Strategy: Managing Sustainable Development in the New Millennium – UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2002)
Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European parliament – Draft Declaration on Guiding Principles for Sustainable Development, 2005
Bellagio Sustainability Assessment and Measurements Principles – IISD and OECD, 2008

<sup>1</sup> « Gender mainstreaming in practice »

[http://msdc.gov.mt/en/NCPE/Documents/Projects\\_and\\_Specific\\_Initiatives/Gender\\_Mainstreaming-in\\_Practise/circular.pdf](http://msdc.gov.mt/en/NCPE/Documents/Projects_and_Specific_Initiatives/Gender_Mainstreaming-in_Practise/circular.pdf)

The key sustainable development principles have been utilised in the analysis of the strategic measures of the current NSSD. The final sustainable development principles which this approach shall be considering are as follows:

Vision and Mandate
Sustainable Governance
Ownership and Participation
Communications/Communicating Effectively
Principles and Challenges
Financial Implications/Considerations
Monitoring and Evaluation

The importance of these seven principles have a certain weight according to the four guiding principles documents in forming a sustainable development strategy as they are the foundation on which sustainable development can function, whilst considerate of the differences of each country. In fact it is up to the country itself to determine which best approach to take forward particularly considering, the ‘prevailing political, socio-cultural and ecological circumstances’<sup>2</sup>

The NSSD is a nationally-owned strategy and thus as an initial step, the key players of all Ministries were brought together as part of the evolutionary process of the strategy development from the initial phase. As a matter of fact a workshop was held on the 15 of July 2014 with the participation of the SD Focal Points and the involvement of the SD Network. The Agenda and Outcome of the workshop entitled ‘Kick-starting the National Strategy for Sustainable Development Review Process’ can be found in Annex 1.

From the findings of the workshop it was evident that whilst certain principles have become common practice, such as stakeholder consultation, in most cases there are other important principles which are at times completely overlooked unless the policy scope is actually addressing the issue in question, that is:

- people’s well being;
- governance and
- budgets.

The workshop also illustrated the need for further policy integration in the work that is currently being undertaken across Ministries and the SD Focal Points have a significant role in improving this process.

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<sup>2</sup> Guidance in preparing a National Sustainable Development Strategy: Managing Sustainable Development in the New Millennium – UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2002)

This reaffirms that Sustainable Development focal points have a key role to play together with the MSDEC in order to facilitate and become enablers to mainstreaming sustainable development across government.

In addition to this, the Sustainable Development website started being revamped to include more information and to provide the space for further resources to be accessed. One key resource which is imperative to enhance is the Sustainability checklist utilised by proponents when applying for project funding under the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020. Although not obligatory under Regulation 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council of 17 December 2014, the use of the checklist reflects good practice to ensure that projects proposals being submitted pursue the principles of sustainable development as outlined in the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union. The checklist considers the reporting obligations of the sustainable development indicators both at a local and at a regional level; as well as national considerations in line with the objectives of the Partnership Agreement. The Competent Authority is expected to finalise the checklist in 2015.

Moreover identification of training possibilities and programmes started being looked into in order to work with other entities such as the Centre for Development, Research and Training as well as other centres to develop adequate training on sustainable development.

## 3.2 Policy Integration

Enabling sustainability thinking and a circular flow of policy developing has over this past year brought about several policies and their initial and continuous implementation. The major policy developments are included hereunder. At the core centre of such policies the dimensions of sustainable development have been considered through consultation and inter-ministerial discussions, the involvement of different stakeholders which addressed inter and intra generational equity as well as bearing a forward looking approach and considering financial implications. Integration of sustainable development into other policies through legal frameworks and the implementation of existing policies, strategies and action plans is one of the most important means of ensuring that sustainable development is being considered in its totality.

### 3.2.1 Sustainability Checks for EU-funded projects

It is evident that addressing sustainability concerns is becoming more common practice and that the relationships and linkages between the various courses ministries and entities take are intertwined. Sustainability has been included as a requirement in funding exercises for some time and it does create the right coerce so that submitted projects consider the elements of sustainability in their project proposals. In fact Sustainable Development has always been included in the Application Forms for all Call for Proposals under Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 (ERDF, CF and ESF) as well as EAFRD and EFF.

Additionally, programmes have common objectives and targets. Such is clearly reflected in the widespread undertaking of climate change and alternative energy, economic and employment implications. The approved Partnership Agreement for the 2014-2020 programming period provides an overview of the application of sustainable development (as a key horizontal principle) for the implementation of the 2014-2020 ESI funds. Sustainable development will cover economic growth, social cohesion and the protection of the environment (including disaster resilience and risk prevention), which will be taken into account throughout the life of the supported activity/co-funded project.

Key examples include the management of heritage projects such as:

- ERDF 032 **Archaeological Heritage Conservation Project** (c. €10m) includes technical studies on all three sites, the building of a visitor centre and other visitor infrastructure and extensive landscaping at Ggantija Temples and St Paul's Catacombs, and the construction of a walkway and a protective shelter at Tarxien Temples. Ggantija has been inaugurated in October 2013. The works at the St Paul's Catacombs are at a very advanced stage and the construction of the protective shelter over the Tarxien Temples have also commenced. These projects shall be concluded in 2015.
- ERDF 245 **Fort St Angelo Heritage Experience** (c. €13m) includes the restoration of the government-owned sections of the fort and their rehabilitation into a cultural attraction focusing on the importance of the fort in Malta's history. Most of the archaeological investigations have been completed. Major restoration and finishes works were ongoing, in view of the project completion deadline set for June 2015. This project is also complemented by national funds. The reconstruction of the sally port is completed whereas the reconstruction of the entrance vault is underway.
- ERDF 244 **Fort St Elmo Heritage Experience** (c. €15m), includes the restoration of the enceinte and Upper Fort St Elmo as a cultural attraction, including the hosting of the current National War Museum and its transformation into a Military History Museum. This project is being led by the Grand Harbour Regeneration Corporation in partnership with HM. The projects in its concluding phase and is earmarked for inauguration in the first half of 2015.
- EAFRD M323/12 (REBACA – Rehabilitation of the Roman Baths and Christian Catacombs, c. €6m), includes the required conservation and rehabilitation works so that the **Ghajn Tuffieha Roman Baths and Ta' Bistra Catacombs** (Mosta) can be made accessible to the general public. The required technical studies are being concluded, while the works tenders have been published. The project has been revised drastically to increase its sustainability and minimize its visual impact on the pristine landscape.



- The EEA (Norwegian Funds) Financial Mechanism 2009-14 New Environmental Management System project for the **Hal Saflieni Hypogeum** (c. €900,000) has also been officially confirmed. Tenders were prepared for the baseline studies. The terms of reference for the Geological Survey were drafted in collaboration with Malta Resources Authority. Project Management started on 22 September whilst the architectural drawings to apply for the MEPA permit were submitted prior to starting works on site. In the meantime the consultant of the environmental management system started the process of the environmental design.

Meanwhile, a key example of a project to increase resource efficiency undertaken by Malta through EU funding:

- ERDF 342-'**Renovating Government Buildings to Increase Energy Efficiency and Reduce Greenhouse Gases (GHG)**

As part of the Government's commitment towards achieving its energy-efficiency goals, it has been decided that public buildings are to be addressed first to serve as a showcase for the private industry as well as for owners of residential buildings to follow. In this context, the project undertakes to perform a study on the 'deep' integrated energy and resource - i.e. renewable energy sources (RES) and water - efficiency retro-fitting interventions required at St. Vincent de Paul Hospital Residence (SVPR), accompanied by generic guidelines how the proposed methodology could be applied to other similar public hospital residences. The outcome of the study will be incorporated within the Cost Benefit Assessment to be carried out for the development of a project which is intended to be submitted for co-financing under the 2014-2020 programming period.

### 3.2.2 Common Agricultural Policy

As part of the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the Commission together with the European Parliament and the Council have drafted new rules to support the farming community through the Direct Payment schemes which are funded under the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF). The reform has shaped the Direct Payments making it more environmental oriented while at the same time aimed to better address specific sectors. This was possible by introducing a number of new schemes of which some are compulsory to all Member States while others can be selected on voluntary bases. The Direct Payment new policy is to help farmers be more market oriented and be able to cultivate crops which will render higher profit without losing any support from these schemes.

The chosen schemes to implement the Direct Payments in Malta are the following:

- Basic Payment Scheme
- Greening
- Young Farmers
- Small Farmers
- Voluntary coupled Support.

### 3.2.3 National Environmental Policy

From an environmental perspective a continued approach to pursue the implementation and monitoring of the National Environment Policy was carried out. The implementation of this policy is closely linked to the environmental initiatives being taken across Government. In this regard a set of focal points were set up in the various Ministries and a series of meetings with these focal points were held. During these meetings the implementation of the NEP measures of each ministry were discussed and a way forward identified, and where necessary additional meetings were held with specific entities. Work also continued on the NEP pilot projects and the collection of data for the NEP monitoring indicators.

### 3.2.4 Climate Action Bill

A framework act for climate action entitled the Climate Action Bill was drafted and launched for public consultation towards the end of the year.

The rationale for this Act stems primarily from Malta's obligations as an EU Member State and a party to international agreements on climate change. As a EU Member State Malta's climate change obligations lie within the context of the 2009 Climate and Energy Package that basically sets three important EU-wide targets for 2020: a 20% greenhouse gas emissions reduction compared to 1990 levels, increasing the share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption by 20%, plus a 20% increase in energy efficiency across the bloc.

The proposed Climate Action Bill is designed to streamline Government's commitment on climate change on both main fronts of climate action - mitigation and adaptation - in a more formal way. It also aims to instill ownership across the board to finetune effective climate action and governance.

The Bill stipulates that it shall be the duty of every person together with Government to protect climate and identifies that it shall be the duty of government to adopt national policies designed to combat human-induced climate change. This shall be done essentially through, *inter alia*:

- the preparation of greenhouse gas inventories as already required by international and EU law;
- periodic reviews of a national low-carbon development strategy;
- periodic reviews of the national adaptation strategy;
- the establishment of a 'Climate Action Board'; and,

- the establishment of a 'Climate Action Fund'.

The Act is meant as a framework legislation enabling the enactment of subsidiary legislation and bringing together existing or newly enacted legislation concerning the regulation of greenhouse gas emissions in line with EU and international law. In 2014 the Directorate has in fact also been working on the drafting of the National System for the Estimation of Anthropogenic Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Sources and Removals by Sinks Regulations. These regulations provide for the establishment of a national system for the estimation and reporting of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions by sources and removals by sinks.

### 3.2.5 Renewable Energy and Efficiency

Malta has been working actively to increase its share of renewable energy share of final energy consumption. Malta has been focusing on increasing the use of PV installation and solar water heaters, heat pumps, biofuels and increasing energy recovery from municipal waste plants and water waste plants.

#### PV Installation and Solar Water Heaters

The total PV installed capacity in December 2013 was 31MWp. An additional approximate amount of 4.0MWp are to be installed on government buildings. The total useful area of the rooftops of these government buildings are estimated to reach 67,000m<sup>2</sup> and will be given on lease for the purpose of establishing, operating and maintaining photovoltaic systems for a period of 25 years and sell the generated electricity at an established feed in tariff to Enemalta Corporation.

A preliminary study to increase solar technology indicates that although rooftop space is available, in practice other services and uses compete for the same rooftop space and it is expected that once a new development framework is in place, a portion of new installations will be deployed on land. A working group has been set up between the Ministry for Energy and Conservation of Water and the Malta Environment and Planning Authority to establish a solar policy. This solar policy is at an advanced stage and will be published shortly.

Nevertheless, priority shall be for rooftop installation which in general benefit from more attractive incentives. With over 60MWp of MRA-registered PV capacity<sup>3</sup>, it is expected that at least 25MWp of new rooftop installations shall come online by end of 2014. It is further envisaged that a minimum of 10MWp of new PV capacity shall be installed on rooftops annually from 2015 onwards. The balance would be ground mounted systems.

#### Heat Pumps

Schemes promoting energy efficient heat pumps for air-conditioning had been implemented way back in 2008. Such equipment can contribute to the heat generation as a renewable resource, however the Directive identifies only heating mode as relevant resource as a

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contribution to the targets. The major load in Malta as a Mediterranean country is in cooling. Plans are being made to promote the use of heat pumps for space heating and water heating in the hospitality industry and in the domestic sector.

#### Recovering of energy from waste

The recovery of energy from municipal waste and waste water treatment plants is also being pursued. This is occurring already in plants operated by Wasteserv Ltd and will continue to be developed in new plants that are in the final stages of development. Moreover, an expression of interest will be issued to establish a waste to energy infrastructure for the wastewater treatment plant sewage sludge.

#### Energy Efficiency

In promoting sustainable development and energy efficiency, the Building Regulation Office (on behalf of the Building Regulation Board) has commissioned cost-optimal studies on the existing national minimum requirements for the residential sector. The cost optimal studies for the offices are at an advanced stage and will be published soon. The studies analyse and recommend the best and most appropriate upgrades of the same obligations as required by the Recast EPBD 2010/31/EU which have to take place over a number of years. The revision of the minimum requirements is legally cast in LN 376 of 2012. The calculations of the cost-optimal energy performance levels in new and existing buildings in Malta have been carried out by means of the Energy Performance Rating of Dwellings in Malta (EPRDM) methodology for dwellings and the Simplified Building Energy Model for Malta (SBEMmt) for offices.

According to the provisions set out in Legal Notice 376 of 2012 the national minimum requirements shall be reviewed at least once every 5 years by the Building Regulation Board (BRB). The results of the cost optimality studies will enable the tightening of the minimum requirements (Technical Guidance Document F presently legislated through Legal Notice 376 of 2012) for a realistic and economically feasible 2018- and -2020-national plan for Maltese Nearly Zero Energy Buildings.

The national competent entity and the Commission shall be informed about such reports and the results will help clarify and determine the roadmap in the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP).

### 3.2.6 Malta National Electromobility Action Plan

Key steps which are being taken are being achieved through the Malta National Electromobility Action Plan (MNEAP) by bringing in a gradual and phased electrification of transport for both private and public mobility, as well as by building upon current environmental and transport related plans and measures already in place, all intended to:

- curb greenhouse gas emissions,
- improve energy efficiency,

- improving air quality
- limiting traffic generated noise pollution
- addressing the use of Renewable Energy Sources for Transportation purposes
- inducing technological innovation
- contributing towards transport induced environmental externalities for the benefits of residents especially those living in congested urban centres
- contribute towards the preservation of cultural heritage particularly towards Government investments in the restoration of historic monuments which are prone to traffic induced pollution
- introduce new economic models and transport services which are not currently used in Malta
- addresses change in behaviour and the conventional car culture
- addressing the build up of human resources and expertise
- establishing Malta as a technological hub for R&D in the field of electromobility and Intelligent Transport Systems
- creating new green jobs

A number of new initiatives falling under the MNEAP are being pushed forward such as Electric Car Sharing and Electric Bicycle Sharing by which the 'private car ownership culture' will be addressed and different modes of travelling encouraged, particularly for short trips.

Additional measures which reduce the dependency on conventional means, include the launch of a web-based interface during 2014 which can be accessible over web applications including smart phones through which a Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) user can pre-book a public car-charging point. A number of grants have been put forward by government to assist potential car buyers to opt for an electric vehicle. Coupled with such initiatives it must also be highlighted that power generation in Malta is set to become cleaner with the use of natural gas and the completion of the Malta-Italy interconnector for the purchase of cleaner generated electricity, the environmental benefits for Malta are bound to leap forward.

Coupled to this scenario, the Government's effort to increase the deployment of photovoltaic technology will also contribute to the provision of cleaner transport, when charging of electric vehicles takes place in places where PV infrastructure is available and the offset of solar energy production against car charging is made.

### 3.2.7 Public Transport

During 2014, Government stepped up its efforts to further improve the bus public transport system by publishing a tender for the selection of a new public transport operator with the main objective to achieve a significant modal shift from private car use on to public transport and hence achieve long-term land transport sustainability. After a selection process, a new contract was eventually signed in December 2014. Through the new contract additional cleaner Euro VI buses will be deployed on the public transport network while additional bus routes are to be introduced to increase both frequency and accessibility. In addition the new Bus Transport Operator is obliged to put in place a real time information system for commuters which will accurately indicate bus movements.

### 3.2.8 Waste Management

Material consumption and waste implications are crucial considerations to be addressed through a proper management set up. The adoption of the Waste Management Plan was adopted by the Maltese Government during January 2014. This Plan represents Government's approach and vision towards the efficient use of resources and it thus set out a strategic direction to where Government envisages taking the waste sector forward.

The core aim of this Plan is that of moving waste management in Malta up the waste hierarchy through increased prevention, re-use, recycling and recovery. This however, depends on a transformation of a variety of characteristics not least current population habits, waste volumes generated, waste collection practices, waste infrastructure and output markets. Malta's high population density, limited land space and lack of economies of scale coupled with the effects of its climatic conditions, proves challenging to achieve this aim.

From its part, Government ensured roping in the sustainability factor within all of the proposed measures outlined in the Plan to ensure a net economic, social and environmental benefit post-implementation. Amongst the listed measures which Government is currently working on, in a way to add further value to sustainable waste management include;

- The carrying out of a study to determine the feasibility of further investing in technologies for energy recovery from waste in Malta.
- The carrying out of an in-depth analysis of the current waste collection system in a way as to encourage further recycling at household level.
- The commissioning of a study on food waste to determine possible ways how to best address the issue of food waste.
- The introduction of a third (organic) bag to cater for the collection of organic waste to, on the one hand, increase source separation and on the other hand, it permits for the generation of higher renewable energy and efficiency at SAWTP.
- The launching of an extensive three-year education and communication campaign on waste management to enable the general public to get accustomed to sustainable waste management practices and prevention opportunities emanating from the Government's Waste Prevention Programme.

In addition to the above, the Plan also envisages promoting the inclusion of the polluter-pays principle across the various waste management procedures. This principle dictates that the polluter, that is, any economic operator who places products on the market, which products might end up as waste, shall make the necessary arrangements to handle/finance the collection of such waste from the market. This principle is more or less reflected in all

measures outlined in this Plan and shall be further looked into as to be better regulated and adhered to by economic operators.

### 3.2.9 Green Public Procurement

Significant linkages are also being created in terms of green public procurement as well as through efficiency in public buildings and the launch and implementation of reforms that reduce administrative burdens in addition to improving citizens experience and service delivery through a one stop shop for citizens. A persistent theme is increasing efficiency all throughout government work linked to national, regional and international objectives. Key examples include attaining the set administrative burden reduction target for Malta. Malta reached and surpassed its target of 15% reduction of administrative burdens on businesses and in Malta's current legislative programme, a highly ambitious commitment has been made at the highest political level to achieve another 25% reduction in the next 4.5 years.

Green Public Procurement for instance is an integral part of the public procurement process. Throughout 2014 the Government, recognising the value of public procurement to the national economy, has been undertaking measures to ensure not only the efficiency of public procurement is improved but also the environmental aspect of such expenditure is ensured. It has been recognised that public sector spending is a major driver for the growth of the economy in Malta and as such the buying power of public authorities can be leveraged to drive markets into growth areas. A key priority for 2014 was therefore developing a more sustainable framework for public spending within which resource efficiency is enshrined. Green Public Procurement is the vehicle for the delivery of such a framework.

In June 2014 government secured approval for the strengthening and mainstreaming of the GPP administrative process within public authorities from the Cabinet. Actions in the final quarters of 2014 concentrated on making the latter happen. The measures on GPP included the reactivation of the Inter-ministerial Task Force on GPP to deliver a review of the current National Action Plan (NAP) and development of a second NAP; the mainstreaming of GPP administrative function and the delivery of training on GPP. As a follow up to the Cabinet Memo and as part of the decentralization of the GPP function DECC in conjunction with Department of Contracts drafted and published a Circular in December 2014 outlining the propose division going forward for GPP.

In addition to the above a number of training events throughout 2014 were delivered to provide updates on GPP policy as well as training public officers in the implementation of the GPP criteria into public tenders. Two training session have been delivered along with three presentations at information seminars and inter-ministerial events throughout the course of 2014.

A preliminary analysis of databases indicated that the GPP Office to date screened and vetted around 2311 tenders issued by public authorities with an estimated value of €711,281,150 in 2014.

### 3.2.10 Fisheries

As it can be deduced, sensitising key sectors to encourage the protection and good management of our resources and the overall wellbeing of both the resources (the natural capital) in addition to quality of life of both the current and future generations, involves the utilization of different approaches. In 2014 proposals for fisheries policies produced by the EU with the view of ensuring that that target objectives in said policies abided with the targets established by the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) were reviewed by the Maltese government.

In addition, the annual review of the bluefin tuna and swordfish management plans took place in end 2014, taking account of the latest scientific advice and were finally endorsed by Malta for incorporation into the national management plans. The interests of all parties involved were discussed and evaluated further to consultations with the fisheries sector's representatives. These management plans take into account the impact of the bluefin tuna fishing fleet which is therefore restricted by the implementation of closed seasons, quotas and technical measures in line with recommendations produced by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

Last year major discussions for the implementation of management measures were held at EU level to implement the discard ban which aims to reduce marine pollution and wasteful fishing practices. Malta joined in discussions about the revision of the role of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), which is a key element for ensuring regional cooperation between EU and non-EU coastal states within the Mediterranean.

In line with target objectives set down in the CFP, and provided by Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009, from a regulatory point of view, Malta furthered its ongoing projects for the development of a website towards improved information sharing within the EU and Member States, traceability projects for the real-time monitoring and control of fishing effort at sea and in ports, Fisheries Information System for real-time data collection and fisheries management at sea, and the implementation of stereoscopic camera systems for the control and management of the bluefin tuna farming sector. These projects bear significance in strengthening fisheries management and improving the efficiency of efforts directed towards the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources.

### 3.2.11 Education and employment

Pillars of importance to heighten awareness and apply a life cycle approach are enabling sectors such as education and employment. Improving the educational framework, addressing the labour market relevance and improving participation of women in the labour



market have been imperative. The main objectives for addressing these policies are through decreasing the rate of Early School Leavers; increasing the number of persons who attend Life Long Learning Courses; increasing the Literacy rate; increasing the number of students continuing tertiary education and increasing the number of women in the labour market. This is being done to strengthen and increase the flexibility of our workforce so it is in a better position to meet any challenges that may be imposed due to various factors that influence the international socio-economic and environmental situation.

Improving skills which in turn benefit the labour-market and enhances citizen's quality of life are in line with sustainability principles that government seeks to keep driving forward through its vision and sustainability approach. Other economic areas which consider the interlinkages of increasing economic upturn, environmental implications and adopting a healthy maritime policy for the islands include maritime spatial planning and the consideration of maritime protected areas, bridging with other sectors to invest in renewable energy.

In order to enable vulnerable groups within society in also slowly but surely improving their quality of life reforming the social security benefits as well as increasing social integration whilst reducing poverty was a major objective throughout 2014. These overarching themes are directly linked with the necessity of providing a good social fabric that ensures that migrants can integrate effectively whilst positively contribute towards the constructive growth of an interesting culture, society and a greener economy. Pension provisions for injured members of the disciplined forces maintain a culture of sustenance and allow a sustainable approach to prevail.

Enhancing the foundations towards a strengthened society requires continuous investment that empowers people whilst providing the necessary tools and information to enrich their lives, our lives. Work revolving around civil liberties thus has not only placed the limelight on particular needs but also has improved the way of life and living and placed an impetus on shifting a cultural outlook. Key steps which the government has acted on last year were:

- Implementation of the Civil Unions Act;
- Discussions (including public consultations) on the formulation of a Human Rights and Equality commission;
- Discussions (including public consultations) on the formulation of a Gender Identity Bill; and
- Setting up of a Directorate for Human Rights and Integration.

The key objectives in these policies mentioned was for Government to act as a catalyst for social change, keeping firmly in mind the developments that were taking place in society. There is a need to continue to, not only acknowledge, but to also provide a legal basis for the varied scenarios of citizens within Maltese society. This is also to be inevitably reflected within the structures of Government as well as society in general.

The policies here outlined were put forward in Malta with the aim to improve the quality of life amongst all members of society. In the case of the Civil Union Act, this was directly linked to the principle of people's wellbeing as it addressed strata of society that were

considered to be marginalised and discriminated against in view of their life choices, as well as applying an integrative process since the enactment of the Civil Union has led to the dissemination of awareness on the rights of these individuals and how their lives are to be integrated within society as a whole.

Discussions on the formulation of a Human Rights and Equality Commission started in 2014. It is envisaged that this Commission will also address sustainability principles such as people's wellbeing whilst building on existant mechanisms. It shall widen the scope to consider all minorities within society. It should be noted that initial discussions in 2014 were also put up online for public consumption and consultation, thus ensuring that all stakeholders are aware of such documentation on an informal platform to ensure that principles of effective communication and political and stakeholder commitment as well as transparency are upheld. The same consultation tools mentioned are also being applied in discussions related to the Gender Identity Bill. The Gender Identity Bill is still under discussion.

The setting up of a Directorate for Human Rights and Integration was discussed late in 2014 and work is underway for this to be implemented as a budget measure for 2015. The aims of the Directorate are governed by a clear mandate in line with the Equality policy that is continuously supported by Government. Apart from addressing people's wellbeing and the integration process, the Directorate's targets improve upon the current capacity within this sector in addressing these issues. It will provide for continuity, within Government structures, that will be regulated by the setting up of the Human Rights and Equality Commission.

### 3.2.12 Health

Sustainability is a key concern in the health sector, so much so that during 2014 the Ministry embarked on an exercise to formulate a National Health Systems Strategy for the period 2014 – 2020. The aim of this strategy is to provide every individual with the opportunity to lead a healthy and active life and to benefit from equitable access to a sustainable quality health care system. This was indeed finalized by the end of the year including an extensive consultation process. Following on from this, a number of initiatives have been undertaken along the lines of the policy direction, as detailed by the National Reform Programme:

- promoting prevention,
- empowering primary care and
- enhancing sustainability.

Substantial progress has been registered on all three fronts and this has also been recognized by the European Commission.

The aim of this strategy is to provide every individual with the opportunity to lead a healthy and active life, and to benefit from equitable access to quality health care, It is a horizontal overarching strategy to ensure a consistent, coherent and all-encompassing response to the challenges that are being encountered in the fact of an ageing population and a longer life

expectancy. The NHSS needs to ensure universal access to high quality health services and economic sustainability, within the available budgetary resources.

Three other important policies which contribute to a healthy sustainable health system were

- the updating of the Food and Nutrition Policy Action Plan,
- the Breast Feeding Policy and
- the National Diabetes Strategy 2015 - 2020.

During the same year, further actions were taken in the implementation of the Non Communicable Disease Strategy (launched in 2010), the Sexual Health Policy and Strategy (2010, 2011), the National Cancer Plan and the Healthy Weight for Life (Obesity) Strategy (2012). The ultimate aim of these policies is to improve the quality of life of present citizens and that of future generations.

### 3.2.13 Tourism

Consequently maintaining society's wellbeing also requires placing additional attention on continued improvements in all sectors, including Tourism which constitutes a significant part of the generation of gross value added in the country. Additional attention was in fact placed on a new draft National Tourism Policy 2015-2020 which is currently undergoing public consultation. The guiding principles are:

- 1) Managing visitor numbers;
- 2) Raising the level of quality across the entire tourism value chain; and
- 3) Reducing seasonality.

The Tourism Policy 2015-2020 is being formulated on the basis of a longer-term Tourism Vision 2030. The Tourism Vision 2030 is based on the principle of sustainable development with a view to safeguarding the positive aspects of our country's attractiveness as a tourism destination for the benefit of visitors and the host population alike. This Vision is based on the concept of controlled growth, which is achievable through the targeting of appropriate markets with the aim of achieving higher rates of economic returns and returns on investment. It is also based on the principle of aiming for high quality delivery at all levels, of the tourism value chain with a view to achieving improved competitive positioning in the international tourism market. The Tourism Policy 2015-2020 is based on the premise related to sustainable management and planning of the tourism industry, including the importance in the tourism product. The main three major pillars communicated in the policy are accessibility, the generation of tourism supply through product development and quality assurance initiatives. It also gives recognition to Gozo's specificities as a distinct tourism destination whilst also taking note of the growing importance and size of the domestic tourism market.

The sustainable investments being carried out need in fact to have an ongoing sustainable design approach. Eco-Gozo is an example in the making and further research and training

would also sustain it and the rest of the market as well as it would in turn contribute favourably in other sectors in effectively implementing its vision.

### 3.2.14 Regional Issues

Malta is currently holding the Presidency of the Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development since 2013. In line with its Steering Committee Presidency role, MSDEC continued to actively support the two key priorities of the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development during 2014: the review of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development and the reform of the Commission itself. Malta hosted the launch of the Review process of the Strategy, with Hon. Minister Leo Brincat launching the process in Malta in February. In June Malta hosted the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Commission, which identified the vision and thematic areas to be addressed in the revised strategy and discussed the reform of the Commission based on a paper drafted by Malta. Malta played an active role in the stakeholder meetings and drafting process to revise the strategy, and towards the end of 2014 worked on the organisation and planning of an international conference to discuss the revised Strategy with stakeholders, to take place in Malta in February 2015.

The SD Focal Points have a significant role in improving the process of policy integration. Accountability, transparency, effective communication, participation, considering financial implications underpinned by a vision and mandate, sustained by research and training are all embedded in sustainable governance. But the key term is increasing sustainable development literacy. This effectively means that we are not just driven by outcomes but we look and analyse carefully the approach taken and its immediate and long-term implications to reach targets.

## 4.0 Conclusion

This past year has been a continual advancement in adopting progressive steps in the field of sustainable development. The interconnections of the dimensions of sustainable development are evident and sustainable governance remains a challenge.

The Guardian of Future Generations and the Sustainable Development Network have commenced working on their programme of work and on the themes they wish to deal with as explained above.

The focus in the year 2015 will be to strengthen synergies between the respective structures set by the Act in addition to reaching out nationwide in order to facilitate and deliver the revision of the Strategy that should guide the shift towards adopting sustainable development principles and a sustainable approach whilst also facilitating capacity building through training opportunities.

In addition to the latter, a monitoring programme will be developed to evaluate the implementation of the Sustainability Funding Checklist as well as continue enhancing and promoting the sustainable development website as a nationwide resource.

Moreover, the MSDEC intends to provide guidelines to Local Councils to encourage those Local Councils wishing to adopt a more sustainable approach within their localities to draft a Local Agenda 21 for their locality. A Local Agenda 21 carried out with the participation of the community and interested stakeholder would certainly place sustainable development principles at the core of local governance.

These buttresses of change have kick-started a reliable track for sustainable governance to take shape slowly but surely both from a rational and policy development growth point of view. Of course other paths are being developed however such initiatives would surely start lessening the sustainable development illiteracy which still exists.

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