

DRAFT ANNUAL TOURISM REPORTING TEMPLATE

1. INTRODUCTION

Council Decision 86/664/EEC of 22 December 1986¹ establishing a consultation and cooperation procedure in the field of tourism foresees that *“each Member State shall send the Commission, once a year, a report on the most significant measures it has taken and, as far as possible, on measures it is considering taking in the provision of services for tourists which could have consequences for travellers from the other Member States”*.

With the publication of the Communication *“Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism”*, thereafter referred to as *“Agenda”*, the Commission announced that *“in order to strengthen the collaboration with and among Member States, their current annual reporting through the Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) will be used to facilitate the exchange and the dissemination of information about how their policies and actions safeguard the sustainability of tourism”*. The Communication also recognised that sustainability and competitiveness are integral parts of a comprehensive approach towards tourism management and development.

This Communication was welcomed by the Competitiveness Council conclusions (22nd-23rd November 2007) and by the Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council of 14th December 2007.

The main aims for the reporting process are to:

- be able to monitor the level of implementation of the *“Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism”* by Member States;
- provide an opportunity for Member States to make visible at European level the ideas and initiatives that they have developed or are developing regarding tourism issues;
- facilitate the exchange of experiences among Member States with regard to how they tackle issues which are important for the competitiveness and sustainability of European tourism.

MS reports referring to year n shall be sent to the European Commission by the end of February of year $n+1$.

If the reports are sent in English, the deadline can be moved to the end of April.

¹ Official Journal L 384, 31/12/1986 P. 0052 – 0053.

2. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE (last modified:)

This section should provide an overview of the main organisational structure to illustrate how tourism is organised and managed, to identify linkages and to identify the engagement of other organisations/stakeholders.

[The information required will only need to be prepared fully in year 1 as it will subsequently only be necessary to provide details of any changes.]

2.1 Please identify the national bodies responsible for tourism (Ministry and also any separate/related National Tourism Organisation), including key areas of responsibility, and their relationship to other national bodies. (maximum of 1.000 characters)

Parliamentary Secretariat for Tourism (PST) within the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)

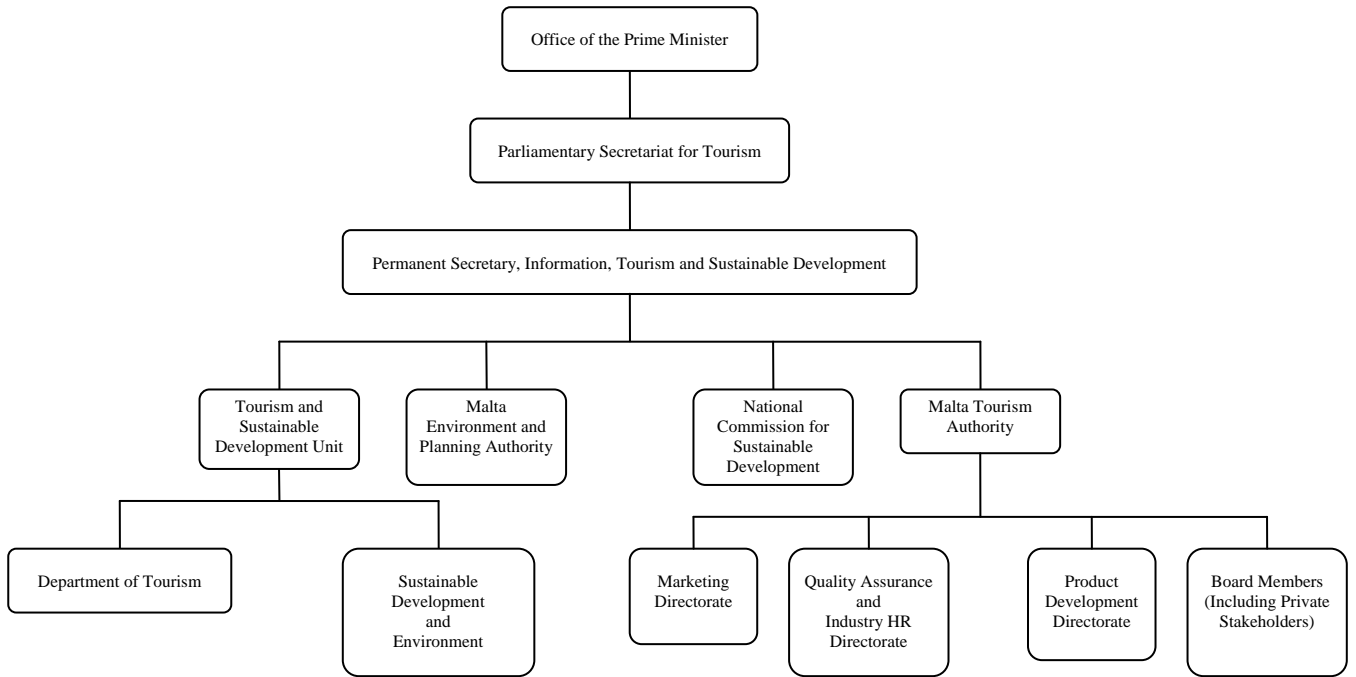
As of March 2008, the tourism portfolio falls under the responsibility of the PST within OPM. The ministry is responsible for tourism policy and plays an active role in monitoring the performance of tourism in and in formulating initiatives to achieve sustainable tourism.

Malta Tourism Authority

MTA's responsibilities range from the marketing of Malta as a tourism destination to tourism product planning and development, to the development of the human resources and to ensure that standards are adhered to through legal enforcement. MTA aims to:

- Promote and advance Malta as a tourist destination
- Advise government on tourism operations and on the sustainable development of the tourism industry
- Issue licences under the Malta Travel and Tourism Services Act
- Monitor, classify and control the licensing of and standards provided in or by tourism operations
- Contribute towards the improvement of the level of human resources in the tourism industry
- Undertake and organise activities and projects as it may consider appropriate in connection with the performance of its functions

2.2 Please provide a **diagram/organigram of the organisational structure for tourism** identifying the relationship between national, regional and local bodies. Provide also a short description of the core responsibilities and competencies of each of the organisations. Include also information regarding the direct and indirect links between other departments, stakeholder organisations and unions. Information about mechanisms of decision making process participation from outsider organisations, e.g. forums, advisory committees is also requested. (maximum 2 pages)



There are different tourism stakeholders and organisations with which the ministry meets on a regular basis.

2.3 Please provide information about **financial data**, including spend on tourism as a percentage of overall government spend, the level of national funding support for tourism marketing, the amount of EU funding support made available for tourism and data concerning the support to SMEs and destinations. (1000 characters)

Government provided a budget of €26 million to MTA in 2009 to support tourism development, including an additional €2.5million to make up for the current international crisis. During the forthcoming period a continuous emphasis will be made for constant investment in tourism product development. This will take place through the allocation of €120 million of EU Structural Funds and the budgeted disbursement is foreseen to happen during the period 2009-2013. Product improvement projects focus on beaches and tourism zones. To sustain the Maltese islands' heritage, €9.5million of these funds have been allocated for the restoration of various. €10 million have been allocated to a grant scheme for sustainable tourism projects by enterprises, including SMEs. A number of ESF projects will also benefit the tourism sector, particularly people working or intending to work in the sector. The Rural Development Programme for Malta has allocated € 32 million for the betterment and promotion of non traditional touristic localities so as to direct tourism flows to these localities so as to enable fairer distribution of income whilst ensuring a more diversified rural economy.

3. POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

3.1 Is there a current **National Strategy for Tourism**? Yes No

If yes, please, provide information in bullet point format about the **key aims, objectives and priorities** of the strategy highlighting those that are designed to address sustainability issues in economic, environmental and social terms in particular those related in the six aims included in the "Agenda". In the **formulation process of the tourism strategy**, briefly explain whether and how consideration has been given to the 9 principles set out in the "Agenda" (para 2.3 p5) and given in the appendix. (maximum 2000 characters)

1. ensure the optimal use of the financial and human resources dedicated to tourism within the public sector and monitor the effectiveness of major initiatives across the industry and the contribution of these projects for the sustainable development of the Maltese tourism industry;
2. deliver on our responsibility to provide direction to the tourism industry and to implement better regulation initiatives;
3. manage and balance economic, social and environmental impacts seeking the national interest, but not at the expense of degrading environmental and socio-cultural resources;
4. deepen our offerings focusing on our existing product elements and types of activity for improving quality and service provision;
5. encourage creative thinking in seeking ways of increasing tourism value added also through the provision of innovative and authentic products;
6. train and retrain personnel in the industry, create the right environment for maintaining existing employment, generate more and better jobs in tourism, also in the non-traditional segments of the industry, and invest in education and lifelong learning;
7. achieve a fair distribution of income from the tourism industry;
8. favour construction for tourism purposes that respects our cultural and natural heritage;
9. address the structural reforms required in tourism;
10. develop synergies between tourism and other development sectors to ensure an integration of tourism policies within the other development sectors' policies and plans and vice versa;
11. maintain tour operator business and improve relationships with tour operators also at a strategic level;
12. Incentivise local tourism business to operate and invest responsibly and sustainably whilst ensuring that the effort of the industry is rewarded through awarding mechanisms that operate to promote the businesses themselves and the prospect of benefitting from long-term contracts engaged upon with tour operators.
12. improve the quality and depth of information available through tourism statistics and work on the formulation of tourism satellite accounts;
13. create the right image and perception of Malta in overseas markets and deliver our promise of an enriching stay;
14. manage tourism zones by:
 - a. ensuring that basic facilities are available, well preserved and maintained;
 - b. identifying the most important niches in the different zones and directing investment accordingly;
 - c. developing a tourism zone management plan;
15. encouraging tourism service providers to provide a proper service which makes us more competitive and offers good value for money;
16. continuously monitoring Malta's overall price competitiveness and curb practices of overcharging through increased enforcement and consumer protection measures;

17. ensuring adherence to set standards by the tourism service providers and clamp down on practices which harm tourism (e.g. littering and illegal dumping, illegal hunting, vandalism, lack of maintenance)

18. taking initiatives which address the seasonality issue;

19. marketing Gozo as a unique rural destination;

20. facilitating access between Malta and Gozo through sea and air links;

21. making Malta more accessible, facilitating the development of air transport networks and attracting a mix of distribution channels;

22. increasing visibility on the web and initiatives aimed at direct online booking and further use of information technology for marketing and information provision;

23. maximising benefits of EU membership and actively participate in the decision-making process and discussions held at an EU level.

The measures above are in line with the 9 principles set out in the Agenda namely:

- Managing tourism in the Maltese islands on the principles of sustainable development
- Maintain and conserve environmental and socio-cultural resources, being the key elements of the islands tourism product
- Increase tourism earnings and tourism value added
- Sustain existing jobs and create more and better jobs
- Achieve a fair distribution of income
- Increase the Islands' competitive advantage and deliver quality and distinct tourism product, built on the local characteristics
- Reduce seasonality
- Capitalise on the unique characteristics of Gozo
- Increase accessibility to and from Malta
- Benefit from e-business in tourism
- Maximize on Malta's membership of the European Union
-

24. Ensuring that all the initiatives and project development undertaken by the public sector and by the wider private sector in the tourism industry contribute towards the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Maltese Islands (Vision 2015).

3.2 Who was the *initiator* and who is *responsible* for its implementation? (maximum 500 characters)

The Ministry for Tourism and Culture (MTAC) was the initiator of the Policy in 2006 and was also responsible for monitoring its implementation through the various entities responsible for the various tasks mentioned within the Policy. OPM's Parliamentary Secretariat for Tourism and the Tourism and Sustainable Development Unit (TSDU) are at present responsible for monitoring the implementation of the National Tourism Policy (2007-2011). MTA is the main stakeholder responsible for implementing the policy with other government ministries and entities contributing to the implementation of the policy. Other non-governmental stakeholders also have a role in the implementation of the policy.

3.3 How is the strategy **monitored** and how often? (maximum 1000 characters)

The National Tourism Policy is complemented by a national tourism plan which specifies a set of actions. The National Tourism Plan identifies the required actions, deliverables, responsibilities and timeframes. These tasks are constantly monitored through feedback gathered from the various tourism entities all of which contribute towards the implementation of tasks of the National Tourism Plan. The gathering of this feedback is done by the Tourism and Sustainable Development Unit within the Office of the Prime Minister. Feedback in view of project and task deliverables is gathered from the Malta Tourism Authority's respective departments, from, the wider public sector ministries and the private sector.

It outlines:

- what the Malta Tourism Authority will do, specifying the deliverables presented in MTA's revised strategic plan,
- the functions and deliverables contributing to tourism which fall under the remit of other ministries and entities, and
- the private sector's role and contribution to tourism.

The plan is extended to present how the nation is to integrate its marketing efforts and destination management encompassing service delivery, enforcement at all levels, product management and sustainability. The Plan covers the period 2007 – 2011.

Monitoring of the plan will focus on ensuring implementation and assessing to what extent objectives and whether the identified actions have been reached.

3.4 What **national legislation** exists which is specific for tourism or which has a major impact on the sector? (maximum 2000 characters)

The Malta Travel and Tourism Act established in 1999.

The aim of this act is to make provision for the promotion of tourism, for the regulation of tourism services and operations, for the establishment of an authority with powers to that effect and for matters connected therewith or ancillary thereto.

There are a number of acts, legal notices and amendments which regulate the sector, namely:

- Legal Notice 157 of 2000
- Legal Notice 258 of 2001
- Legal Notice 269 of 2000
- Legal Notice 151 of 2001
- Legal Notice 80 of 2002
- Legal Notice 115 of 2001
- Legal Notice 82 of 2002
- Legal Notice 283 of 2005
- Legal Notice 125 of 2002
- Legal Notice 184 of 2002
- Legal Notice 100 of 2003
- Legal Notice 87 of 2005
- Legal Notice 284 of 2005

- Legal Notice 126 of 2002
- Legal Notice 185 of 2002
- Legal Notice 127 of 2002

These legal notices outline licensing requirements, categories and facilities to be provided to the industry. One should also take note of the current transposition process taking place in the services directive.

4. MEASURES AND INITIATIVES

This section provides Member States with an opportunity to outline *specific initiatives and policies* that are or are going to be adopted to manage and develop tourism activity in ways which respond to the key challenges referred to in the "Agenda" and which fall within the six main aims of the "Agenda" itself.

These initiatives could for instance fall into the following types of policy instruments: command and control instruments (legislation, regulation and licensing, land use planning and development control), voluntary instruments (guidelines and codes of conduct, reporting and auditing, certification, eco-labels, awards, voluntary contributions), economic instruments (taxes and charges, financial incentives and agreements), supporting instruments (infrastructure provision and management, capacity building, awareness raising, marketing and information services), measurement instruments (benchmarking, assessments on optimal use levels, carrying capacity).

1 Economic prosperity

- a. To ensure the long term competitiveness, viability and prosperity of tourism enterprises and destinations.
- b. To provide quality employment opportunities, offering fair pay and conditions for all employees and avoiding all forms of discrimination.

2 Social equity and cohesion

- a. To enhance the quality of life of local communities through tourism, and engage them in its planning and management
- b. To provide a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors, available to all without discrimination by gender, race, religion, disability or in other ways.

3 Environmental and cultural protection

- a. To minimise pollution and degradation of the global and local environment and the use of scarce resources by tourism activities.
- b. To maintain and strengthen cultural richness and biodiversity and contribute to their appreciation and conservation.

4.1 Please set out, briefly, the **steps** which have been or will be taken, if any, **to address the 7 key challenges** for the delivery of sustainable and competitive tourism, covered in the TSG report and referred to in the 'Agenda'.

4.1.1 Reducing the seasonality of demand. (maximum 1000 characters)

One of the main objectives of the National Tourism Policy is to reduce seasonality, though it is acknowledged that tourism activity is by its own nature seasonal.

Product improvement projects are being developed aimed at encouraging tourists to visit and experience the different localities during their stay on our islands. This will help to achieve a fairer distribution of income and increase employment throughout the islands whilst alleviating some of the pressure off the more visited sites and locations.

Cruising – Government will continue its efforts at promoting Malta as a 'cruise and fly' destination. Cruise

passenger visitors are potential tourists. Investment in artistic projects will be undertaken to ensure the possibility of providing a local art experience to the tourist. The sister island of Gozo may be promoted with operators of clippers (small cruise ships carrying less than 1000 visitors). These will visit Gozo and Malta. Travelling in smaller numbers but providing a higher yield, these tourists are more attractive for Gozo. Government will make the necessary investments in order to have offshore berthing facilities.

Strengthening short breaks – Government will continue to maintain and promote a national calendar of events. Various measures are being taken aimed at attracting low cost airlines to operate to and from Malta thereby increasing the number of short-stay holidays in Malta. Government will continue supporting events that add value to the visitor's stay in Malta.

Relaxation – In the last couple of years a number of hotels have invested in health and spa facilities in order to market Malta for this emerging market. These facilities provide an added-value for short break holidays.

Medical Holidays – Government will continue supporting private institutions interested in developing this niche. Private hospitals are working with international organizations in order to obtain permits to be able to carry out medical procedures on their behalf. Marketing efforts are underway to support these initiatives.

Wedding Holidays – The related product and services are continuously being refined to offer a memorable experience to the growing number of foreign spouses who are deciding to get married in Malta.

Our policy is to ensure that marketing, product development, human resource development and quality assured initiatives are well co-ordinated and integrated to ensure that the identified segments continue to develop and result in a positive economic and social contribution to Malta and Gozo.

4.1.2 Addressing the impact of tourism transport. (maximum 1000 characters)

Improving the quality of life through environment protection and urban regeneration.

Specific management plans will be developed with the respective transport operators to diminish the impact of daily traffic tourism transport from specific areas.

4.1.3 Improving the quality of tourism jobs. (maximum 1000 characters)

The National Tourism Policy has as one of its aims the creation of more and better jobs in the tourism sector. National employment policies and initiatives, as specified in the National Action Plan for Employment, will contribute to this and the tourism service providers will be encouraged to work within the set environment. It is our policy to continue addressing the issues that are forcing women out of the labour market. Improved work practices by the private sector will also be encouraged.

Whilst some opportunities for employment do lie within the traditional tourism related service providers, more opportunities exist which to date remain relatively untapped in the non-traditional tourism related service providers such as in the conservation and interpretation of sites, in the creative industries, in the crafts industry, in tourism policy making and planning. We want to encourage investment in such tourism service providers whilst providing the training required for young people and those wanting to work in these industries, which complement tourism.

The Malta Tourism Authority aims to improve the quality of jobs in the tourism industry. Through an EU funded

project amounting to €4million, the Industry HR within the MTA will upskill and certify persons employed as or seeking employment in top, middle or supervisory managerial positions in sectors contributing directly or indirectly to tourism.

4.1.4 Maintaining and enhancing community prosperity and the quality of life, in the face of change. (maximum 1000 characters)

Government has laid out its mission to ensure a stable macro-economic environment capable of fostering sustainable economic growth, increased and better employment opportunities and the sustainability of our social responsibilities.

A number of economic and social fundamentals need to be addressed:

- Attain a balanced position for public finances in the medium term in order to regain fiscal flexibility that would act as an economic spur to long-term economic growth and higher standards of living;
- Re-position the capital and human resources of the public sector to efficiently and effectively contribute to better service delivery and economic growth;
- Focus Government's role in the economy on the regulatory aspect, facilitating rather than participating as an operator in economic activities;
- Accelerate the necessary structural reforms in the supply side of the economy by providing flexibilities in the labour, product/services and capital markets, thereby increasing productivity;
- Guarantee quality lifelong education and training opportunities for all, leading towards the maximum possible fulfilment of the potential of every person and fostering of a knowledge-based culture to improve our country's competitive edge for the satisfaction of the country's needs with regards to sustainable growth and development;
- Upgrade our Islands' environment and infrastructure in order to ensure an improved quality of life through sustainable development and regeneration of our heritage;
- Provide an equitable safety net that removes the risk of poverty and realises the goal of social inclusiveness with benefits paid and appropriate support provided to those genuinely needed.

4.1.5 Minimising resource use and the production of waste. (maximum 1000 characters)

Particular attention is being given to tourism zones, which are also leisure areas, the immediate priority is being given to ensuring that basic facilities within these zones are available, well presented and maintained. These basic facilities include a clean urban environment, upgrading of waste management infrastructure, beach cleaning, availability of public toilets, proper signage, improved landscaping, interpretation of key sites and the enforcement of regulations.

Malta has currently launched a consultation process for a waste management strategy in the Maltese Islands. This strategy will also be of benefit for the betterment of waste management practices in the hotel industry. Moreover, the Hoteliers in Malta and Gozo have also recently been offered the opportunity to integrate their day to day operability with the Travelife Sustainability system and to benefit from the prioritization given to this system by the main tour operators during their contracting negotiations. The Travelife Sustainability System is

an industry owned tool which has been launched for Maltese tourism businesses during a conference organized in January 2009 by the Tourism and Sustainable Development Unit. The tool which is fully supported by the Federation of Tour Operators (FTO) helps tourism enterprises to understand the main challenging issues pertaining to sustainable tourism development and offers solutions to help tourism enterprises achieve better and more outstanding performance.

4.1.6 Conserving and giving value to natural and cultural heritage. (maximum 1000 characters)

Malta's cultural heritage will continue to be protected, conserved and presented for all to appreciate and enjoy. It is also essential to ensure cultural assets are valued and appreciated, especially buildings of unique architectural value, which act as an important and unique attraction for our visitors. High standards of presentation and conservation of all walled cities and fortifications will be a priority.

Malta's landscapes are characterized by coastal, urban and rural settings. It is our local policy to maximize the opportunities presented by such settings, whilst harmonizing the historical, natural and urban environment. Within these settings, it is essential that authenticity is safeguarded. The environment itself is an important element in the authentic tourism experience and projects should ensure the protection of such resources thus adding value to the tourism product, rather than exploited at the expense of the environment.

An increased number of sites have been designated as Natura 2000 sites contributing to the valorisation of the natural heritage of the Maltese Islands.

4.1.7 Making holidays available to all. (maximum 1000 characters)

Government will continue to focus its efforts on deepening the Islands touristic offer through quality improvements in both our existing physical product and the service we provide.

Investment in the improvement of the Islands infrastructure will continue in order to facilitate access to all the different areas of the islands. Accessibility to sites and places of interest will increase through additional signage and information material leading to these sites.

Government believes that each visit must be a unique experience. For this reason, through the entities responsible for tourism development, it will strengthen its effort to transform sites and events into authentic experiences for both locals and foreigners. Projects aiming at improving accessibility (physical, information and intellectual) and at ensuring equality issues (especially gender, ethnicity, disabled persons) are taken into consideration and are given a high priority on the national agenda. Specific grant Schemes are being undertaken whereby any state financial aide will be provided to eligible beneficiaries only if development is in line with criteria established by the Guidelines provided by the National Commission for the Disabled.

4.2 As key challenges may change over time, please identify any other areas that are **becoming a new challenge**. (maximum 1000 characters)

In line with the Tourism Policy of the European Union, the challenges for the industry are continuously focused on main priority areas aiming at:

- Maintaining accessibility by air within the climate change policy context

- Improving the use of the available European financial instruments in order to enhance the tourism product and service offer.
- Encouraging stakeholder synergies in order to ensure the sustainability of European Tourism.
- Supporting national and international measures for tourism related SMEs.
- Increasing the efforts at a national level to introduce Tourism Satellite Accounts and also to facilitate the collection of tourism related statistics.
- Maintaining successful practices to promote tourism sustainability, cultural valorization whilst simultaneously enhancing the awareness of such practices by engaging in initiatives such as the European Destinations of Excellence Award.

By the year 2015 Malta is envisaged to become a centre of excellence in various areas namely tourism services, information and communication technologies (ICT), financial services, high value added industry and services as well as in international educational services and health care services. Excellence in Tourism Services is expected to take place on the basic framework outlined in the harmonized National Tourism Policy and on principles of sustainability, responsibility, and competitiveness.

Government's policy for the tourism industry is highly linked to the principle of sustainable development and one based on providing support to tourism enterprises in the implementation of a responsible operations policy. This is constantly being undertaken by encouraging tourism enterprises to implement projects based on forward planning, proactive and strategic thinking.

The prioritization on sustainable development portrays a number of challenges to the Maltese tourism product. These challenges are based on patterns of investment and consumption that can be pursued in the future without damaging Malta's human or natural environment. Moreover, the current international economic recession is undeniably affecting consumer trends and the purchasing power in every sphere of life, inclusive of which are consumer trends and attitudes towards travelling. In this scenario, it is fundamental to outline that in order to overcome such economic challenges, the responsible investment initiatives of the industry need to be supported, and the innovative tourism niches valorising Malta's culture need to be enhanced.

In view of these challenges, Government's policy for the tourism industry is constantly directed towards ensuring that the marketing campaigns, product development, human resource development and quality assured initiatives are well coordinated and integrated to ensure that the identified segments continue to develop and result in positive economic and social contribution to Malta and Gozo. At an EU level the tourism industry is foreseen to remain an important economic driver for the member states and Malta is predicted to achieve a fair share of tourism in Europe.

Government is committed to enhance the tourism service offer by building continuously on the abilities of the human resource. Support for the tourism workforce is currently being offered by the Employment and Training Corporation as well as by the Malta Tourism Authority. These initiatives will focus on the priority to ensure a comparative advantage for Malta, by investing in the tourism workforce and by sustaining a corporate and social responsible form of management in the private sector.

Government is constantly committed to improve Malta's tourism product and service offer through the required infrastructural investment. Our goal is to ensure that local service providers achieve price competitiveness by integrating investment that provides the opportunity to reduce on cost cutting elements and by addressing the need to change from old ways of doing business to new and innovative ones. The Grant Scheme for Sustainable Tourism Projects by Enterprises is an ERDF project, aiming at co-financing tourism enterprises that are planning to develop tourism projects which contribute towards the sphere of competitiveness, the creation of more and better jobs, an enhancement in accessibility, innovation, marketing interventions and providing support to projects that will tackle current challenges through an environmental and social responsible attitude.

4.3 Please identify and describe one **SPECIFIC INITIATIVE** (i.e. how it worked, difficulties and problems encountered, solutions and success factors), which is related to the 7 key challenges, that is **INNOVATIVE/SUCCESSFUL** and which would be of interest to or of help to other Member States. (maximum 5000 characters)

Malta supports the implementation of projects that valorise on our unique environmental, social and cultural assets and has participated successfully over the past 3 years in the European Destinations of Excellence project (EDEN). We highly believe that these direct funding projects contribute thoroughly towards the *Conservation and the Valorisation of the Natural and Cultural Heritage (Challenge 6)*.

Through the effective use of direct funding tapped by the Malta Tourism Authority for tourism related activities organized by local councils and NGO's , continuous work has been implemented and is constantly being foreseen so as to promote the economic benefits of the tourism industry whilst ensuring the social cultural and environmental sustainability of tourism. This project has constantly identified the importance of the tourism industry as an economic driver in the European economy and as a vehicle to fund the protection of nature, culture and also preventing damaging change in the traditional natural and cultural environments.

The direct funding opportunities allocated for tourism projects are continuously intended to maximize the value of diversity and shared characteristics amongst European destinations at various thematic levels such as the *rural ambience, intangible heritage* together with *conservation and promotion of protected areas and areas of aquatic tourism importance*. The prioritization given to these thematic characteristics blend well with Malta's objectives which inter alia aim at maximizing the opportunities offered by tourism in raising awareness and generating direct and indirect support for conservation, awarding best initiatives organized at a local level through effective community involvement at a European level as well as at pursuing ways of increasing contributions to conservation of the local authentic environments.

The EDEN project focuses on sustainable tourism practices in our localities, both in the built and the natural environments, in the non-traditional tourism areas of aquatic importance and also supports the conservation of our tangible and intangible heritage. This project has positively contributed towards making the local tourism offer more sustainable, thus benefiting industry growth and international market opportunities. The involvement of local government during project implementation has definitely acted as an important milestone in the success of the project itself and in the valorisation processes of our tangible and intangible heritage. This tool has also raised the destination identity of the locals and has also instilled more pride towards their locality through the successful organization of local community festivities and involvement. Moreover, through project implementation for the years 2009 and 2010, the Malta Tourism Authority envisages more positive impacts of the tourism industry on the destination's protected areas and an enhanced contribution and valorisation of the aquatic tourism projects in the local tourism product offer. The EDEN 2010 project will also bring along an enhanced valorisation of the eclectic marine and aquatic heritage found in the Maltese Islands..

Overall, the EDEN project focuses a lot on the sustainability factor of destinations. The sustainability factor has been transmitted to Malta, during project implementation and this factor has contributed towards ensuring a more sustainable tourism product offer and is also contributing towards a more competitive tourism industry.

5. MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The "Agenda" identified three mechanisms for its implementation: sustainable destinations, sustainable businesses and responsible tourists.

5.1 Sustainable destinations: What support is given to strengthen destination management at the regional/destination level (supportive policy environment, knowledge networks, training programmes, establishment of measures/indicators for benchmarking, etc.)? (maximum 1000 characters)

STAR

The Special Thanks And Recognition Awards (STAR) is an important initiative through which the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) is able to give public recognition to all those who work directly or indirectly in the tourism industry.

Through the STAR scheme the MTA also awarded good quality tourism products.

5.2 Sustainable businesses: What support is given to strengthen the sustainability and competitiveness of businesses (supportive policy environment, orientation of business support services to sustainability, training, financial incentives, etc.)? (maximum 1000 characters)

Eco Certification

The Malta Tourism Authority's Eco-Certification Scheme has succeeded in encouraging hotels to deliver a better product to meet the demand of the ever increasing environmentally aware tourist. To participate, hotels must comply with a number of criteria all aimed at improving the hotels' environmental performance and increasing environmental awareness amongst employees.

To assist the hotels in meeting the requirements of the scheme the MTA organises a number of training seminars on the subject. Currently approximately 10% of the hotels on the Maltese Islands are Eco-Certified including three, four and five-star hotels.

Hotels are awarded this recognition following a mystery guest review to establish that the level of service meets the criteria as established by the Malta Tourism Authority.

5.3 Responsible tourists: What support is given to promote responsible choices by tourists (e.g. sustainability in education, national marketing and media campaigns, promotion of certification schemes)? (maximum 1000 characters)

Quality Service Audit

The mystery guest audit is carried out by a company which is contracted by the MTA and covers information provided to customer, reservations, welcome, reception, public areas, bedroom, living room, bathroom, breakfast services, bar services, restaurant services, room service, miscellaneous services and facilities.

Hotels will need to score a pass in each of the relevant categories in order to be awarded with a certificate indicating that the hotel passed the QSA.

A certificate given by the Malta Tourism Authority is awarded to each of the hotels that meet the requirements of the scheme. This is awarded for a period of twelve months

Quality Assurance Scheme for the MICE Sector

Following the successful launch of the proposed scheme feedback from stakeholders was received and evaluated. The scheme will now pass through a second phase. This will involve a pilot study to assess the manageability and usability of the proposed criteria. The following criteria will be used for the pilot study and following this study the scheme will be officially launched with the final criteria

6. DATA AND INDICATORS

Eurostat will provide, as an annex, the key statistical data required to support the reporting process covering around 20 indicators². These are mainly related to the aim of 'economic prosperity'.

Please, identify indicators that are being used or developed at national / regional level which could add to the range of information being provided by Eurostat, particularly in relation to social and environmental issues (other indicators from the TSG report, visitors/ residents satisfaction, etc.). (maximum 1000 characters)

In line with its corporate objective of providing relevant and timely information to tourism stakeholders and students, the MTA has a service aimed at providing up-to-date information which is important for the tourism sector for decision making purposes. This tool presents the MTA with the possibility to reach out the trade and disseminate up-to-date information. This information is of utmost importance to whoever has a vested interest in the tourism sector.

Research reports are available for the following areas:

Market Intelligence :

- market profile surveys
- brochure analysis
- qualitative market research studies
- niche markets and special interest research
- MICE segment
- English Language segment
- Diving segment

Human Resource Research:

- Skills analysis
- Employment forecasts in tourism industry
- Tourist evaluation of human resources

Economic Research:

- Tourism expenditure surveys
- Economic impact studies

Product Research:

Locality surveys conducted in 'tourism zone' localities and in leisure and culture oriented sites

7. COMPLEMENTARY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

² These indicators have been selected from the 50 TSG indicators on the basis of the possibility to calculate them at the European level.

If necessary use the following box to provide additional complementary information that has not already been covered.

Tourism remains a key sector for Malta's economic and social development. Government is committed to do its utmost to ensure that the tourism activity happening in Malta is sustainable and based on that which is authentic, increases value added and builds on the diversity that these islands can offer our guests.

APPENDIX

PRINCIPLES FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF TOURISM:

- **Taking a holistic and integrated approach**

All the various impacts of tourism should be taken into account in its planning and development. Furthermore, tourism should be well balanced and integrated with a whole range of activities that affect society and the environment.

- **Planning for the long term**

Sustainable development is about taking care of the needs of future generations as well as our own. Long term planning requires the ability to sustain actions over time.

- **Achieving an appropriate pace and rhythm of development**

The level, pace and shape of development should reflect and respect the character, resources and needs of host communities and destinations.

- **Involving all stakeholders**

A sustainable approach requires widespread and committed participation in decision making and practical implementation by all those implicated in the outcome.

- **Using best available knowledge**

Policies and actions should be informed by the latest and best knowledge available. Information on tourism trends and impacts, and skills and experience, should be shared across Europe.

- **Minimising and managing risk – the precautionary principle**

Where there is uncertainty about outcomes, there should be full evaluation and preventative action should be taken to avoid damage to the environment or society.

- **Reflecting impacts in costs – user and polluter pays**

Prices should reflect the real costs to society of consumption and production activities. This has implications not simply for pollution but for charging for the use of facilities that have significant management costs attached to them.

- **Setting and respecting limits, where appropriate**

The carrying capacity of individual sites and wider areas should be recognised, with a readiness and ability to limit, where and when appropriate, the amount of tourism development and volume of tourist flows.

- **Undertaking continuous monitoring**

Sustainability is all about understanding impacts and being alert to them all the time, so that the necessary changes and improvements can be made.

April 23rd 2009