



MAJJISTRAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR MALTA 2007 – 2013

14/12/2009

| | |
|--|----|
| Executive Summary | 4 |
| Chapter 1: Introduction and Background | 5 |
| .1 Introduction..... | 5 |
| .2 Submission Overview..... | 5 |
| .3 Applicant Details including company name and number | 6 |
| .4 Local Area | 7 |
| .5 Process preparing application..... | 8 |
| .6 Structure of application document..... | 9 |
| Chapter 2: The Partnership | 10 |
| .1 Description of the partnership and members | 10 |
| .2 Proposed group staffing and capability | 11 |
| .3 Proposed management structures | 12 |
| .4 Proposed financial management system including control and development..... | 13 |
| .5 Financial Status..... | 13 |
| .6 IT system capability | 13 |
| .7 LAG structure and Decision Committee Structure | 13 |
| Chapter 3: Needs Assessment..... | 16 |
| .1 Description of territory | 16 |
| .1.1 Regional setting | 16 |
| .1.2 Local Councils and electoral divisions | 18 |
| .2 Consultation process | 19 |
| .2.1 Consultation at Decision Committee level | 19 |
| .2.2 Launching event with Mayors | 19 |
| .2.3 Direct mailing..... | 20 |
| .2.4 Adverts, Articles on Newspapers | 20 |
| .2.5 Website and online consultation | 20 |
| .2.6 Locality and Sectoral meetings | 21 |
| .2.7 Final Consultation Seminar | 30 |
| .3 Demographic profile | 31 |
| .3.1 Population dynamics..... | 31 |
| .3.2 Key demographic indicators..... | 33 |
| .3.3 Settlements..... | 35 |
| .4 Socio-economic profile | 46 |
| .4.1 Education and employment..... | 46 |
| .4.2 Level of dependency | 49 |
| .4.3 Gross domestic product (GDP)..... | 51 |
| .4.4 Agricultural sector..... | 51 |
| .4.5 Tourism | 53 |
| .4.6 Construction and quarrying | 56 |
| .4.7 Industry | 57 |
| .4.8 Fisheries..... | 57 |
| .5 Environmental profile | 58 |
| .5.1 Biodiversity | 58 |
| .5.2 Natura 2000 sites | 59 |
| .5.3 Air Quality | 60 |
| .5.4 Water (including bathing water quality) | 60 |
| .5.5 Waste | 61 |
| .6 Wider relevant research and evaluation | 63 |
| .7 Wider relevant development programme..... | 71 |
| .8 SWOT analysis..... | 72 |
| .9 Needs and prioritisation | 73 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Chapter 4: Majjistral Sustainable Development Programme..... | 75 |
| .1 Vision..... | 75 |
| .2 Strategy..... | 75 |
| .3 Strategic objectives..... | 77 |
| .4 Targeting..... | 78 |
| .5 Programme structure | 78 |
| .6 Strategic actions | 80 |
| .7 Actions and priorities..... | 81 |
| .7.1 ACTION 1: Studies on the assets and quality of life of the region..... | 81 |
| .7.2 ACTION 2: Guidelines and feasibility studies for implementation of capital investment projects..... | 83 |
| .7.3 ACTION 3: Training for implementation of LEADER | 85 |
| .7.4 ACTION 4: Training and awareness campaigns on sustainable environmental management | 87 |
| .7.5 ACTION 5: Promotion of the Majjistral Region, its assets, and products..... | 89 |
| .7.6 ACTION 6: Open calls for Capital Investments, Marketing, Training, Studies for active lifestyle initiatives and the crafts sector..... | 91 |
| .7.7 ACTION 7: Improve Quality of Life and Accessibility in the Majjistral Region..... | 93 |
| .7.8 ACTION 8: Measure 125: Infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture..... | 95 |
| .7.9 ACTION 9: Measure 313: Encouragement of Tourism Activities | 97 |
| .7.10 ACTION 10: Promote Majjistral produce and products on the European market..... | 98 |
| .8 Interaction with other programmes / projects | 99 |
| Chapter 5: Financial Plan, Monitoring, Evaluation and Review | 100 |
| .1 Overall Financial Plan..... | 100 |
| .2 Methodology | 100 |
| .3 Allocation by action by year | 104 |
| .4 Monitoring, evaluation, review and reporting | 105 |
| .4.1 Monitoring | 106 |
| .4.2 Evaluation | 106 |
| .4.3 Review..... | 106 |
| .4.4 Reporting | 107 |
| Chapter 6: Networking and Cooperation | 108 |
| .1 National Networking and Cooperation..... | 108 |
| .2 International Networking and Cooperation..... | 108 |
| .3 Cooperation and Coordination with other public bodies ant local, regional and National level..... | 108 |
| Chapter 7: Horizontal Principles..... | 110 |
| .1 Innovation..... | 111 |
| .2 Sustainability | 112 |
| .3 Economic Viability | 112 |
| .4 Linkages | 113 |

Executive Summary

The Majjistral Sustainable Development Strategy is submitted in the framework of the implementation of the LEADER programme in Malta, financed by the European Agriculture and Rural Development Fund 2007 – 2013.

The Majjistral Action Group Foundation is a partnership established in the territory of the North-West of Malta and comprises 13 localities.

The purpose of this document is to present the partnership and illustrate the functioning of the Local Action Group. Furthermore, the document identifies the common needs and priorities of the area concerned and contains specific actions of support to local stakeholders for the implementation of development projects.

The document is composed by 7 Chapter:

- Chapter 1: Introduction and background provides general information on the area concerned and on the structure of the strategy
- Chapter 2: The partnership provides information on the Majjistral Action Group Foundation, its members and proposed structure
- Chapter 3: Needs assessment consist in a socio economic analysis of the area and a SWOT analysis leading to the identification of the main priorities for the Majjistral region
- Chapter 4: Majjistral sustainable development programme presents the actions supported through the LEADER programme in the area concerned
- Chapter 5: Finacial plan, monitoring, evaluation and review illustrates the allocation by year over the period of validity of the strategy as well as the processes that the Majjistral Action Group will adopt
- Chapter 6: Networking and cooperation, provides information on the networking and cooperation activities that will be undertaken
- Chapter 7: Horizontal principles shows how the strategy is addressing LEADER cross cutting principles of innovation, sustainability, economic viability and linkages.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

.1 Introduction

The LEADER Programme is being implemented for the first time in Malta under the Rural Development Programme 2007 – 2013, as after Malta's accession on the 1st May 2004, the country decided not to implement the LEADER under the Rural Development Programme for Malta 2004 – 2006.

The Majjistral Local Development Strategy has been built during a crucial moment for the Maltese local government system. Local Councils, constituted in the early nineties, are increasingly playing a crucial role in Maltese society. The Local Councils Reform, that the Maltese Parliament recently approved, creates the conditions for the further development of the Local Government role.

With regards to the private sector, several representatives of SMEs, NGOs, Farmers organizations are actively contributing to the implementation of the LEADER. However it has to be remarked that, sectoral interests representation are not organised at Majjistral territory level. In Malta interests groups are organised at National level, without local or sub – regional delegations.

Majjistral Action group will support the consolidation and development of the area as a region in order to better identify future common needs and design effective policies. The Majjistral Local Development Strategy will be the first initiative that will address common needs of the Majjistral territory.

.2 Submission Overview

This section provides general information on the Majjistral territory as well as information on the approaches adopted for the definition of the Majjistral Sustainable Development Strategy.

.3 Applicant Details including company name and number

Majjistral Action Group Foundation started its operations in 2008, when a cluster of local councils and private operators from the Majjistral (North Malta) area initiated the LEADER process. In June 2009, after the group officially constituted, resources from Measure 341 – Rural Development Programme for Malta 2007 – 2013 were accessed and the process for the definition of the Local Development Strategy began.

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Name of the Entity</i> | <u>Majjistral Action Group Foundation</u> |
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| <i>VAT Number</i> | MT 1934 4705 |

.4

Local Area

The thirteen MAG localities are situated in the north-west of Malta and include most of the island's rural area and associated coastline. Gozo and Comino and the southern part of Malta make up the other Local Action Groups set up in 2008 with the responsibility of implementing strategies that address the regions' particular needs. Although many planning issues are common to the whole island, the Majjistral territory has a number of specific features/ needs which need to be reflected into different measures.

- Attard
- Dingli
- Għargħur
- Iklin
- Lija
- Mdina
- Mellieħa
- Mgarr
- Mtarfa
- Naxxar
- Rabat
- Siġġiewi, and
- St Paul's Bay.



.5

Process preparing application

The total area of the Majjistral Territory is 130,120 Sq Km, representing a large portion of the whole territory of the island of Malta. The total population is 80,012, approximately 20% of the total population of the Country.

The Majjistral Action Group Foundation was assisted by BEurope Ltd., in partnership with Ernst and Young and ADI Environmental Consultants for the preparation of the Local Development Strategy. In particular the experts produced a specific needs analysis and SWOT analysis for the territory. The team also led the consultation process with all stakeholders and in all the localities.

The process for the preparation of the application was split in 3 phases:

- ***Needs analysis and priorities for the area***

During the first phase of the process, the team of experts worked on the identification of common data for the region. In Malta demographic data are available by locality, while data related to socio-economic aspects are aggregate at national level.

The methodology adopted to overcome this situation and to obtain information on the main characteristics of the region has been twofold.

Where possible, data have been derived from those available. There are data that are available for a cluster of localities that include all the 13 localities forming part of the LAG plus two or three other localities that are not part of the eligible territory of the LEADER.

In absence of specific data, national ones have been considered and assumptions have been made.

In both cases, the indications obtained have been consulted with the Decision Committee as well as with local stakeholders so as to understand the perception of the territory.

- ***Consultation with local stakeholders***

The Consultation process was based on the draft needs analysis and prioritization resulting from phase one. The consultation contributed substantially to shape the strategy and to adapt it to the needs emerged at grassroots level. Specific meetings were held in all localities and with all the different stakeholders. During this phase, the synergy with the information and communication campaign, carried out by Outlook Coop. has been crucial to determine the success of the consultation process. Thanks to the communication campaign all residents and stakeholders have been informed and had the chance to actively participate to the consultation process.

- ***Synthesis and final document***

After the consultation process, a process of synthesis was used to integrate all of the information gathered in the preceding phases.

The outcome of this process consists in the proposed Majjistral Sustainable Development Strategy to be delivered under the measures of the Rural Development Programme for Malta 2007-2013. The proposed Programme has been developed with the identification of appropriate actions

.6

Structure of application document

This document conforms to the template issued by the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs and contains the following sections:

1. Introduction and Background
2. The Group
3. Needs Assessment
4. The Programme
5. Financial Plan, Monitoring, Evaluation and Review
6. Networking and Co-operation
7. Horizontal Principles

Chapter 2: The Partnership

.1 Description of the partnership and members

The Majjistral Action Group represents the northern and western areas of Malta. Its territory comprises 13 localities and covers a wide section of the rural territory of the Majjistral region. Furthermore the Foundation represents a wide spectrum of private stakeholders like farmers cooperatives and associations, local NGOs and SMEs.

The evolution of the LEADER approach in the Northern region of Malta is quite interesting and has gone along with the capacity of local operators to understand and learn about the LEADER and then to get together to try to set up such an initiative.

During summer 2008, Local Councils representatives attended several meetings organized by the Ministry of Resources and Rural Affairs to inform the population on the main elements of the LEADER approach and the procedure to be recognized as such. After that, initial meetings amongst some Local Councils of the Northern were held, the LEADER project was shared and discussed and it was established to cooperate to further develop LEADER in Malta.

Eight bordering Local Councils got together, i.e. Lija, Attard, Iklin, Għargħur, Saint Paul's Bay, Mellieħa, Mgarr and Naxxar and they started to operate to create the first informal group by involving active private stakeholders of the territory, in particular NGOs and farmers organizations. Information meetings and general discussions went on to the end of summer 2008, when the Foundation Majjistral Action Group was formally created, the Decision Committee elected and presented.

After the creation of the Majjistral Action Group Foundation other Local Councils of the Northern region of Malta expressed their interest to become part of the group. After submitting a request to the Decision Committee, the localities of Rabat, Dingli, Mtarfa, Siġġiewi and Mdina were included. An application from Mosta Local Council was received out of the terms established. When the locality of Mosta for the first time showed its interest in forming part of the LEADER area, the Majjistral Action Group had already submitted an application under Measure 341. As indicated in the funding guidelines the territory covered by that application could not vary for the whole programming period 2007- 2013.

The Public Sector is represented in the Majjistral Action Group by 13 Local Councils, namely:

Attard, Dingli, Għargħur, Iklin, Lija, Mdina, Mellieħa, Mgarr, Mtarfa, Naxxar, Rabat, Siġġiewi, St Paul's Bay.

The Private Sector is represented in the Majjistral Action Group by the following organisations:

Farmers Organisations

- Assocjazzjoni tal-Bdiewa (ATB)
- Koperattiva Rurali Manikata
- Mġarr Farmers Cooperative

NGOs

- Maghtab Residents Association
- Kumitat Festa Għargħur
- Għaqda Korali u Orkestrali "Maria Bambina"
- Jubilate Deo Choir
- Special Needs Group
- Naxxar Lions FC
- Peace Band Club
- Kumitat Festa, Marija Sultana tal-Martri, San Pawl il Bahar.
- Sirens ASC
- Wardija Residents Association
- MellieħaScout Group

SMEs

- Heaven Spa Ltd.
- Alka Ceramics Attard
- Malta Sunripe Co Ltd
- Bella Vista Hotel
- Palazzo Parisio
- P&S Ltd
- Flower Sales Ltd

.2

Proposed group staffing and capability

The Decision Committee will start the selection process for the recruitment of a CEO and one Assistant upon approval of the Local Development Strategy by competent Authorities.

The CEO will have a pivotal role for the implementation of the strategy and will be responsible for the implementation of the Strategy in the territory.

The Assistant will guarantee the CEO with an administrative and secretarial support.

The financial administration of the Majjistral Action Group will be subcontracted as per Public Procurement Procedures.

If required, Legal Assistance will be subcontracted as per Public Procurement Procedures.

The respective job descriptions for the posts of CEO and Assistant will be illustrated in the Terms of Reference of the call for applications that Majjistral Action Group will launch upon approval of the Local Development Strategy.

.3

Proposed management structures

The Decision Committee will be responsible for all recruitments and appointments; it will be in charge of evaluating the correct implementation of the Local Development Strategy. Furthermore the Decision Committee will act as supervisor of all the initiatives undertaken under the LEADER. The Decision Committee will meet at least monthly.

The Evaluation Committee is appointed by the Decision Committee. The Evaluation Committee is in charge of evaluating all project proposals as well as tenders.

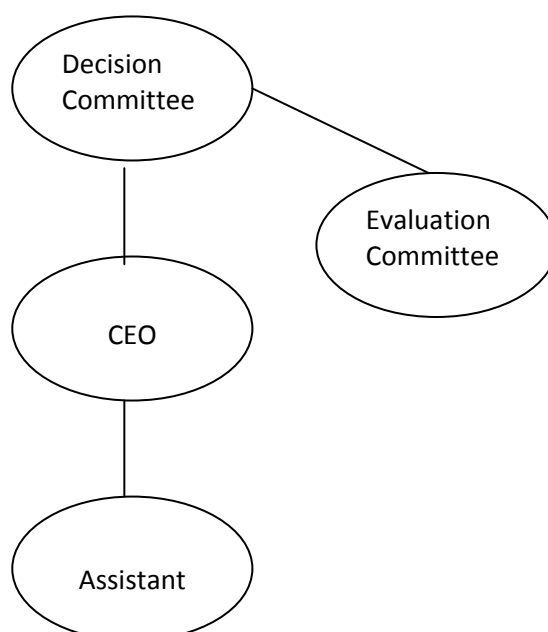
The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the overall management and implementation of the Local Development Strategy. The CEO will be responsible for updating the Decision Committee on the implementation of the Strategy as well as on the management of the Majjistrat Action Group on a monthly basis.

The Assistant CEO supports the management and implementation of the Local Development Strategy in particular from an administrative and secretarial point of view.

Accountancy services will be subcontracted for the whole period of implementation of the strategy. The services subcontracted will be limited to those required for the correct running of the Public Private Partnership and its compliance with national legislation. Legal Assistance can be subcontracted.

It has to be considered that, due to limited budget allocated to LEADER under Axis IV, running costs will have to be kept at minimum. In this context, the quality of the CEO and his/her commitment to the successful implementation of the Majjistrat Sustainable Development Strategy are crucial factors. The CEO will have to be able to tackle situations that require flexibility and deep knowledge of European Project Management, Local Government System, NGO Legislation, Public Procurement etc.

The CEO, as well as the Decision Committee, the members of the LAG and other stakeholders will be supported by external experts through the training actions identified with the Majjistrat Sustainable Development Strategy.



.4 Proposed financial management system including control and development

All programme budgets and project commitments are considered and approved by the Decision Committee. The Decision Committee makes all financial decisions, for example approving of annual budgets and approving of project commitments.

All decisions made by the Decision Committee will have due regard to the approved business and financial plans. It will closely monitor progress of programme activities by reviewing and approving monthly financial reports, which are presented at each monthly Decision Committee meeting.

The public private partnership will report to the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs, it will cooperate with all requests for information required and will carry out checks and audits as indicated by the National Authority.

The Majjistral Action Group will comply with EU Regulations and National Legislation where appropriate and will make available records and information for any national or EU auditors.

.5 Financial Status

The Majjistral Action Group is in its start up phase. In order to implement Measure 341, the organisation has contracted a loan with a local bank.

.6 IT system capability

The Majjistral Action group will set up its office with all required IT systems. A computer per officer will be available, together with other office equipment like printer, fax, photocopier, projector, etc. The offices will be endowed with a Local Area Network (LAN) where all computer records will be stored.

.7 LAG structure and Decision Committee Structure

With regards to the composition of the Decision Committee it was decided that the number of board members would be nine (9). Local Councils elected their four (4) representatives which would sit on the board while the private partners elected five (5) members. Private members indicated their representatives during a General Meeting held in Naxxar in October 2009. It has to be considered that the LEADER process was initiated for the first time in 2008 and the initiative is progressively attracting more people and interested stakeholders. During the very start up of the initiative, it is very important that the team working at Decision Committee level will consolidate its experience on the management of the LEADER. The Majjistral Action Group will also operate to encourage female participation in order to achieve the target of 40% women in the Decision Committee by the end of the implementation of the strategy.

Members of the Decision Committee

Chairman

Dr. Ian Castaldi Paris is a Doctor of Laws and works as Notary Public in Malta. He has been serving as Mayor of Lija for the past 5 years. He is also Chairman of the Majjistral Park.

Secretary

Mr. David Battistino is currently the President of the committee of the Nationalist Party IMġarr Section having served in the past as secretary within the same committee. He sits as a member of the 'Lejla IMġarrija' Commission, a voluntary organisation which organises annually two very popular, national agricultural events – 'Lejla IMġarrija' and 'Festa Frawli' – with the aim of publicising the IMġarr farmers' work and at the same time raising funds for the Parish Church.

In the past he was elected for three consecutive terms as member of the IMġarr Local Council on the Nationalist Party ticket. During his term of office amongst other duties he was responsible for Youths and Sport and the town twinning project of the IMġarr Local Council with that of Mathi Local Council in the Torino province in Italy.

He currently works as a personal assistant to the managing director of a private company in the construction industry after serving for fourteen years in the banking sector working mainly in the IT.

Other members

Mr. Salvu Sciberras B.A. (Gen), Dip. Educ. (Lon) was born in Kercem, Gozo. He served in the Education Department first as teacher and then as Assistant Head of School from 1957 to 1998. In 1995 he became Private Secretary to the Minister of Health and from 1998 to 2003 as his Personal Assistant. He sat on the Board of Directors of FMS and Maltacom. He was elected as a PN local councillor in Naxxar in 2003 and 2006. He has been elected by the 12th District to represent it on the Executive Committee of the Partit Nazzjonalista

Mr. Mario Gauci was elected as the first Mayor of Ġhargħur in 1994 and since then he has contested successfully another 4 elections. He is an Associate of the Chartered Institute of Bankers and works as a Senior Corporate Banking Manager with a Commercial bank. Over the years he served on various committees and currently he is Deputy Chairman of the Northern Committee for the Local Enforcement. He is also a member of the Ġhargħur Feast Committee.

Ms. Joan Haber was born in Munxar Gozo and has been residing in Attard since 1975. After secondary school in Gozo she proceeded to study Economics at the University of Malta. In 1980, with husband artist Paul Haber, she set up Alka Ceramics Ltd. manufacturing ceramics for export to the U.S. and Canada. Today Joan is the managing director in charge of operations and marketing. Ms. Haber is also the Fair Consultant of the Weddings Fair for MFCC.

For a number of years Ms. Attard served as a director of the Bank of Valletta. Ms. Attard was also the chairperson of the committee set up by the government to organize the Craft Council.

Dr Gordon Cordina is an economist by profession and Head of the Department of Economics at the University of Malta. He is a graduate of the University of Malta and the University of Cambridge. He has headed the Research Department of the Central Bank of Malta and the National Statistics Office, and served as consultant to national and international institutions. His research and consultancy work covered the formulation and implementation of Rural Development Plans for Malta. He

currently serves on the Board of Directors of Bank of Valletta. As resident of Mellieħa, Dr. Cordina is an active member of the *Għaqda Korali u Orkestrali "Maria Bambina"*.

Mr. Louie Naudi studied at the Polytechnic attaining a Diploma in Business Administration. He joined Barclays Bank in 1973. Mr. Naudi Left the banking sector in 1987 and set-up his own business and also conducted experiments for the benefit of the agriculture sector. Mr. Naudi was involved in the negotiations on the agriculture chapters of the 'Acquis Communautaire' representing a sector of farmers and was nominated to sit on the Presidium of COPA (the European Farmers' Organisation) to represent the Maltese professional farmer organisations. Mr. Naudi joined the Assocjazzjoni tal-Bdiewa in 2006 and was actively involved in the establishment of the FLC (Farmer Learning Centre).

Ms. Graziella Galea graduated as Architect and Civil Engineer at the University of Malta in 2006 and in 2009 she obtained a master degree in road engineering. Member and later President of IAESTE (Malta) between 2003-2007. Member of the St. Paul's Bay PN committee for the past four years. Serving as Mayor of St. Paul's Bay since 1st April 2008 following the 2008 local council elections.

Mr. Michael Cassar Torreggiani

M Cassar Torreggiani studied accountancy and business management at MCAST . He has been working in Malta, UK and North Africa as manager of different companies operating in various sectors. Since 1993 he operates Salina Wharf Marketing Ltd. Mr. Cassar Torreggiani is President of the Magħtab Residents Association for 12 years and presently Secretary for the Maltese Timeshare Association.

Chapter 3: Needs Assessment

This chapter provides a discussion of the Majjistral territory in terms of its geography and the relevant environmental and socio-economic features contained in this area. It also provides details on the development and outcome of the consultation process. A SWOT analysis summarises these territory aspects in order to identify areas of needs and prioritisation which conclude this chapter.

.1 Description of territory

The Majjistral Action Group (MAG), a public-private partnership set up in 2008, includes thirteen localities, namely the localities of:

- | | | |
|------------|------------|------------------|
| → Attard | → Mdina | → Rabat |
| → Dingli | → Mellieħa | → Siġġiewi, and |
| → Ġhargħur | → Mgarr | → St Paul's Bay. |
| → Iklin | → Mtarfa | |
| → Lija | → Naxxar | |

These thirteen localities are all included in the National Statistics Office (NSO)'s Northern and Western classification of districts¹. The localities making up these two districts as per the NSO's classification are:

- Western District: Attard, Balzan, Dingli, Iklin, Lija, Mdina, Mtarfa, Rabat, Siġġiewi, Zebbug
- Northern District: Ġhargħur, Mellieħa, Mgarr, Mosta, Naxxar, St. Paul's Bay

The North West of Malta, as defined by the NSO, therefore includes all the localities of the MAG territory, as well as the localities of Balzan, Zebbug and Mosta².

.1.1 Regional setting

The thirteen MAG localities are situated in the north-west of Malta and contain the majority of the Island's rural area and associated coastline. Gozo and Comino and the southern part of Malta make up the other Local Action Groups set up in 2008 with the responsibility of implementing strategies that address the regions' particular needs. Although many planning issues are common to the whole island, the Majjistral territory has a number of specific features/ needs which need to be reflected into different measures.

The Majjistral boundary runs roughly from Ghallis Point in the north, to Wied Fulija in the south and includes all the rural, coastal and settlement areas west of Naxxar and Siġġiewi, as well as the National Recreation Centre at Ta' Qali. The area has a distinctive rural character, but contains historic towns and relatively modern holiday settlements and is subject to intense pressure in fulfilling its role as a major area for tourism and recreation activities.

¹ The NSO splits the 68 local councils of Malta into six districts or regions, namely South East, South Harbour, Northern Harbour, West, North and Gozo and Comino.

² It is pertinent to note that published data is not always available by locality, and therefore in some cases the data presented in this chapter relates to the amalgamation of the North-West districts, including also the three localities not making part of the MAG.

Figure 1: Majjistral localities

The main settlement areas which are located within the Majjistral territory are Mellieħa, St. Paul's Bay, Naxxar and Rabat. The settlements are important residential, recreational and/or tourism centres. Apart from the main settlements, there are a number of smaller settlements, some of which are closely associated with the agricultural activities in the surrounding countryside. The largest are Mgarr and Dingli, each with a population of over 3,000.

The area is a major recreational area for the island's resident and visiting tourist population and is clearly subject to environmental degradation from tourism activities as well as various agricultural and other activities. It is a major objective of the Majjistral Local Development Strategy (LDS) to protect and enhance the environmental quality of the Majjistral territory. The overall social and economic development of Malta and particularly the areas adjacent to the Majjistral territory will also influence the amount of pressure that the territory will face in the development strategy period being envisaged within the LDS.

The Majjistral area has a distinctive rural character, important historic towns and relatively modern holiday settlements. As a result, it is subject to conflicting pressure in fulfilling a number of land uses.

.1.2 Local Councils and electoral divisions

All the thirteen localities making up the MAG are local councils as constituted under Maltese Law in 1993 (Local Council Act, Chapter 363 of the Laws of Malta) and as amended in 1999 (Act XXI of 1999, that is, the Local Councils (Amendment) Act 1999).

In 2001, the system of local government was entrenched in the Constitution of Malta through Act No. XIII of 2001, which established that: "The State shall adopt a system of local government whereby the territory of Malta shall be divided into such number of localities as may by law be from time to time determined, each locality to be administered by a Local Council elected by the residents of the locality and established and operating in terms of such law as may from time to time be in force."

After the recent reform, Local Council terms passed from 3 to 4 years. With reference to the electoral districts, the 13 localities making up the MAG were part of the following districts in the 2008 General Election³:

- Sixth district: Siġġiewi (district also includes Qormi and Luqa)
- Seventh district: Dingli, Mgarr, Mtarfa and Rabat (district also includes Zebbug)
- Eighth district: Lija and Iklin (district also includes Birkirkara and parts of St Venera)
- Ninth district: Għargħur (district also includes Msida, San Gwann, Ta' Xbiex and Swieqi)
- Eleventh district: Mdina and Attard (district also includes Balzan and Mosta)
- Twelfth district: Mellieħa, St. Paul's Bay and Naxxar

³ Department of Information (2008). Accessed August 2009 from:
<http://www.doi.gov.mt/EN/elections/2008/General%20Elections/default.asp>

.2 Consultation process

The consultation process undertaken by the Majjistral Action Group Foundation wanted to help communicating the LEADER project to the general It was also aimed at encouraging all local stakeholders to take an active role in the design of the Local Development Strategy. Different communication channels and means were used, in particular seminars, locality meetings and sectoral meetings, website and online consultation tools, promotion through newspapers and TV, delivery of flyers to all households of the territory.

Online consultation has been possible thanks to publication of an interactive questionnaire on the website www.leadermajjistral.eu, both in English and Maltese. The web consultation facility is flexible, it can be easily filled and it was always available during the whole consultation period. Furthermore, meetings involving the localities of the areas as well as the main sectors of Majjistral have been organised so as to ensure a larger participation and more contribution to the building up of the local development strategy. The communication therefore, apart from providing with information on LEADER and its functioning, was aimed to encourage local stakeholders to actively participate in the process of design of the Local Development Strategy for Majjistral using the website and the meetings.

Locality meetings were organised with the active involvement of Local Councils. Sectoral meetings were planned with the private partners that are members of the Majjistral Action Group.

.2.1 Consultation at Decision Committee level

After the first analysis a consultation session has been held with the Decision Committee to share the approach used in the analysis and the main outcome. The discussion was focused on the identification of specific needs related to different sectors of the island economy. The priorities identified have been consolidated. Specific actions requested from the different socio economic sectors were discussed and associated with the related need and priority. An initial list of priorities has been drafted and approved. The needs identified, their related priorities and the proposed draft measures constituted the base for the consultation with local stakeholders.

.2.2 Launching event with Mayors

The first introductory seminar to the Consultation related to the Leader process in Majjistral was held in Mgarr and addressed to the Mayors of Majjistral. The Decision Committee considered that a more restricted launching event would have allowed a deeper discussion and would have facilitated Mayors to be more familiar with the LEADER. This has then facilitated the organisation and development of locality meetings. The Decision Committee agreed that it was important that all the Mayors were involved in the process with a focused seminar which would highlight:

- how the Leader process is being implemented in Majjistral
- how the Local Development Strategy is being built
- how the Consultation process will be carried out and what the content would be

Presentations were given during the launching seminar and discussions with the participants brought to the consolidation of the consultation calendar as well as the discussion on the main priorities for the region.

.2.3 Direct mailing

A flyer illustrating the main elements of the LEADER project has been delivered to all Majjistral households. The objective of this communication was to provide all the residents with general information on the LEADER as well as inviting them to attend the consultations meeting or participate to the online questionnaire. The leaflet in fact contained the calendar of all locality and sectoral meetings as well as a general introduction on the development of the LEADER project in the Majjistral region. The flyer reached all Majjistral households during the week when adverts have been published on different national newspapers.

.2.4 Adverts, Articles on Newspapers

A total of 4 adverts has been published on national newspapers, both in English and Maltese, to inform the general public about the consultation process. The adverts were published on different newspapers, namely Mument, The Sunday Times, Torċa, Malta Today on different dates of the week before the consultation process started.

The advertorials were sent to all national newspaper to ensure maximum coverage. Advertorials were sent for the press conferences which were held on the 21st October and 15th December at Corinthia Palace H'Attard.

.2.5 Website and online consultation

A website of the Majjistral Action Group Foundation has been created (www.leadermajjistral.eu). The website was designed to provide information on the LEADER project, the territory concerned and the local actors involved. It has been enriched with an interactive tool such as the online consultation facility, the news and events section and the download section in order to make it more effective, useful and complete.

The download section is used to make available all official documents issued by the Majjistral Action Group Foundation which have been produced during the setting up process and which will be produced for the implementation of the Local Development Strategy.

The news and update section will be used as part of the communication strategy that the Majjistral Action Group will implement to communicate and inform about the implementation of the Local Development Strategy.

The online consultation questionnaire was built around the specific priorities that the analysis of the territory had identified. The participants to the online consultation could rank the priorities identified from 1 to 10 where 1 = very important and 10 = not important. The total number of priorities selected was 15. Therefore, the participants on the online consultation could only select 10 out of the 15 priorities and they were asked to indicate the level of importance of the selected ones. This allowed to communicate to the participants on the online consultation that the budget was limited and that only those responding to a more urgent need could be undertaken out of a number of options available. This would have helped the Decision Committee in the definition of the list of priorities to be addressed with the LEADER.

.2.6 Locality and Sectoral meetings

The objective of locality meetings was to actively involve residents as well as local elected representatives and civil society operators.

Locality meetings were important to get local population feedback and point of views on the needs for the sustainable development of Majjistral and on the priorities identified. These meetings also represented an occasion to better explain the functioning of the LEADER Programme and the role of the Local Action Group.

The meetings started on the 21st October 2009 and finished on the 10th November 2009. The table below presents the outcome of each locality and sectoral meeting.

| TOURISM – NGO SECTORAL MEETING | EXPERTS COMMENTS |
|--|---|
| Restoration of underground flourmill at St Paul's Bay (managed by Fondazzjoni Wied Industrijali) and form part of a heritage trail | Can be funded under 323; marketing / trail linked to it can be funded under 313 and LEADER |
| Training on how to secure funds i.e., on application forms, project management, etc | Can be funded through LEADER |
| Support for opening of a shelter in St Paul's Bay? | Can be funded under 323; 313 can be used if packaged as a trail linking shelters (e.g. Mgarr & Siggiewi), include info panels, etc (?) use of an electric bus to visit shelters and/or other features of interest |
| Sports tourism, awareness raising | Can be funded through LEADER (as long as the proposed project cannot be funded through other programmes or axes within the RDP and provided it is within budget allowed per project). |
| Crafts sector coming together and taking place in fairs including outside the territory | Can be funded by LEADER |

| FARMERS SECTORAL MEETING | EXPERTS COMMENTS |
|---|---|
| Alternative energy – panels for farmers. Agri-tourism | Energy Schemes available under ERDF |
| What about restoration of rubble walls? | This is available under M323. |
| There are walls that have collapsed that are the Council's responsibility that they don't finance (Għargħur) | LEADER cannot finance responsibilities of Council |
| Access to fields | Financed under LEADER - M125 |
| Restoration of windmills; training on how to restore windmills and rubble walls | Restoration of windmills not under LEADER but under M323. Training under LEADER |
| What about building reservoirs? | Financed by RDP M125 managed by MRRA |
| Restoration of small agricultural rooms | Covered by Axis I RDP |
| Strategy needs sensitivity to the private land and life of the farmer. Better to focus on restoration of public roads and rubble walls in these areas. We don't want an invasion of tourists. We need to consider security of private land. | Noted for SWOT. |
| Rubble being thrown on the countryside and | LEADER cannot clean up as it is bound to carry |

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| fields – we need to clean up the countryside before bringing the tourists | out sustainable investments through the strategy. |
| Let's focus on areas such as the coast that will not disturb farmers e.g. the coast. This is a good place to develop a coastal walk. | Walks can be funded under LEADER m 313 |
| The country roads are bad and will be a disincentive for tourists. Opposing comment: it's an adventure for a tourist | Access Roads to fields funded under M 125 |
| Access sensitivity is also important in terms of safety particularly if pesticides have just be applied | Noted for SWOT. |
| Better access between villages/localities. | It can be studied under the LEADER |

| NGOs SECTORAL MEETING | EXPERTS COMMENTS |
|--|---|
| Regeneration of Wied Ġħain Żejtuna | Measure 323 RDP |
| More management plans within the foundation | Studies can be funded under LEADER |
| To revive the natural watercourse embankments, flora, fauna and their habitat. | It could be part of an education activity |
| Create a greener, cleaner and safer environment | Various measures including embellishment. |

| LIJA LOCAL COUNCIL MEETING | EXPERTS COMMENTS |
|--|--|
| Need to know what reservoirs are in the territory and whether we need to add more, if yes, these should be funded. | LEADER might fund the study, but not the reservoirs. Water management covered by M 125 RDP |
| Better access to the sea at rocky beaches | Possibly through ERDF funding. |
| Child care facilities | LEADER cannot afford the construction of a new facility but assist with existing ones. |
| Need to improve pavements | This activity cannot be funded through LEADER |
| Traffic management – fly over | LEADER can fund a study to support traffic management, but cannot fund any road works. |
| Need to promote agricultural products locally and overseas | It can be funded through LEADER |
| Need for recreational areas where BBQs can be held | Recreational areas funded through 313 – whether or not BBQs can be held in such areas will depend on code of conduct and safety guidelines for the management of such an area. Development of these guidelines can be funded through LEADER. |
| Conservation of green areas | Depends on area and any existing legislation/plans on its management. Case-by-case basis. |
| Villa Francija part of a heritage attraction | Could be included as part of a trail under Measure 313. Can be marketed through LEADER. Restoration cannot be funded through LEADER |
| Need for uniformity and aesthetic upgrade of the countryside, e.g. entrances to fields, other | LEADER could fund on an area-wide basis. |

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| areas, should not use barrels but proper gates | |
| Can part-time farmers benefit from LEADER to buy machinery – a measure that is in the RDP but only available to full time farmers | Part-time farmers can apply for actions within the Strategy that do not include those covered by other funds. In the specific case it refers to existing M 121 RDP. |
| Need to know what reservoirs are in the territory and whether we need to add more, if yes, these should be funded. | LEADER might fund the study. Water Management infrastructure can be under M125. |

| DINGLI LOCAL COUNCIL MEETING | EXPERTS COMMENTS |
|---|--|
| Certain features of interest such as Għar il-Kbir are mismanaged. | LEADER could help in the marketing and development of heritage trail (through 313). |
| Tourists visiting Dingli are often lost looking for features of interest | LEADER can improve signposting. |
| There are a number of alternative routes to leave and enter Dingli other than the main Rabat route however these are not well-maintained and cannot be used by most people. We need to facilitate rural access. | Funding to improve access to fields in particular under Measure 125 relevant. |
| Areas such as Misraħ Suffara need upgrading – it would be positive if farmers from the area could come together and tackle the issue | Can be funded through LEADER. |
| The rural environment is being taken over by rich people who are not farmers and disturbing traditional farming practices and access to valleys for farmers is obstructed. | Cannot be tackled through LEADER unless there is an awareness campaign |
| Discouraged to apply for funds due to obstacles from authorities. | Normal legal operating procedures will apply to LEADER. However, support will be provided by the Majjistral Local Action Group to all applicants. |
| Erosion is a problem. We need to clean the valleys and MEPA doesn't let us and everything including reeds and soil was washed away by the rain. The strategy needs to address the problem of water channelling and harvesting | LEADER cannot clean valleys. A study could be carried out to identify what interventions are needed to sustain agriculture in the various valleys. |
| An office to support potential applicants that may need help in applying for funds | The Majjistral Local Action Group will be setting up such an office with running costs to implement the Strategy. The Strategy can cater for training for potential applicants applying for funds. |
| Restoration of the windmills. Wied ta' Baldu. Ġnien ta' Baldu. Access to the valley has been obstructed by rich people. | Restoration cannot be done through LEADER. |
| Problem with gates in the countryside of non-farmers is obstructing access for tourists and farmers. | Access to fields can be funded under M125 |
| We have a lot of cultural heritage features that cannot be exploited and restored. | Restoration cannot be done through LEADER. |
| Dingli used to have a system where tourists used to spend time in the village but now because of ADT that sent the bus straight to the cliffs this is | LEADER can help |

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| not possible. We want to revive this and bring tourists back to the village not just the cliffs. | |
| We have a market for goats and sheep and now we have included gbejna. | LEADER can market products. |
| We have put together a number of walks we are including experts who can give a presentation | LEADER can help |
| Public transport is a disaster | Public Transport is not under the LAG remit |
| Crafts club – can we benefit? | Craft Sector can be eligible |
| Need to restore degraded places | Restoration cannot be done through LEADER. M323 caters for it |
| Footpaths are not pedestrian-friendly – problems with garages and driveways | Footpaths/ trails can be funded with M 313 |
| Abandoned developments should go back to previous state. | LEADER has no competence/authority |

| ATTARD LOCAL COUNCIL MEETING | EXPERTS COMMENTS |
|--|--|
| Problem with valleys. The watercourses are at risk from collapse of banks. Wied Inċita. Wied ta' Cambra. An embankment needs to be built behind the valley to mitigate the quarry. There are dumps with building waste. | LEADER cannot fund cleaning of valleys. |
| Behind Mount Carmel there is an area that is neglected – we could plant trees. Afforestation. There is also storage of hazardous waste (oils) that needs to be cleared. These oils could be leaking into the water table. A walk round Mount Carmel on the way to Rabat is obstructed with fill (building waste). Old footpaths by the quarry towards Zebbug should be re-opened. This is public land although quarry owner has put up signs saying its private. | Pathways can be funded under LEADER M313. |
| Drainage system in Attard is terrible and system is leaking. There are always works on the roads to fix a leaking pipe; there are holes in all the roads. Water channels are contaminated with sewage. | LEADER has no competence/authority |
| Embellishment – creation of gardens, statues. | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Landrijiet (Rabat) – full of history, cart ruts, old houses – abandoned and not managed, suffers from misuse e.g. BBQ. | Trails, studies can be funded. |
| Wirt Storiku – embankment linja ta' ferrovija (behind Corinthia) needs restoration. | Restoration cannot be done through LEADER. |
| Heritage trails, lines, aqueducts, etc | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Playing field – Attard LC taking care of it. | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| We have lost our gardens and we neglect them. They need to be maintained. E.g. Stazzjon is just a courtyard, it used to be one of the best gardens. | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| A study to identify which areas are public. We need capacity-building to apply. | It can be funded through LEADER. |

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| Part of the village core should have solar lighting systems installed. Could extend this territory-wide. | Energy schemes are available under ERDF. |
| Garden of the sisters (old people's home) – make garden elderly-friendly and disabled. Include mogħdijiet. Sisters – solar water heating e.g. sustainable garden, landscaping with local trees, use of solar panels for lighting, and other measures. | It can be funded through LEADER. |

| MDINA LOCAL COUNCIL MEETING | EXPERTS COMMENTS |
|---|--|
| Can we restore the Mtarfa bridge? | It cannot be funded through LEADER. |
| Problem of drainage overflowing into the valley under the Mtarfa bridge. A study might help – to see the impact on farmers and residents. Studies on the area is positive and a good first step | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Website for all the events going on in the territory. | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Upgrading of heritage trails. | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Guidance on applying for funds | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Study on wind farm at Baħrija | This is being done by central government |
| Can we clean the countryside? | Not under M313 or LEADER. |

| MTARFA LOCAL COUNCIL MEETING | EXPERTS COMMENTS |
|---|---|
| Types of projects needed by the school: Twinning; Need to organise sports days and activities; EkoSkola, we want to carrying out planting and gardening Benches Skambji ta' safar Improve corridors with pictures Extracurricular activities – equipment for these Homework clubs Embellishment and improvement of the library Opening of a games room To buy 2 smart boards Design and technology equipment Outings Magazine | Some assistance can be given to schools especially where there are specific projects |
| The school is a historical building and we need maintenance. We aim to use the school for cultural activities if we could embellish it including the garden, nature area. | Cleaning alone is not sufficient; activities can be funded |
| We want to promote tourism in Mtarfa. We are trying to buy and restore the clock. We need help to restore silos, shelters, cart ruts, tombs, etc, to clean, uncover and promote. We want to | Restoration no. however other measures such as trails, walks marketing can be funded. |

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| create a museum. We want a tour for Mdina, Rabat and Mtarfa. | |
| Santa Lucija chapel. San Oswald we need to embellish the area around these chapels that are run down although the chapels are attracting tourists. The chapels need to be restored. We can fund studies e.g. by the architect to see what is needed. | Studies can be funded through LEADER.; restoration not eligible. |
| The school needs to go back to its original traditional state i.e. remove the parquet, and other modern interventions that are out of context. | Infrastructural upgrade is not eligible. |
| The swings. | Leisure parks under M313. |
| Two Grade 2 English military buildings we need to restore them. Sister's Quarters and We need to make a centre where everyone can meet - we will be reusing the buildings because we don't have enough buildings in Malta. | Restoration under Measure 323 |
| Our aim was to have a sports academy. We want this to grow to the point where our children specialise in sport. Sibt Sport – every Saturday (each child has to participate in each of the 8 sports as directed by the academy on the day). We need to grow, we don't have space. We are already carrying out twinning programmes. We intend to bring a professional basket ball player to Malta who will go around schools and help in training. | Leader can help. |
| Mtarfa Football Club needs to build a ground. | Can help although budget is limited. |
| Training course for people to learn how to access funds. | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Walking promenade belvedere. Needs landscaping and a secondary road. | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Restoration of statues. | It cannot be funded through LEADER |
| Access roads to fields need to be invested in. | Funded Through LEADER M125 |
| Forest – needs cleaning, and embellishment with garden furniture and management. | Possibly through M313 – leisure parks |
| Cultural activities. We want to organise Notte Bianco in Carnival. Military Mtarfa – some funding for the cultural heritage. | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| We need help in filling in the application forms. | Capacity building – It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Cleaning of valleys, if these are not cleaned it erodes all my field, and rubble walls, access roads for farmers need to be upgraded. | Not really LEADER. |
| I'm an agricultural student we carry out projects that are expensive, can we get help? These projects are for the community. | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| We need studies on stability of Mtarfa because it's built on clay. | It can be funded through LEADER. |

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| Would like to restore the Archive of the Hospital (now a school) and create an art gallery for the Majjistral region. Could do studies e.g. feasibility, plans to present to potential sponsors. | Studies can be funded through LEADER. |
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| SIGĠIEWI LOCAL COUNCIL MEETING | EXPERTS COMMENTS |
|---|--|
| Exchange visits | Funded by Europe for Citizens. International activities with LEADER under specific action. |
| There should be a mail shot to tell us when the Strategy is ready and is available on the website. Should be on the news and papers too. | Noted for communication strategy |
| Training to help apply. | Capacity building – It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Road signage needed. Information panels. We could create a standard for signs and make them rustic | Yes for studies and signage. |
| Better access along Għar Lapsi and the inaccessible bay | Accessibility to tourism sites under ERDF |
| Environmentally friendly sea transport – study | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| We can focus on a few small roads for cycling and walking trails. | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Travelling exhibitions – or at about 3 different satellites. Example – a display area. Mini Malta Enterprise for tasting Majjistral products. Could link with crafts village. | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Routes for cycling and walking – on a panel. | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| A festival like at Birgu with re-enacting. | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Sports tourism – more marketing of sports facility at Ta'Qali. | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Silo walk. | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| We need to upgrade our product. E.g. Music festivals of good quality and can be modern not just traditional. | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Include everyone, do an exhibition in the square where anyone who likes can participate. | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Promotion of areas of interest. | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Awareness-raising continual – about this Leader programme. | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Need for embellishment at Sigġiewi e.g. roundabout. | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| We have a piazza that can be used for a festival e.g. for choirs. And marketing. | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Christmas Festival – San Nikola should have it in Sigġiewi. | It can be funded through LEADER. |

| SAINT PAUL'S BAY LOCAL COUNCIL MEETING | EXPERTS COMMENTS |
|--|-------------------------|
| We could create a farmers' cooperative for the region. | Measure 141 RDP |
| Victoria Lines – restoration | Not LEADER but M323. |

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| The Bugibba promenade needs work to become like Sliema – problem with boathouses. Embellishment to make it an attraction. | This would be central Government. |
| Nature Trail on foreshore between Fra Ben and Dolmen – remove bumping cars. Fencing of the flora. The Nature Trail can be used for children. Add benches from natural products. | Nature trail can be funded through LEADER. |
| Wied Għalqonka needs to be cleaned. Water dams need restoration. | Not LEADER but M323. |
| There is a large piece of land in Qawra. This is earmarked as a sports centre. We should do a park for tourism and education e.g. planting the Għargħar Tree. I agree with walk at the foreshore, wild onion. We shouldn't do a multi-storey carpark. | Leisure Park yes under M313. |
| We have a number of hamlets focus on traditional lifestyle. | Marketing can be funded through LEADER. |
| We need guidance on applying. The paperwork is too much. | Capacity building – It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Training for the elderly e.g. to turn them into wardens. | Training can be funded through LEADER. |
| Rubbish is well managed in winter but when tourists come they don't comply with e.g. time to take rubbish out. Waste management training. | Training yes. |
| Xemxija hill suffers from noise and air pollution from traffic. | Study yes |
| We need to see what type of people are coming to St Pauls Bay for summer | Study yes |
| We need to integrate the elderly into the strategy | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| We suggest an adventure park | Leisure Park yes under M313. |
| We need to have people to see what's going on in the environment such as wardens | Not LEADER |
| We have lots of cultural heritage we need to market this. | Marketing yes. |
| We need to pedestrianise areas. | Local Council / Government |
| Can we get training for Masters students? | ESF |
| Use elderly to mentor single parents that use the Day Care Centre. Council and single parents can work together to help children of Day Care Centre. | It can be funded through LEADER. |

| NAXXAR LOCAL COUNCIL MEETING | EXPERTS COMMENTS |
|--|----------------------------------|
| More management plans | M323. |
| More cultural festivals within the region | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Good guidelines and training regarding the application | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Restoration on small scale | M323. |
| Promotion for single travellers | It can be funded through LEADER. |

| IKLIN LOCAL COUNCIL MEETING | EXPERTS COMMENTS |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Research on air pollution | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Subsidy for Rubble walls | Not eligible |
| Good guidelines and training regarding the application | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Restoration in various chapels | No |
| Project for all windmills within the region | As a trail |
| Organise various cultural activities with other local councils such as an exhibition of fireworks | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Publish a recipe book based on rosemary – (Iklin – Rosemary) | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Promote more the library which is situated in Lija. | Possibly |

| MĠARR LOCAL COUNCIL MEETING | EXPERTS COMMENTS |
|--|--|
| Access for pathways | M125 – access to fields and M313 heritage trails can be funded |
| Marketing on historical places | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Promotion for various festivals within the region | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Websites | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Good signage | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Guidebooks on North West | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Promotion on North West beach bays | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Good guidelines and training regarding the application | It can be funded through LEADER. |

| MELLIEĦA LOCAL COUNCIL MEETING | EXPERTS COMMENTS |
|---|--|
| St Maria Estate Project (rehabilitation of the valley) | Parts of the project including marketing and education would be eligible |
| Natural valleys, cleaning | Cleaning not eligible |
| Marketing campaign on anti-literacy | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Heritage trail | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Educational and enforcing – green warden campaign | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Old farmhouses that need to be rehabilitated | Potentially as a project |
| Educate Locals – Maltese | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Marketing | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Restoration of rubble walls | Not the actual restoration as this is M323 |
| Internal tourism from other regions | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Mizieb – picnic areas and educational campaign on littering | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Television advertising campaign regarding Majjistral region | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Agri- tourism – Koperattiva Manikata | It can be funded through LEADER. |

| ĠHARGĦUR LOCAL COUNCIL MEETING | EXPERTS COMMENTS |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Identity for the Majjistral region | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Initiatives and activities regarding Ġhargħur history | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Restoration of rubble walls | Only training |

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| More access roads and pedestrian | M125 – access to fields and M313 heritage trails |
| Research on traffic flow | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Marketing on agriculture | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Scientific surveys | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Supply for electricity (farmers) | Possibly |

| RABAT LOCAL COUNCIL MEETING | EXPERTS COMMENTS |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Agri-tourism locality | Marketing can be done |
| Marketing on Roman Villa, Katakombi etc | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Restoration of valleys | Depending on type of measures |
| Forestation | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| More support for SME and farmers, marketing on their local products | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| A new cemetery | Not LEADER |
| Access for good library | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| More enforcement/ awareness campaign (environment) | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Promotions activities for youths and adults | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Valley management | Depending on type of measures |
| Research on air pollution | It can be funded through LEADER. |
| Training and guidelines – application form | It can be funded through LEADER. |

.2.7

Final Consultation Seminar

On the 15th December 2009, the Majjistrat Action Group organised a seminar for local stakeholders, with the aim of presenting the outcome of the consultation process and in particular to illustrate the actions composing the Majjistrat Sustainable Development Strategy. This action represents the end of the preparatory phase of the LEADER in the region.

.3 Demographic profile

The number of people living in the Majjistral territory will impinge on the needs identified for the MAG territory. In 2008, the total population of Malta⁴ stood at 413,609, while the total population for the Majjistral territory was 82,692, representing 20% of the total population in Malta. In 2001, this percentage stood at about 18%, indicating that while total population in Malta increased by an annual growth rate of 0.7%, population in the Majjistral territory has been rising by a larger annual increase (2.4%)⁵.

In 2008, 20% of the total population lived in the Majjistral territory. In the last decade, the rate of population increase in the Majjistral area has been three times the average national increase. This has obvious implications on the territory.

.3.1 Population dynamics

The following table provides a breakdown of population trends in the thirteen localities making up the Majjistral territory. In 2008, the largest localities by number of registered population were St. Paul's Bay (circa 14,500), Naxxar (c. 12,400), Rabat (c. 11,500) and Attard (c. 10,600). On the other hand, the smallest localities in terms of population were Mdina (250), Għargħur (c. 2,400) and Mtarfa (c. 2,500).

Table 1: Total population by locality

| Locality | DR2001 | DR2002 | DR2003 | DR2004 | Census 2005 | DR2006 | DR2007 | DR2008 | % Change (2001 to 2008) | Annual growth rate |
|---------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------------|--------|--------|--------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Attard | 9716 | 9774 | 9815 | 9908 | 10405 | 10474 | 10552 | 10598 | 9.1% | 1.2% |
| Dingli | 1466 | 2978 | 3003 | 3032 | 3347 | 3361 | 3347 | 3366 | 13.8% | 1.9% |
| Għargħur | 2143 | 2188 | 2228 | 2279 | 2352 | 2384 | 2392 | 2422 | 13.0% | 1.8% |
| Iklin | 3331 | 3360 | 3396 | 3416 | 3220 | 3240 | 3240 | 3247 | -2.5% | -0.4% |
| Lija | 2569 | 2591 | 2597 | 2618 | 2797 | 2828 | 2833 | 2877 | 12.0% | 1.6% |
| Mdina | 377 | 388 | 394 | 397 | 278 | 278 | 253 | 250 | -33.7% | -5.7% |
| Mellieħa | 6481 | 6618 | 6735 | 6889 | 7676 | 7807 | 7932 | 8033 | 23.9% | 3.1% |
| Mgarr | 2864 | 2919 | 2949 | 2977 | 3014 | 3024 | 3025 | 3040 | 6.1% | 0.9% |
| Mtarfa | 1576 | 1597 | 1637 | 1651 | 2426 | 2449 | 2447 | 2468 | 56.6% | 6.6% |
| Naxxar | 10546 | 10662 | 10771 | 10909 | 11978 | 12126 | 12257 | 12356 | 17.2% | 2.3% |
| Rabat | 11763 | 11761 | 11753 | 11750 | 11473 | 11474 | 11468 | 11452 | -2.6% | -0.4% |
| Siggiewi | 7605 | 7652 | 7707 | 7755 | 7931 | 7967 | 8013 | 8042 | 5.7% | 0.8% |
| St Paul's Bay | 8071 | 8313 | 8642 | 8942 | 13412 | 13868 | 14280 | 14541 | 80.2% | 8.8% |
| Total | 70000 | 70801 | 71627 | 72523 | 80309 | 81280 | 82039 | 82692 | 18.1% | 2.4% |

Source: NSO, Demographic Review (various editions); 2005 Census of Population and Housing – Vol. 1: Population

Table 1 above shows that total population in the Majjistral territory has been on the rise, growing by an annual growth rate of circa 2.4% from 2001 to 2008. In terms of individual localities making up this territory, the largest growth rates in population have been registered by St. Paul's Bay (8.8%), Mtarfa (6.6%), and Mellieħa (3.1%). Mtarfa saw a number of housing developments in the period from 1995 to 2005, while St. Paul's Bay and Mellieħa are no longer being considered solely as summer residences, with many opting to live in these localities throughout the year. All other

⁴ NSO provides data for both total population (Maltese and foreigners) and Maltese population only. In this chapter, total population is being quoted.

⁵ All annual increases are based on the formula for a compound annual growth rate.

localities registered growth rates which are less than the 2.4% of the whole territory. On the other hand, declines in population were registered in Mdina (5.7%), Iklın and Rabat (both 0.4%).

The following table presents the workings for the population density of the thirteen MAG localities.

| Locality | Area (km ²) | 1995 | | 2005 | | Percentage change 1995-2005 |
|----------------|-------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | Population | Population per km ² | Population | Population per km ² | |
| Malta and Gozo | 315.2 | 378132 | 1,200 | 404962 | 1,285 | 7.1% |
| Majjistral | 130.0 | 66101 | 508 | 80309 | 618 | 21.5% |
| Attard | 6.6 | 9214 | 1,399 | 10405 | 1,567 | 12.0% |
| Dingli | 5.7 | 2725 | 478 | 3347 | 591 | 23.6% |
| Għargħur | 2.0 | 1991 | 988 | 2352 | 1,167 | 18.1% |
| Iklin | 1.7 | 3098 | 1,795 | 3220 | 1,865 | 3.9% |
| Lija | 1.1 | 2497 | 2,310 | 2,797 | 2,553 | 10.5% |
| Mdina | 0.9 | 377 | 426 | 278 | 314 | -26.3% |
| Mellieħa | 22.6 | 6221 | 272 | 7676 | 339 | 24.6% |
| Mgarr | 16.1 | 2672 | 166 | 3014 | 187 | 12.7% |
| Mtarfa | 0.7 | N/A | N/A | 2426 | 3,341 | N/A |
| Naxxar | 11.6 | 9822 | 848 | 11978 | 1,035 | 22.1% |
| Rabat | 26.6 | 12995 | 476 | 11473 | 431 | -9.5% |
| Siggiewi | 19.9 | 7097 | 350 | 7931 | 399 | 14.0% |
| St Paul's Bay | 14.5 | 7392 | 472 | 13412 | 923 | 95.6% |

Source: NSO (2007), 2005 Census of Population and Housing – Vol. 1: Population

In 2005, the localities with the highest population density (defined as total population divided by the area in square kilometres) were Mtarfa (c. 3,300 population per km²), Lija (c. 2,600), Iklin (c. 1,900) and Attard (c. 1,600). On the other hand, the localities with the lowest population density were Mgarr (c. 200), Mdina (c. 314), Mellieħa (c. 339) and Siggiewi (c. 399). The average population density for Malta is 1,285 while that of the Majjistral area stands at less than half.

The thirteen localities making up the Majjistral territories have different population sizes, with the largest locality having above 13,500 inhabitants and the smallest locality having just under 300. If measured by area, the largest locality comprises an area of about 27 square kilometres, while the smallest locality is about 0,7 km². The Majjistral area registered about half the national population density in 2005.

.3.2

Key demographic indicators

A number of other demographic indicators also provide further input into the identification of needs relating to this territory. Table 3 below presents information on the gender and age split of the thirteen localities making up the Majjistral territory.

| Locality | 0 – 9 years | 10-19 years | 20-29 years | 30-39 years | 40-49 years | 50-59 years | 60-69 years | 70+ | Total | |
|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------|-------|---------|
| | | | | | | | | | Males | Females |
| Attard | 1138 | 1718 | 1427 | 1407 | 1769 | 1456 | 845 | 645 | 5200 | 5205 |
| Dingli | 427 | 532 | 463 | 522 | 506 | 492 | 202 | 203 | 1706 | 1641 |
| Għargħur | 297 | 291 | 368 | 373 | 349 | 345 | 194 | 135 | 1210 | 1142 |
| Iklin | 367 | 666 | 428 | 355 | 657 | 467 | 192 | 88 | 1653 | 1567 |
| Lija | 273 | 388 | 397 | 385 | 402 | 427 | 281 | 244 | 1369 | 1428 |
| Mdina | 16 | 38 | 28 | 17 | 41 | 44 | 34 | 60 | 120 | 158 |
| Mellieħa | 913 | 1043 | 1045 | 1077 | 1169 | 1088 | 808 | 533 | 3820 | 3856 |
| Mgarr | 363 | 515 | 383 | 439 | 469 | 383 | 224 | 238 | 1534 | 1480 |
| Mtarfa | 466 | 367 | 244 | 548 | 385 | 183 | 76 | 157 | 1211 | 1215 |
| Naxxar | 1471 | 1853 | 1685 | 1782 | 1979 | 1625 | 881 | 702 | 6002 | 5976 |
| Rabat | 965 | 1386 | 1578 | 1249 | 1494 | 1896 | 1356 | 1549 | 5544 | 5929 |
| Siggiewi | 909 | 1216 | 1256 | 1076 | 1156 | 1180 | 637 | 501 | 3908 | 4023 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|-------|-------|
| St Paul's bay | 1556 | 1676 | 2029 | 2200 | 2000 | 1742 | 1248 | 961 | 6721 | 6691 |
| Total | 9161 | 11689 | 11331 | 11430 | 12376 | 11328 | 6978 | 6016 | 39998 | 40311 |

Source: NSO (2007), Census of Population and Housing 2005 – Vol.1: Population

In terms of gender analysis, the Majjistral territory is evenly split between males and females. This is reflected throughout most localities of this territory except for Mdina (57% females). In Malta the 2005 population was split between 49.6% males and 50.4% females.

In 2005, the localities with the highest number of older people (in this case measured by the number of 60+ year olds as a percentage of total population of the locality) were Mdina (34%), Rabat (25%) and Lija (19%). Overall, 16% of the total Majjistral population is over 60 while in Malta this percentage stands at 19%. On the other hand, the localities having the highest percentage of young people (defined as ages between 0 and 19 years) were Mtarfa (34%), Iklin (32%), Dingli and Mgarr (both 29%). These results possibly provide an indication that people are moving into the MAG area as well as the possibility of new developments becoming available in the territory. Overall, about one-fourth of people living in the Majjistral territory fall within the 0-19 age bracket, which is identical to the national percentage.

Table 4 below provides information on the level and type of disabilities relevant to the territory under study. The data presented below relates to the North-West district since no data by locality was available. About 95% of the North West population had no disability, about 2% had a physical impairment while 1.1% had more than one type of impairment. Other impairments made up less than 1% of total district population.

Table 4: Long-term disability among total population by type and district of person with disability

| Type of disability | Total | Western district | Northern district | North West district | Percentage |
|---|--------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------|
| Visual impairment | 3770 | 483 | 415 | 898 | 0.8% |
| Hearing impairment | 1870 | 233 | 204 | 437 | 0.4% |
| Physical impairment | 7702 | 979 | 973 | 1952 | 1.7% |
| Intellectual impairment | 1311 | 202 | 160 | 362 | 0.3% |
| Mental health condition | 1912 | 221 | 237 | 458 | 0.4% |
| Other impairment | 3520 | 450 | 394 | 844 | 0.7% |
| More than one type | 3763 | 860 | 391 | 1251 | 1.1% |
| No disability | 381114 | 53610 | 54393 | 108003 | 94.6% |
| Total population – North West districts | 404962 | 57038 | 57167 | 114205 | |

Note: Apart from the 13 localities making up the Majjistral, the figures in the table above include also Zebbug, Balzan and Mosta

Source: NSO (2007), Census of Population and Housing 2005 – Vol.1: Population

In terms of illnesses and health conditions of the North-West district populations, according to the 2005 Census 16% had a long-term illness or health condition. This percentage stood at 18% for the whole of Malta. These results are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Long term illness and/or health condition

| Age | Total | With illness/health conditions | Without illness/health conditions |
|---------------|-------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 0 – 9 years | 12986 | 642 | 12344 |
| 10 – 19 years | 16694 | 905 | 15789 |
| 20 – 29 years | 16333 | 878 | 15455 |
| 30 – 39 years | 15983 | 1285 | 14698 |
| 40 – 49 years | 17445 | 2284 | 15161 |
| 50 – 59 years | 15944 | 3848 | 12096 |
| 60 – 69 years | 9971 | 3759 | 6212 |
| 70+ | 8849 | 4531 | 4318 |

Note: Apart from the 13 localities making up the Majjistral, the figures in the table above include also Zebbug, Balzan and Mosta

Source: NSO (2007), Census of Population and Housing 2005 – Vol.1: Population

The following table presents information on the level of participation in sports registered in Malta and in the North-West region. Percentages for Malta and the North-West were similar, with only 6% claiming that they practise sports on a competitive basis, another 19% practising sports not on a competitive basis and the remaining 75% not participating in any sports.

Table 6: Participation in sport by population aged 5 years and over

| District | On a competitive basis | Not on a competitive basis | No participation |
|----------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Malta and Gozo | 6% | 17% | 77% |
| Western | 6% | 17% | 77% |
| Northern | 6% | 20% | 74% |
| North-West | 6% | 19% | 75% |

Note: Apart from the 13 localities making up the Majjistral, the figures in the table above include also Zebbug, Balzan and Mosta

Source: NSO (2007), Census of Population and Housing 2005 – Vol.1: Population

The Majjistral territory has a relatively younger population. About 16% of the total Majjistral population is over 60 compared to the national percentage of 19%. The high percentage (above 30%) of young people in a number of Majjistral localities is a reflection of the higher rate of population increases in the MAG areas.

.3.3

Settlements

The following table provides details of the dwellings present in the Majjistral territory in both 1995 and 2005. An increase of 36% has been registered in this ten-year period, that is, a 3.2% annual increase. The greatest increases in dwellings were registered St. Paul's Bay (57%), Mellieħa(45%) and Ġhargħur (38%), while Rabat registered the lowest increase (4%).

About one-third of these properties remain vacant, possibly indicating that many have their summer residences in these localities. Vacant properties have increased by approximately 40% in the ten-year period under study.

Table 7: Dwelling stock by occupancy status and locality: 1995-2005

| Locality | 1995 | | | 2005 | | | Percentage Change 1995-2005 | | |
|---------------|-------|----------|--------|-------|----------|--------|-----------------------------|----------|--------|
| | Total | Occupied | Vacant | Total | Occupied | Vacant | Total | Occupied | Vacant |
| Attard | 2663 | 2439 | 224 | 3418 | 3006 | 412 | 28.4% | 23.2% | 83.9% |
| Dingli | 896 | 812 | 84 | 1198 | 1033 | 165 | 33.7% | 27.2% | 96.4% |
| Ġhargħur | 753 | 637 | 116 | 1037 | 824 | 213 | 37.7% | 29.4% | 83.6% |
| Iklin | 916 | 857 | 59 | 1031 | 930 | 101 | 12.6% | 8.5% | 71.2% |
| Lija | 875 | 779 | 96 | 1185 | 945 | 240 | 35.4% | 21.3% | 150.0% |
| Mdina | 157 | 110 | 47 | 146 | 98 | 48 | -7.0% | -10.9% | 2.1% |
| Mellieħa | 3575 | 2026 | 1549 | 5190 | 2694 | 2496 | 45.2% | 33.0% | 61.1% |
| Mġarr | 1031 | 794 | 237 | 1164 | 953 | 211 | 12.9% | 20.0% | -11.0% |
| Mtarfa | N/A | N/A | N/A | 748 | 681 | 67 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Naxxar | 3748 | 2978 | 770 | 4789 | 3935 | 854 | 27.8% | 32.1% | 10.9% |
| Rabat | 4629 | 4021 | 608 | 4804 | 3925 | 879 | 3.8% | -2.4% | 44.6% |
| Siggiewi | 2358 | 2059 | 299 | 2917 | 2504 | 413 | 23.7% | 21.6% | 38.1% |
| St Paul's Bay | 9065 | 2517 | 6548 | 14207 | 5445 | 8762 | 56.7% | 116.3% | 33.8% |
| Total | 30666 | 20029 | 10637 | 41834 | 26973 | 14861 | 36.4% | 34.7% | 39.7% |

Source: NSO (2007), Census of Population and Housing 2005 – Vol.2: Dwellings

Dwellings in the MAG area have increased by about 36% between 1995 and 2005. About one-third of these properties remain vacant, with this type of properties increasing by approximately 40%.

The following sub-sections discuss each of the thirteen localities making up the MAG territory.

Attard

Attard is bounded to the north and to the east by Lija and Balzan respectively. These three localities are known as the Three Villages due to their similar urban characteristics dominated by the presence of a number of large gardens and quiet residential neighbourhoods. In recent years, rapid urban expansion in Attard has led to the development of new areas, such as Misraħ Kola, Tal-Fuklar and Ta' Fgieni resulting in extensive areas of low density villa and terraced house development. Further urban expansion is now defined by the presence of the Ta' Qali National Park to the west, Mount Carmel Hospital and the proposed Attard By-pass to the south.

Between 1985 and 1998 the population of Attard increased by 65% from 5,681 to 9,372 as a result of the rapid urban expansion that occurred. In 2008, Attard's population stood at 10,598. The number of children up to 14 years of age has also increased significantly from 1,326 in 1985 to 2,307 in 1995. Although Attard is predominantly residential in character, there are also some commercial, industrial and tourist activities, such as the Attard Industrial Estate, the commercial area at Triq il-Pitkali and the Crafts Village in Ta' Qali. There is also a 5-star hotel in Attard.

Attard incorporates within it the Ta'Qali area, a wide open space housing the National Stadium, the National park, a vegetable market (known as Il-Pitkali) and the Crafts Village. The area is considered a major recreational area and has recently also accommodated the Malta Fairs and Convention Centre (MFCC), the largest international conference and exhibition centre in Malta which houses various activities ranging from fairs to concerts and other large scale events.

The area includes a number of important gardens, most importantly the San Anton Gardens which is probably one of the best known gardens on the Island and which also houses the San Anton Palace, the official residence of the President of Malta.

Dingli

Dingli is located to the south west of the MAG territory, four kilometres from Rabat. It is strongly dominated by residential uses but has a commercial centre concentrated around the main church. The village is closely associated to Dingli Cliffs to the west – the cliffs are very popular with tourists and locals because of the views they offer. Dingli is also surrounded by attractive countryside where a number of rural hamlets are scattered such as Misraħ Suffara and Tal-Imbart.

The village serves a dual role of a service centre for convenience shopping for the local community and the surrounding hamlets, and also as a focal point for the visitors to the countryside and the coastal cliffs. Those roads in Dingli giving access to the cliffs are therefore subject to substantial traffic during weekends. The location of quarries in the vicinity necessitates the use of Dingli as a through road by large vehicles, which create nuisance to residents and traffic hazards.

The urban fabric of Dingli has two main characteristics - the old village core around the church, stretching further to the east, characterised by narrow winding roads, and the housing estate characterised by a pre-determined layout and building types, to the north and north west of the old core. Terraced houses dominate the housing estate but a number of maisonettes have also been constructed.

Għargħur

Għargħur is a rural village situated between Naxxar to the west and Madliena to the east. The locality is an important example of a typical village still totally surrounded by rural areas of good quality agricultural land. This provides for the quiet, serene atmosphere found within this locality with abundant green natural areas around it. It is therefore quite different from the neighbouring localities of Mosta and Naxxar that have become heavily urbanized through development.

Għargħur still retains a natural delineation all around the village, separating it entirely from surrounding localities. Għargħur is predominantly residential in character with a typical village core surrounding the prominent church and square. Commercial and retail activities are limited to local shopping provision mainly within the Church area.

Some of the best examples of areas of ecological value are found bordering Għargħur. These include Wied Anġlu, Wied il-Faħam, Wied ta' Santa Marija taż-Żellieqa, Wied ta' Piswella, Wied ta' Santa Katarina and Wied id-Dis. The Great Fault, an important geological feature, also passes within the limits of Għargħur.

Għargħur is in fact situated on high ground and its prominent position overlooking the coast of Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq was found suitable for the location of the existing Broadcasting Transmitting Station. The Victoria Lines (1870-1899), a historical feature with recreational and tourism potential, also passes through this locality.

Iklin

Iklin is a recently developed urban settlement and consists of two distinct and separate urban areas; the bungalow area to the north with dwellings constructed on the slopes of Wied l-Iklin, and the terraced house area to the south that is bounded by two arterial roads. These arterial roads separate Iklin from the neighbouring localities of Lija and Birkirkara. The rural area to the east of the urban settlements mainly consists of dry agricultural land, but there is also a concentration of disused quarries, many of which have been successfully rehabilitated back to agriculture, together with a number of industrial and commercial developments located along Triq Tal-Balal.

Most urban development in Iklin has taken place during the late 70's and the early 80's. In fact most of the terraced house area was developed by 1985, and this predominantly consists of three bedroom terraced houses constructed on two floors.

Iklin has a young population. At present there is minimal provision of sports and recreational areas to serve the younger generation in particular. In addition most of the land within scheme has been built up and therefore opportunities for new recreational projects are very limited. Another problem relating to the younger generation is that there is no primary school in Iklin, and presently pupils have to cross the arterial roads in order to go to school at Lija and Birkirkara. Options for the possible development outside development zone are constrained by the existence of two fireworks factories which are located about 200 metres away from residential areas.

Commercial uses are mainly concentrated along Triq in-Naxxar but are also being established within the adjoining residential areas. Triq in-Naxxar forms the boundary of the area, and consequently Iklin is adversely affected by the major congestion along this road and at the Lija Roundabout. The commercial development along Triq in-Naxxar also causes parking congestion in the area, which has been partially addressed through parking time restrictions.

Lija

Lija forms part of the traditional Three Villages (Attard, Balzan and Lija). This locality is characterised by villas, townhouses and gardens of high architectural and historical significance including Villa Preziosi and Villa Francia amongst others.

Lija's other landmarks and characteristic features include the Belvedere 'It-Torri' (1857), Lija Cemetery also dating to the 1800s, Tal-Mirakli Chapel along with the characteristic narrow and winding streets providing this locality with a traditional streetscape.

The western extent of Lija consists, however, of new urban areas. Lija has a number of public open spaces and private gardens. These gardens are the most important feature alongside the winding streets and vernacular architecture that give Lija its identity. Another important urban area in Lija is the parish church. This core area is well located with views onto the parish church and belvedere along the same axis providing an important central focal point for Lija. Lija possesses an important rural area at Hal Mann though industrial growth in this area has been considerable in recent years.

The major part of Lija benefits from being located away from the main road network. However some localised problems do exist in the village core that need to be addressed through traffic calming measures and related environmental improvements. The major problem in Lija, and adjacent areas, is the traffic congestion at the Lija Roundabout. This is a very important node on the road network and a critical source of delays for buses. The problems are not just related to junction design and capacity since a significant element of the problem is the lack of road capacity along Triq in-Naxxar.

Mdina

Mdina is the old capital of Malta and is a historically unique citadel providing clear evidence of a fusion of Arabic and European cultures. The city contains a number of fine medieval palaces, Baroque buildings and monuments. Mdina dates back to the medieval period and includes areas that were transformed in the early eighteenth century.

The national landmark of Mdina is perhaps the most unspoilt settlement in the MAG territory with its unique skyline and visual composition. The hill on which Mdina is sited is of significant historic value. Howard Gardens to the south of the city also have a historic and visual value as it provides the setting to Mdina. The Roman Villa, in the outskirts of the town, has archaeological importance.

Mdina's history and culture makes it a prime visitor attraction. Over recent years it attracted the interest of tourist related facilities and businesses. Traffic problems associated with tourist activities, are common although the centre of Mdina is a pedestrian area and vehicular access is only available to residents and vehicles with special permits. Above all, Mdina is a living city and although with a decreasing and ageing population it is still a prime residential area.

Apart from the various historical and cultural sites in Mdina, throughout the year the local council / community organises a number of cultural activities including:

- Medieval Mdina in the month of April
- The feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in July
- The feast of St Peter and St Paul in June
- A concert in December, and
- Various cultural outings throughout the year.

Mellieħa

Mellieħa is the northern-most urban settlement within the MAG territory and includes an established residential base. The boundaries of Mellieħa include the three urban settlements of Mellieħa, tas-Sellum and Manikata surrounded by countryside often of high environmental value, such as Għadira Bay, Anchor Bay, Fort Campbell and Marfa Ridge.

Mellieħa's population has over recent years steadily increased with the establishment of Government housing on the outskirts of the traditional village. This increase in population has increased the demand for services in the area and its retail sector has grown as well. New hotels have developed within the commercial hub reflecting the town's attraction for tourism.

The Għajn Tuffieħa area includes the popular bays of Għajn Tuffieħa, Golden Sands (both protected beaches) and their hinterland. A number of headlands are also associated with this area. The area is well known for its fine sandy beaches, the high clay slopes and exceptional picturesque scenery. Għajn Tuffieħa Bay is a steep sided sandy beach with boulder headlands on both sides, whilst Golden Sands is a wider sandy beach with Pwales Valley to the east. The former bay is being administered by Mgarr Local Council whilst Golden Sands Bay is under the jurisdiction of Mellieħa Local Council in terms of the 1993 Local Councils Act. The area also includes a five-star hotel.

The area also includes the Majjistral Nature and History Park, which was declared as a national park by the Government in 2007. The Park incorporates part of the protected coastal cliffs of the North West of Malta, which now form part of the list of Natura 2000 sites of international importance. The Majjistral Park contains a number of historical and archaeological sites that have been identified in studies commissioned by the Malta Tourism Authority. Farming, as well as outdoor activities such as horse riding and walking, feature in the park, which also includes Golden Sands beach. The Park is managed by a federation of 3 NGO's involved in coastal management, cultural restoration and environmental protection.

Mellieħa was also the first Maltese locality to be selected as a European Destination of Excellence (EDEN) in 2009. This is a project promoting sustainable tourism development models across the European Union and is based on national competitions that take place every year. The 2009 theme focused on "Tourism and Protected Areas" and initiatives undertaken by this locality included:

- the enhancement of the natural environment and landscaping of the area;
- the protection and preservation of architectural and archaeological features;
- further development of local competences in the area of agriculture, animal husbandry and the production of typical local products and food;
- coordination of local farmers, volunteers and members of the community to cooperate on a common project;
- initiatives to enable farmers to return abandoned fields to agricultural use;
- enabling locals and visitors to learn of resources through direct contact with the area.

Mġarr

Mġarr is the larger urban settlement located within the boundaries of Mġarr Local Council. It is predominantly residential in character but has a thriving business centre focused around the main church. The village serves a dual role of a service centre, especially for convenience shopping, for the local communities of Mġarr and Żebbiegħ and the surrounding rural hamlets and also as a focal point for the visitors to the countryside and the coast to the west, especially during weekends. Restaurants in or near the main square of Mġarr attract customers from across the island and the playground in the same square also attracts visitors from the larger urban areas.

The immediate countryside around Mġarr contains archaeological remains of considerable importance such as Ta' Hāgrat and Sqorba Temples which could serve as a major attraction if well preserved and adequately presented to the visitor.

Żebbiegħ is a smaller settlement a few hundred metres away from Mġarr. It is characterised by the older part of the village to the east, with dwellings dispersed over a larger area giving low densities and substantial infill vacant land, and the Government housing to the west made up of terraced houses and flats. A small centre of shops linked with a football ground and a children's play area give identity to the estate.

Ġnejna Bay, one of six protected beaches in Malta, is an enclosed secluded bay with a popular sandy beach, and two small valleys descending to it.

The Mġarr Local Council is very active in organizing cultural activities all year round. Some of the most popular activities include the Festa Frawli (3rd or 4th week of April), which celebrates the renowned quality and unique taste of the Mġarr strawberries, and the Lejla Mġarrija (1st Sunday or 2nd Sunday in August), which features Mġarr's cultural heritage as numerous agricultural, fishing and traditional crafts exhibitions. Other activities organised throughout the year include:

Ġieh Mġarr – 1st or 2nd Sunday of February

American Car Exhibition and Fenkata – 1st or 2nd Friday in August where all restaurants in the parish square are given the concession to set up tables and chairs outside the restaurant and promote the traditional rabbit dish. In the meantime, they will admire a number of American cars which are exhibited opposite the church.

Feast of the Assumption – first Sunday after the 15th August.

In Mġarr there are a number of companies selling traditional Maltese products such as sun-dried tomatoes, oil, basil and vinegar.

Mtarfa

Mtarfa is a local service centre in terms of population size, but it also provides major community services such as a secondary school, which serves the wider region, a sizeable home for the elderly, a centre for persons with disability and a respite home all of which cater for persons outside of Mtarfa, and generate extraneous traffic and parking. It is also in the immediate proximity of Rabat and until very recently did not have its own Local Council, but formed part of the administrative boundaries of Rabat.

Prehistoric remains have been discovered in Mtarfa, including silos, cart ruts and rock-hewn tombs. For several years Mtarfa remained as a fertile land jutting out in between "Qlejgha" and Busbies

Valleys. This is reflected in the urban form and street pattern of the western part of the town, which demonstrates a predominantly rural character with a scatter of traditional farmhouses and rural buildings, now intermingled with more modern, sometimes incongruent, constructions and land uses such as large garages for industrial activities and plant yards.

During the British period considerable development occurred at Mtarfa which commenced in the late nineteenth century with the military barracks (now converted into residential units) and the Mtarfa landmark – the Clock Tower - and continued in the early twentieth century with the construction of the hospital, currently utilised as a secondary school, and its ancillary facilities some of which lie derelict like the Dispensary and the Sisters Quarters. The architectural style and site layouts of the period are still evident but considerable alterations have been made to the buildings to enable their re-use for other purposes.

Over the past 15 years Mtarfa has once again witnessed extensive development, and a consequent growth in population, as the implementation of the Mtarfa New Town project began in the early 1990s. This project was undertaken by the public sector and aimed primarily at the provision of social housing. It included a community centre, which is currently increasing in activity with the occupation of the building by shops, Local Council offices, and police station and the construction of a pastoral centre.

The New Town project had significant impacts on the skyline of Mtarfa and on views of the town from Mdina and from the surrounding countryside, especially due to the heights of the new housing blocks. Nonetheless, the clock tower remains a dominant landmark and the landscaped belt is still intact retaining the characteristic view of Mtarfa of buildings within a landscaped setting.

Naxxar

The Naxxar Local Council includes the settlements of Magħtab and Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq. It is also the only locality with coastal access from Għallis to Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq. Naxxar is bound to the west by Mosta and to the east by Għargħur and constitutes an important outer settlement whose urban area has grown over the last decades to the extent that it has joined up with Mosta.

The rate of urban expansion of Naxxar had accelerated in the 1970's and 1980's due to the development of large villa and new terraced house areas. The population of Naxxar has increased by 4,320 persons between 1985 and 1998. In comparison this is more than twice the population of Għargħur. The most significant increase has resulted in the child population from 1,562 in 1985 to 2,543 in 1995. The number of economically active people has increased from 4,244 in 1985 to 6,353 in 1995. There was a slight fall in the proportion of elderly persons with 7.8% of the population being over 65 in 1985 and 7.2% in 1998, a fall of 0.6 percentage points.

Naxxar includes significant rural areas such as the area known as “Ta’ Alla w Ommu” and the “Magħtab area” to the east of “Ta’ Alla w Ommu” Road. “Ta’ Alla w Ommu” lies within the broad plain of Għajn Rihana overlooked on the south by the Victoria Lines and the Mosta Fort. This area also includes a large quarry complex cut into the escarpment beside the valley.

Until its recent closure, the Magħtab Landfill was the largest landfill in the Maltese Islands and resulted in various environmental problems. Agricultural production and efficiency were being impeded by problems of pollution at Magħtab. Furthermore its close proximity to the major tourism area of St. Paul's Bay may have negatively impacted the tourism in the area. Following the closure of the Magħtab landfill, the Għallis Waste Management Complex has been developed in close proximity to the previous site. MEPA has recently given the go-ahead for the development of an

enterprise park for small and medium sized enterprises in Burmarrad, at the bottom of “T’Alla w Ommu” hill.

Apart from the coastal area and Magħtab, Naxxar is highly built-up. A significant section of the coast road passes through this area. To increase its use and safety, this road is being improved through the EU TEN-T programme. Government intends to upgrade the road by undertaking on-line improvements rather than construct a totally new road which would have to pass over the Magħtab landfill site.

Rabat

Rabat is the major residential centre in the west of Malta. It provides community and commercial facilities for surrounding towns and villages such as Mdina, Mtarfa, Bahrija and Dingli. In this respect there is a distinct commercial area centred on the main square, which spreads out along the more important access roads. The majority of retailers are of a small to medium scale mainly catering for the local use. Dispersal of these activities along the access routes is contributing to congestion and pollution in the area’s narrow streets.

Rabat is unique in terms of the wealth of historically and archaeologically important sites, various monastic complexes, churches and early Christian rock cut tombs. These sites attract large volumes of day visitors, mostly foreigners. A major issue is how to develop Rabat’s tourism potential as a historic attraction without compromising the historic integrity of the area and minimising the impacts (traffic, congestion, air and noise pollution) such development would bring upon the community.

Rabat also includes several piazzas with particular character that further enhance the quality of the historic area. Certain restrictions to future redevelopment due to the presence of underground archaeological remains dictate to a large extent what can be built.

The resident population of Rabat has shown a slow increase over the period 1985-95. This is attributed mainly to the establishment of Housing Estates in the area. There is also a marked increase in the percentage of middle to old age section of the population. Although access to shops and services is relatively good, the slowly ageing population will continue to put a strain on particular services. Future demand for health care facilities and the pressing need to facilitate better access for the elderly over the coming years is an important issue in the area.

Bahrija is a small, relatively isolated, residential settlement to the north-west of Rabat surrounded by open countryside of high landscape, ecological and archaeological value, most of which has been scheduled. Most of the buildings are one or two-storey terraced houses but recent buildings have been constructed on three floors as maisonettes and flats reflecting the increasing development pressures on this small settlement. The village has a main church and a small historic chapel, its own primary school and is also served by the basic retail facilities such as a grocer, butcher, stationer and ironmonger.

Bahrija village is associated mostly with an autumn religious activity of St. Martin and during this period attracts large numbers of visitors. Bahrija is also visited during the autumn and winter season due to the attraction of the surrounding countryside and nearby coastal cliffs. Supporting the function of a visitor attraction are bars and restaurants located in close proximity which are famous across the island for serving traditional dishes.

The location known as Il-Buskett, a special area of conservation of international importance forming part of the Natura 2000 network, lies 1.8 km due south of Rabat and 1 km to the east of Dingli and is approximately 1.13km² in area. During the late 16th century a large fortified palace (Verdala) was built on the northern flank above the valley. During this period intensive efforts were made to afforest the valley slopes, and these gradually developed into Malta's largest semi-natural woodland. Much of the present day layout dates back to the 17th century, when orchards were planted and were supported by an irrigation system. Vineyards and conifers were planted on the hillside terraces, and a number of ponds were constructed. Buskett hosts an annual event with an agricultural theme on the feast of St. Paul and St. Peter locally known as "L-Imnarja".

The Chadwick Lakes include a number of artificial lakes filled with run-off rain water from nearby fields. These lakes fall within the boundaries of Rabat, even though they pass through other localities such as Mtarfa and Mosta.

Sigġiewi

The area of Sigġiewi includes the village and the countryside on the north, west and east of this settlement. The village lies on a ridge bounded to the north by the steeply-sloped Hesri valley, to the east by Wied ix-Xkora, including a conspicuous network of active soft-stone (globigerina limestone) quarries, and to the west by the gentle slopes preceding the Laferla ridge (popularly known as is-Salib tal-Gholja) and Ta' Żuta/ Girgenti area. The western rural countryside of Sigġiewi includes Għar Lapsi, a quarry and the Reverse Osmosis plant. Għar Lapsi is situated on the coast to the south-west of Sigġiewi and is used mainly by local people as a recreational facility. The area includes the cluster of buildings in Għar Lapsi and the Reverse Osmosis Plant.

The predominantly young to middle-aged population of Sigġiewi has increased by 11% between 1995 and 2005. This significant population growth may be attributed largely to a continuous gentrification process (i.e. individuals with higher-income earnings taking up residence in the historic core of the village) and movement of a number of families largely coming from Żebbuġ, other nearby localities and Cottonera families populating the newer housing estate at Tal-Hesri. Sigġiewi is considered a high growth area in terms of population.

Sigġiewi still retains its traditional village identity with a prevailing residential character consisting of a good number of large townhouses and their private gardens within the historic core area, and uninterrupted rows of terraced houses neatly arranged along wide schemed streets.

The retail area is situated primarily around the 17th century parish church and St.Nicholas 'piazza'. Most of the remaining vacant plots are located within streets south of the parish piazza in the area known as Ta' Blat il-Qamar. Sigġiewi is very much short of urban green open spaces considering its physical size, although the main piazza in front of the church is a popular meeting place.

In the rural part of Sigġiewi the main concern has been the proliferation of quarrying activity and construction related operations which have scarred the rural landscape and valleys (e.g. Wied Xkora - Wied Hanzir - Wied Sillani system and Wied Ta' Kandja). The rehabilitation of this landscape once quarrying activities cease is important. The possible reuse of restored quarries for specific uses compatible with the surrounding area and to satisfy specific demands also needs to be identified.

St Paul's Bay

St. Paul's Bay includes the urban areas of St. Paul's Bay, Buġibba, Qawra, Burmarrad and Xemxija and substantial areas of countryside of high scenic and agricultural value. The area is intensively used for tourism, entertainment and recreation.

St. Paul's Bay, Buġibba and the Qawra area are considered a focal point for the location of entertainment and tourism facilities. St. Paul's Bay council area accounts for around 33% of the national tourist accommodation together with more than 900 self-catering apartment blocks⁶. There are also a significant number of unlicensed self-catering accommodations used as summer / holiday residences by the Maltese. This accounts for an estimated additional 7,000 beds. The area also hosts hundreds of restaurants and bars dispersed throughout the Qawra and Buġibba area, which attract large numbers of pedestrian and vehicular movements and generate activities during the night and early hours of the morning, especially in the summer season. The concentration of entertainment and tourism facilities is significantly less in St. Paul's Bay.

Burmarrad is an urban settlement on the road from Mosta to St. Paul's Bay. The settlement is basically a stretch of 700m of residential development with an element of business activity along Triq Burmarrad. Over the recent past a number of relatively large showrooms have been granted development permissions but some are still in shell form and unutilised. At peak hours, vehicle congestion at Burmarrad is a frequent occurrence, caused by commercial activities, parked cars and vehicles negotiating into or out of the main road. Additional industrial and commercial development on the outskirts of the village also generates traffic problems.

Wardija is a hill with dispersed residential developments as well as a number of archaeological sites and six chapels dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, St. Simon, St. George, Our Lady of Grace, St. John the Baptist and Our Lady of the Forsaken. These chapels were built by the noble families that owned the land to provide a place of worship for the farmers that worked their land. The area can also boast of a school which caters for students with a variety of special needs and multi-disabilities.

Xemxija is a small seaside settlement on the northern coast and is physically separated from the main urban area of St. Paul's Bay by the Pwales Valley. The area is dominated by high blocks and is used mostly for residential purposes. The area includes a few bars and restaurants along the main road leading to Xemxija hill. Is-Simar bird sanctuary is located in the vicinity of Xemxija.

The local council and various voluntary organisations are actively involved in the organisation of a number of entertainment / cultural activities throughout the year including:

- Carnival Parades and Competitions in Buġibba and St Paul's Bay Centre during the month of February;
- Wardijafest: A traditional food feast, band marches and various Take-Away food stalls during the month of April
- 1st May Sports Day: Cycling and Fun Runs.
- Lejla Pawlina: Traditional Maltese food and talent show during the month of July
- Feast of our Lady of Sorrows, end of July
- Fishing Competition organised together with Għaqda Sajjieda Dilettanti during the month of August. Fish caught during this competition are auctioned in aid of charity.

⁶ MEPA (2006), *North West Area Policies*

- Festa tal-Bdiewa, Burmarrad (October): Local talent show, traditional food, bingo, vegetable and flower exhibitions, agriculture exhibitions and cake, beer drinking, wine tasting and sports competitions and blessing of pets and animals.
- Christmas: Local Band Parades in Qawra, Buġibba area to entertain tourists..

Apart from the above mentioned activities, all different Parish Churches of the Saint Paul's Bay area organise activities and feasts.

.4 Socio-economic profile

The following section provides a brief description of the socio-economic profile of the MAG territory.

.4.1 Education and employment

Data presented in the 2005 Census indicates a level of literacy of the territory which is marginally higher than the Maltese average. While the literacy rates for the whole island stands at 92.8%, in the West the rate is 93.4% while in the Northern district this is even higher at 95.5%.

The following table provides details of the highest educational levels attained in Malta and the North-West districts. Compared to the national average, there was a higher proportion of residents that completed tertiary, non-tertiary and post-secondary education, but a lower percentage of residents who finished till primary education their education at the primary level.

Table 8: Highest educational level achieved

| | Total | No schooling | Special disability schools | Pre-primary | Primary | Secondary | Post-secondary | Non-tertiary | Tertiary |
|-----------------------|--------|--------------|----------------------------|-------------|---------|-----------|----------------|--------------|----------|
| Malta-Gozo | 335476 | 8101 | 925 | 1414 | 85640 | 151844 | 46371 | 9017 | 32164 |
| Western | 46849 | 1294 | 143 | 185 | 11051 | 20056 | 7032 | 1438 | 5650 |
| Northern | 46024 | 707 | 114 | 119 | 9826 | 20634 | 7721 | 1635 | 5268 |
| North-West | 92873 | 2001 | 257 | 304 | 20877 | 40690 | 14753 | 3073 | 10918 |
| Per cent – North-West | | 2.2% | 0.3% | 0.3% | 22.5% | 43.8% | 15.9% | 3.3% | 11.8% |
| Per cent – Malta | | 2.4% | 0.3% | 0.4% | 25.5% | 45.3% | 13.8% | 2.7% | 9.6% |

Source: NSO (2007), Census of Population and Housing 2005 – Vol.1: Population

The employment status of the inhabitants of the North-West district is analysed in Table 9 below. In the latest population census, 49% of the North-West population declared they were employed (46% for Malta as a whole), another 49% were inactive (51% for Malta) while 2% declared they were currently unemployed (3% for Malta). About two-thirds of males had a job while two-thirds of females were inactive, possibly housewives or pensioners. According to the same source, 82% were employees, 7% self-employed with employees while the remaining 11% self-employed without employees.

Table 9: Employment status in Western and Northern District

| Status | North-West district | | |
|------------|---------------------|---------|-------|
| | Males | Females | Total |
| Employed | 30408 | 14982 | 45390 |
| Unemployed | 1341 | 895 | 2236 |
| Inactive | 14012 | 31235 | 45247 |
| Total | 45761 | 47112 | 92873 |

Note: Apart from the 13 localities making up the Majjistral, figures in the table above include also Żebbuġ, Balzan and Mosta

Source: NSO (2007), Census of Population and Housing 2005 – Vol.1: Population

In terms of the type of occupation of the inhabitants of this territory, about 16% were service workers and shop/ sales workers. Another 16% were technicians and associate professionals. Another 14% were professionals while 10% were legislators, senior officials and managers. The full list is provided in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Main occupation of population aged 15 years and over

| Occupation | Malta-Gozo | Western | Northern | North-West |
|--|------------|---------|----------|------------|
| Armed Forces | 1532 | 149 | 193 | 342 |
| Legislators, senior officials and managers | 12350 | 1971 | 2428 | 4399 |
| Professionals | 18001 | 3397 | 2951 | 6348 |
| Technicians and associate professionals | 22562 | 3598 | 3611 | 7209 |
| Clerks | 19206 | 2660 | 2817 | 5477 |
| Service workers and shop and sales workers | 25066 | 3340 | 4012 | 7352 |
| Skilled agricultural and fishery workers | 2320 | 445 | 589 | 1034 |
| Craft and related trades workers | 20828 | 2800 | 2919 | 5719 |
| Plant and machine operators and assemblers | 13973 | 1853 | 1454 | 3307 |
| Elementary Occupations | 17647 | 2356 | 1846 | 4202 |
| Total | 153483 | 22570 | 22820 | 45390 |

Source: NSO (2007), Census of Population and Housing 2005 – Vol.1: Population

Table 11 below presents the economic activity of the occupations held by the residents of the North-West region compared to the national average. About 16% work in the wholesale and retail trade, 14% in manufacturing while 10% in hotels and restaurants. Another 9% work in education while 8% work in health and social work. It is interesting to note that circa 50% of those employed in agriculture, hunting and forestry in Malta and Gozo are located within this area.

Table 11: Economic activity in main job of population aged 15 years and over

| Occupation | Malta-Gozo | Western | Northern | North-West |
|---|---------------|---------|----------|--------------|
| Agriculture, hunting and forestry | 2249 (1.5%) | 520 | 571 | 1091 (2.4%) |
| Fishing | 429 (0.3%) | 22 | 79 | 101 (0.2%) |
| Mining and quarrying | 674 (0.4%) | 114 | 172 | 286 (0.6%) |
| Manufacturing | 26201 (17.1%) | 3597 | 2864 | 6461 (14.2%) |
| Electricity, gas and water supply | 3118 (2.0%) | 498 | 320 | 818 (1.8%) |
| Construction | 11003 (7.2%) | 1547 | 1641 | 3188 (7.0%) |
| Wholesale and retail trade | 24474 (15.9%) | 3442 | 3680 | 7122 (15.7%) |
| Hotels and restaurants | 12724 (8.3%) | 1561 | 2976 | 4537 (10.0%) |
| Transport, storage and communications | 11953 (7.8%) | 1753 | 1657 | 3410 (7.5%) |
| Financial intermediation | 5564 (3.6%) | 948 | 894 | 1842 (4.1%) |
| Real estate, renting and business activities | 10406 (6.8%) | 1511 | 1725 | 3236 (7.1%) |
| Public admin, and defence; social security | 13101 (8.5%) | 1840 | 1632 | 3472 (7.6%) |
| Education | 13092 (8.5%) | 2212 | 1927 | 4139 (9.1%) |
| Health and social work | 11360 (7.4%) | 2094 | 1535 | 3629 (8.0%) |
| Other community, social and personal service activities | 6563 (4.3%) | 820 | 1043 | 1863 (4.1%) |
| Private households with employed persons | 163 (0.1%) | 24 | 32 | 56 (0.1%) |
| Extra-territorial organisations and bodies | 407 (0.3%) | 65 | 73 | 138 (0.3%) |
| Total | 153483 | 22570 | 22820 | 45390 |

Source: NSO (2007), Census of Population and Housing 2005 – Vol.1: Population

Compared to the national average, in the Majjistral area there is a higher proportion of residents that completed tertiary and post-secondary education.

In the 2005 Census, about half of the North-West population declared they were employed. About two-thirds of males had a job while two-thirds of females were inactive. The majority (about 80%) were employees while about 20% were self-employed.

The main economic activities of the Majjistral employed inhabitants relate to wholesale and retail trade, manufacturing and hotels and restaurants. Almost half of those employed in agriculture, hunting and forestry in Malta and Gozo are located within this area.

.4.2 Level of dependency

The age composition of the territory population under question will have an effect on the needs identified for this area. Table 12 below presents the dependency ratios of the thirteen localities making up the MAG territory. The dependency ratio is defined as the number of people aged 0 to 14 and 65 and over, divided by the number of people aged 15 to 64. This ratio gives an indication of the proportion of young people and elderly people living in the area.

The national average stands at 44.7%, while the average for the territory is 45.1%. Mdina has the highest dependency ratio (71.6%), followed by Mtarfa (53.9%), Rabat (48.9%) and Mgarr (48.8%). The localities with the lowest dependency ratios were Iklin, Gharghur and Siggiewi (all below 40%).

| Locality | Per cent |
|----------------|----------|
| Malta and Gozo | 44.7 |
| Attard | 40.5 |
| Dingli | 41.0 |
| Gharghur | 37.2 |
| Iklin | 34.8 |
| Lija | 42.1 |
| Mdina | 71.6 |
| Mellieħa | 44.1 |
| Mgarr | 48.8 |
| Mtarfa | 53.9 |
| Naxxar | 42.1 |
| Rabat | 48.9 |
| Siggiewi | 39.4 |
| St Paul's Bay | 41.9 |

Source: NSO (2007), Census of Population and Housing 2005 – Vol.1: Population

As mentioned in Section 1.2.2, 16% of the total Majjistral population is over 60 years old while in Malta this percentage stands at 19%. The table below presents the number of persons in institutional households in the territory. About 36% of the population in institutional households comes from the North-West region.

| | Total | | Males | | Females | |
|------------|--------|----------|--------|----------|---------|----------|
| | Number | Per cent | Number | Per cent | Number | Per cent |
| Western | 1,562 | 100.0 | 568 | 36.4 | 994 | 63.6 |
| Northern | 702 | 100.0 | 220 | 31.3 | 482 | 68.7 |
| North-West | 2,264 | 100 | 788 | 34.8 | 1,476 | 65.2 |
| Malta-Gozo | 6,347 | 100.0 | 2,296 | 36.2 | 4,051 | 63.8 |

Source: NSO (2007), Census of Population and Housing 2005 – Vol.1: Population

The territory includes a number of old people's homes and day centres, including⁷:

- Elderly home in Mellieħa, run through a public-private partnership
- Mtarfa home for the elderly and Mtarfa day centre, run by government
- Dingli day centre, run by government
- St. Paul's Bay day centre, run by government
- Naxxar day centre, run by government

⁷ Government residential homes for the elderly obtained from <https://ehealth.gov.mt/download.aspx?id=141>. Government day centres obtained from <https://ehealth.gov.mt/download.aspx?id=114>.

In total in Malta there are 9 government residential homes for the elderly (including St. Vincent de Paule) and 16 day centres for the elderly. The area also includes a number of elderly homes which are run by the private sector and / or church. Local Councils also play an important role in the running of the day centres.

The following table presents a breakdown of the household size of the North-West district compared with the national breakdown. One-quarter of households comprise 2 members, another quarter 3 members while a third quarter 4 members. One-person households make up 16% of the North-West households while the remaining 11% have 5 or more members per household.

| | Total | One-person household | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+ |
|------------|--------|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-----|-----|----|-----|
| Malta-Gozo | 139583 | 26410 | 35869 | 30717 | 30809 | 11298 | 3323 | 804 | 236 | 70 | 47 |
| Percentage | | 19% | 26% | 22% | 22% | 8% | 2% | 1% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Western | 18151 | 2492 | 4360 | 4175 | 4728 | 1769 | 488 | 90 | 34 | 7 | 8 |
| Northern | 19864 | 3739 | 5058 | 4490 | 4461 | 1577 | 413 | 87 | 28 | 6 | 5 |
| North-West | 38015 | 6231 | 9418 | 8665 | 9189 | 3346 | 901 | 177 | 62 | 13 | 13 |
| Percentage | | 16% | 25% | 23% | 24% | 9% | 2% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

Source: NSO (2007), Census of Population and Housing 2005 – Vol.1: Population

According to the Ministry for Social Policy's register of childcare facilities, as at July 2009 there were a total of 43 childcare facilities in Malta. 9 of these were located in the MAG localities, including centres in⁸:

- Burmarrad
- Għargħur
- Zebbiegh
- Mġarr
- Naxxar
- Attard (two)
- Mellieħa (two)

⁸ <http://mfss.gov.mt/services/subpages/content.asp?id=2111>

.4.3 Gross domestic product (GDP)

Data on the GDP of the territory is not readily available. In fact the only official data available and published by the NSO in this regard relates to the GDP for Malta and Gozo. As can be seen from the next paragraphs there is generally limited data and statistics on the territory, both in terms of the number of businesses and operators located in the territory as well as the productivity of this territory compared to the rest of Malta.

| Table 15: Gross Domestic Product | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | 2004 €' million | 2005 €' million | 2006 €' million | 2007 €' million |
| Malta | 4232 | 4512 | 4794 | 5121 |
| Gozo | 266 | 282 | 298 | 315 |

Source: NSO Press Release 231/2008: Regional GDP 2004-2007

.4.4 Agricultural sector

One of the main characteristics of the MAG territory is the amount of rural area available. The area is characterised by fields used for producing crops and fruits as well as other agricultural produce. There are also a number of vineyards, including estates in Wardija, Wardija Valley, Għajn Riġana, Burmarrad, Ta' Qali and Girgenti, among others⁹. The following table provides details of the Maltese land area split by agricultural use.

| Table 16: Land Area by district, locality and type | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----|---------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| District/ Locality | Total land declared by farmer (Ha) | Total agricultural land area (Ha) | | Irrigated land (Ha) | Dry land (Ha) | Garrigue Land (Ha) |
| Mdina | 14.192 | 13.039 | 92% | 0.112 | 12.927 | 1.153 |
| Sigġiewi | 926.475 | 845.605 | 91% | 81.460 | 764.145 | 80.870 |
| Attard | 140.482 | 132.182 | 94% | 19.530 | 112.652 | 8.300 |
| Dingli | 366.286 | 287.220 | 78% | 53.672 | 233.548 | 79.066 |
| Iklin | 22.484 | 21.514 | 96% | - | 21.514 | 0.970 |
| Lija | 40.570 | 39.549 | 97% | 3.773 | 35.776 | 1.021 |
| Rabat (Malta) | 1702.110 | 1412.060 | 83% | 179.570 | 1232.490 | 290.050 |
| Mtarfa | 56.574 | 54.260 | 96% | 13.445 | 40.815 | 2.314 |
| Għargħur | 100.499 | 87.588 | 87% | 2.820 | 84.768 | 12.911 |
| Mellieħa | 562.929 | 457.971 | 81% | 182.793 | 275.179 | 104.957 |
| Mġarr (Malta) | 742.573 | 637.467 | 86% | 113.735 | 523.732 | 105.106 |
| Naxxar | 319.085 | 286.008 | 90% | 26.903 | 259.105 | 33.077 |
| San Pawl il-Baħar | 628.458 | 560.149 | 89% | 208.929 | 351.220 | 68.309 |
| Total Majjistral | 5622.717 | 4834.612 | 86% | 886.742 | 3947.871 | 788.104 |

Source: NSO Census of Agriculture, 2001

Producers of typical Maltese agricultural produce, including olive oil, sun-dried tomatoes, honey, are very popular in Mġarr, Wardija and the Pitkali area in Ta' Qali. Farmers' organizations are also found in Żebbiegħ and Mġarr. Agri-tourism is still relatively new to the area, though there are a number of opportunities available in the territory. According to the NSO 2001 Census of Agriculture, the North-West district has about 70% of the total registered farmers (1005).

Agricultural activities tend to impinge on a number of scarce resources including but not limited to land, groundwater and air quality / climate change (due to the increased use of pesticides).

⁹ www.marsovin.com, www.delicata.com, www.camilleriwines.com, www.meridiana.com.mt

The SOER 2005 Land use sub-report notes that “certain agricultural activities also have environmental impacts related to pollution of soil, water and air, fragmentation of natural habitats and loss of wildlife, land abandonment and loss of soil, land use intensification and improper use of agricultural chemicals.” The report goes on to state that “the most critical land-related agro-environmental issues relate to the abandonment of agricultural land, farm intensification and fragmentation of land ownership”.

Use of various pesticides, fertilisers and other techniques also have an impact on the ecosystem. Organic farming, which favours renewable resources and recycling, respecting natural pest and disease control is still in its infancy. According to the MEPA State of the Environment Indicators 2007 “as at end 2007 there were 12 certified producers of organic products in the Maltese Islands, covering 17.3 hectares, representing 0.17% of Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA) and 0.15% of total agricultural land. It is estimated that 40% of this land is used for the production of olives, 23% for the production of fruit and berries, 12% for the production of vegetables, melons and strawberries and 10% for the production of grapes”. Information on the area occupied by organic farming activities in the MAG area is not available.

As noted earlier, agricultural activities impinge on water resources. Table 17 below presents the number of registered boreholes/ notifications for boreholes as at 2008. About 40% of the boreholes in Malta emanated from the Majjistral territory, with the localities having the most boreholes being Siġġiewi, Rabat and St. Paul’s Bay.

| Table 17: Boreholes registrations/ notifications | | | |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Locality | 1997 Registrations | 2008 Notifications | Total number of boreholes |
| Attard | 36 | 55 | 91 |
| Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Baħrija | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Buġibba | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Burmarrad | 0 | 24 | 24 |
| Dingli | 267 | 28 | 295 |
| Ghadira | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Għajn Tuffieħa | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Grġhur | 14 | 32 | 46 |
| Iklin | 3 | 24 | 27 |
| Lija | 12 | 17 | 29 |
| Maġħtab | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Manikata | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Mdina | 14 | 3 | 17 |
| Mellieħa | 393 | 101 | 494 |
| Mġarr | 225 | 101 | 326 |
| Mtarfa | 33 | 7 | 40 |
| Naxxar | 185 | 108 | 293 |
| Qawra | 0 | 8 | 8 |
| Rabat, Malta | 987 | 205 | 1192 |
| San Pawl Tat-Tarġa | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Siġġiewi | 168 | 216 | 384 |
| St. Paul's Bay | 353 | 118 | 471 |
| Ta' Qali | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Wardija | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Żebbiegħ | 0 | 4 | 4 |

| | | | |
|------------------------|------|------|------|
| | | | |
| Total – MAG | 2690 | 1075 | 3765 |
| Total - Malta and Gozo | 5340 | 2643 | 7983 |

Source: Malta Resources Authority

The area also houses a significant number of livestock farms. The following table presents information on the livestock holdings and relative population in the North-West district. The area has almost half of the pig farms of the Maltese Islands, a quarter of the cattle farms and goat holdings and a third of the sheep holdings of Malta. These farms place significant pressures (e.g. waste) on the area and may in certain cases have a negative impact on the overall attractiveness of the area as well as resulting in certain environmental pressures.

Table 18: Livestock holdings and population in Western and Northern District – 2007

| Population | North-West district | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------|------------|
| | North-West district | Malta | Percentage |
| Pig farms | 66 | 152 | 43% |
| Pig population | 42049 | 76900 | 55% |
| Cattle farms | 103 | 394 | 26% |
| Cattle population | 4193 | 19442 | 22% |
| Sheep holdings | 457 | 1467 | 31% |
| Sheep population | 4080 | 12315 | 33% |
| Goat holdings | 209 | 851 | 25% |
| Goat population | 1855 | 6227 | 30% |

Note: Apart from the 13 localities making up the Majjistral, the figures in the table above include also Zebbug, Balzan and Mosta

Source: NSO (2008), Agriculture and Fisheries 2007

The MAG territory is characterised by a significant rural area, used mainly for agricultural purposes. About 85% of the land declared by farmers is used for agricultural purposes. The area also includes a significant number of livestock farms. Agricultural activities tend to impinge on a number of scarce resources including but not limited to land, groundwater and air quality / climate change (due to the increased use of pesticides).

About 40% of the boreholes in Malta were registered in the Majjistral territory.

.4.5

Tourism

The territory contains relatively modern holiday settlements and can be considered as a major player in local tourism. According to the Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association's (MHRA) register of tourist establishments, the area has a high concentration of 4- and 3-star establishments, while there are only three 5-star hotels (out of fifteen in the whole of Malta and Gozo), one situated in Ghajn Tuffieha, one in Attard and another one in Mdina. The following table provides details of the concentration of tourist establishments in the territory.

Table 19: Concentration of tourist establishments

| | 5-star | 4-star | 3-star | 2-star | Guest houses and hostels |
|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------------------------|
| Total in territory | 3 | 21 | 11 | 0 | 3 |
| Total in Malta-Gozo | 15 | 38 | 29 | 3 | 9 |
| Percentage | 20.0 | 55.3 | 37.9 | 0.0 | 33.3 |

Source: MHRA

The following table provides information on the number of units and corresponding beds in those MAG localities that have hotels, aparthotels, guest houses and/ or hostels.

Table 20: Accommodation capacity by locality, 31 December 2008

| | Hotels | | Aparthotels | | Guest houses | | Hostels | | Total | |
|----------------|--------|-------|-------------|------|--------------|------|---------|------|-------|-------|
| | Units | Beds | Units | Beds | Units | Beds | Units | Beds | Units | Beds |
| Attard | 1 | 316 | | | | | | | 1 | 316 |
| Mdina | 1 | 34 | | | | | | | 1 | 34 |
| Mellieħa | 10 | 3907 | 3 | 1054 | 1 | 20 | | | 14 | 4981 |
| Rabat | | | 1 | 36 | 2 | 38 | | | 3 | 74 |
| St. Paul's Bay | 26 | 9624 | 16 | 2230 | 4 | 133 | | | 46 | 11987 |
| Total | 38 | 13881 | 20 | 3320 | 7 | 191 | 0 | 0 | 65 | 17392 |

Source: Malta Tourism Authority

The above data clearly shows that the area tends to have a large concentration of 4-star and 3-star hotels. In addition, the table below shows that the occupancy and the average room rate achieved by these hotels tend to be below those achieved by hotels in the central area (such as Sliema).

Table 21: Regional analysis of tourism establishments

| | Sliema | | Mellieħa | | Bugibba | |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|----------|--------|---------|--------|
| | 4-star | 3-star | 4-star | 3-star | 4-star | 3-star |
| Occupancy | 51.12% | 45.78% | 46.52% | n/a | 59.88% | 29.27% |
| Average Achieved Room Rate | €36.02 | €17.59 | €20.56 | n/a | €19.9 | €13.88 |

Source: BOV MHRA Report Q1 2009

The area is rich in cultural heritage and has a significant number of tourist attractions located across a number of localities. The following table provides information on the main localities visited by tourists according to the Malta Tourism Authority's (MTA) Market Profile Survey conducted with tourists originating from Malta's main source markets. Mdina was visited 72% of the times, St. Paul's Bay 56%, Mellieħa 44% and Dingli 29%.

Table 22: Localities visited (2005 - 2008)

| | Year 2005 | Year 2006 | Year 2007 | Year 2008 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Valletta | 90.2% | 90.7% | 91.6% | 91.7% |
| Mdina | 69.5% | 69.9% | 71.7% | 72.0% |
| Three Cities | 27.8% | 28.1% | 30.8% | 31.8% |
| Sliema | 64.6% | 64.1% | 64.1% | 64.0% |
| St Paul's Bay | 57.8% | 57.1% | 57.0% | 55.8% |
| St Julians | 45.5% | 45.9% | 45.4% | 44.5% |
| Marsaxlokk | 43.0% | 42.9% | 44.6% | 43.6% |
| Mellieħa | 42.5% | 42.7% | 44.0% | 44.0% |
| Wied iż-Żurrieq | 32.4% | 33.0% | 31.6% | 31.2% |
| Marsascula | 17.4% | 16.7% | 18.2% | 15.2% |
| Dingli | 25.8% | 27.2% | 30.1% | 29.0% |
| Paceville | 19.0% | 18.8% | 19.7% | 20.1% |
| | | | | |
| Total Tourists Visiting Malta | 1170608 | 1124235 | 1243510 | 1290856 |

Source: MTA Market Profile Surveys

Table 23 below provides the number of visitors to Heritage Malta sites and attractions. A number of attractions are in the Majjistral territory, including the Domus Romana (Roman Villa), the National Museum of Natural History and St Paul's Catacombs, among others.

| Table 23: Visitor numbers in Heritage Malta sites and attractions (2007) | |
|--|----------------|
| Calendar Yr 2007 | Total Visitors |
| | |
| Ghar Dalam Cave & Museum | 56,327 |
| Haġar Qim Temples | 77,987 |
| Hal Saflieni Hypogeum | 25,753 |
| Inquisitor's Palace | 33,501 |
| Mnajdra Temples | 35,536 |
| Malta Maritime Museum | 18,975 |
| Domvs Romana | 25,780 |
| National Museum of Archaeology | 152,655 |
| National Museum of Fine Arts | 18,941 |
| National Museum of Natural History | 16,927 |
| National War Museum | 53,408 |
| Palace Armoury | 78,265 |
| St Paul's Catacombs | 76,308 |
| State Rooms | 159,999 |
| Tarxien Temples | 115,512 |
| Folklore Museum | 9,701 |
| Ġgantija Temples | 165,736 |
| Museum of Archaeology | 13,180 |
| Natural Science Museum | 7,998 |
| Ta' Kola Windmill | 7,366 |
| The Old Prisons | 15,698 |
| Xagħra Stone Circle | 5 |
| Borg in-Nadur | 0 |
| Salina Catacombs | 0 |
| San Pawl Milqi | 0 |
| Ta' Haġrat Temples | 0 |
| Tas-Silġ | 0 |
| Skorba Temples | 0 |
| Ta' Mintna Catacombs | 0 |
| Total visitors | 1,165,558 |

Source: MTA

The territory is also host to a few foreign language schools, including schools in Lija, Attard and St. Paul's Bay (3). Other attractions in the areas include the Popeye Village in Mellieħa, horse riding schools in Ghajn Tuffieħa and Magħtab area and a shooting range in Magħtab¹⁰. The area which is of tourist relevance is on average well serviced by public transport routes, even though the current network does not provide for a night service to all areas. However, certain smaller localities, such as Mġarr and Dingli, may not be serviced as adequately and improvements could be made.

The territory is a major player for local tourism and includes a number of holiday settlements, tourist establishments (mainly 4- and 3-star) and recreational/ historical/ cultural attractions.

.4.6

Construction and quarrying

According to MEPA's Minerals Subject Plan (2003), there are 28 hardstone quarries and 66 softstone quarries in Malta and Gozo, as well as other disused sites. Softstone quarries are generally found in the South of Malta, but there are a number of softstone quarries in Siggiewi. On the other hand, most hardstone quarries are found in the west and northwest coast of Malta and in central areas along Wied il-Għasel and Mosta/ Naxxar. The following table provides information on the hardstone quarries in the Majjistral territory:

| MAG locality | Number of Quarries | Total Area (m2) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Attard | 1 | 56760 |
| Mellieħa | 1 | 39140 |
| Mġarr | 2 | 60725 |
| Naxxar | 4 | 214953 |
| Rabat | 1 | 42770 |
| Siggiewi | 7 | 429280 |
| Total Licensed – MAG territory | 16 | 843628 |
| Total Licensed – Malta and Gozo | 28 | 1263211 |

Source: MEPA (2003), Minerals Subject Plan, pg. 26

Softstone quarries in the MAG territory are presented below:

| MAG locality | Number of Quarries | Total Area (m2) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Għargħur | 2 | 43755 |
| Iklin | 3 | 23728 |
| Siggiewi | 15 | 259077 |
| Total Licensed – MAG territory | 20 | 326560 |
| Total Licensed – Malta and Gozo | 66 | 1147934 |

Source: MEPA (2003), Minerals Subject Plan, pg. 21

Quarrying activity tends to have a negative impact on the landscape of the area and tends to result in a number of other environmental pressures including but not limited to noise and dust emissions.

More than half of the local hardstone quarries and 30% of the softstone quarries are found in the MAG territory.

¹⁰ List obtained from Yellow Pages

.4.7 Industry

The Majjistral territory is not considered a main industrial area when compared to other areas in Malta and Gozo. There are no industrial estates except for an area in Attard and the Crafts Village in Ta' Qali. Some of the major settlements of the territory have retail areas in the town centres. As noted earlier an SME/ micro-enterprise site has been approved in the Burmarrad area.

.4.8 Fisheries

Given that many of the locations making up the Majjistral territory are situated on the coastline, fishing remains an important economic activity of the area.

According to the NSO, in 2007 there were 268 registered fishing vessels in the West Area and 575 in the North Northeast area¹¹. In total, in 2007 there were 2678 registered fishing vessels in Malta and Gozo. The same source also lists the following recognised fishing ports in the MAG territory:

- Għar Lapsi
- Ġnejna
- Anchor Bay
- Marfa Point
- Marfa
- Ramla tal-Qortin
- Armier
- Little Armier
- Ramla tat-Torri
- Mellieħa Bay
- Mistra Bay
- St. Paul's Bay (il-fekruna)
- St. Paul's Bay (Xemxija)
- Il-Veċċa
- Tal-Għażżenin
- St. Paul's Bay (Il-Gillieru)
- Buġibba
- Qawra
- Salina
- Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq

A number of fish farms are also located in the area, especially to the North of the island, such as St. Paul's Bay.

The area is not a major industrial area. Agriculture and fishing remain an important economic activity for the area.

¹¹ Source: NSO (2008), Agriculture and Fisheries 2007. Different area classification is used in this statistic.

.5 Environmental profile

As noted in the previous paragraphs, the Majjistral area is characterised by:

- Significant rural area and associated coastline;
- A number of historical and cultural sites;
- Growing population, with annual increases above the national average; and
- Holiday settlements and various tourism and recreational activities.

All these activities result in various pressures on the area.

The State of the Environment Report 2005 (SOER) and the State of the Environment Indicators 2007 provide an overview of the principal pressures on the Maltese environment and the key challenges and issues in need of addressing. These reports have been used as the basis to obtain an understanding of the key environmental pressures faced by the Majjistral area.

.5.1 Biodiversity

The territory forming part of the north-west is rich in biodiversity and has a number of areas which have been designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) to protect habitats and species of national and international importance. The table below summarises the designated natural areas.

Table 26: Natural areas designated

| | Total (Malta & Gozo) | | Total (North-West) | |
|---|----------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|
| | Number | Area in sq km | Number | Area in sq km |
| Special Areas of Conservation ¹ | 32 | 17.352 | 12 | 7.287 |
| Special Areas of Conservation – Marine | 2 | 11.108 | 1 | 8.487 |
| Special protection area (including watercourse, marshland, freshwater wetland, sand dunes, garigue and coastal cliffs) ² | 12 | 14.36 | 5 | 8.36 |
| Area of ecological importance / site of scientific importance ³ | 97 | 26.726 | 41 | 13.16267 |
| Bird sanctuaries | 26 | | 10 | |
| Sites with historical trees having antiquarian importance | 6 | 0.1595 | 4 | 0.0795 |
| Nature reserves | 32 | | 15 | |
| Protected beaches ⁴ | 11 | 0.3144 | 6 | 0.1927 |

1 This excludes coastal areas covering circa 23.163 sq kilometres, which area transects various councils

2 Area includes Ras il-Pellegrin till Ix-Xaqqa, which spans various localities and may not all fall within the North-West region

3 This excludes coastal areas covering circa 23.338 sq kilometres, running from Mellieħa to Birżebbuġa

4 Protected beaches in Malta are located in Mellieħa and Mġarr. All other protected beaches are located in Gozo

Source: MEPA

The north-west includes areas such as Il-Buskett, is Simar, ix-Xagħra tal-Qortin, il Miżieb, is Salini, St. Paul's Island and Il-Ballut amongst others. All the protected beaches in Malta are located in the northwest and more specifically Mellieħa and Mġarr. Furthermore, the whole North-West coastline is protected under the Development Planning Act (DPA) / Environment Protection Act (EPA).

.5.2

Natura 2000 sites

Malta's 12 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) automatically form part of the Natura 2000 network. Of these 5 fall within the localities forming part of the MAG and include:

| Table 27: Natura 2000 sites | |
|--|---------------|
| Site Name | Area (sq. km) |
| Simar (l/o San Pawl il-Bahar) | 0.60 |
| L-Ghadira Area | 0.98 |
| Ramla Tat-Torri/ Rdum Tal-Madonna Area | 0.75 |
| Buskett – Girgenti | 2.25 |
| Rdumijiet ta' Malta: Ras il-Pellegrin sa l-Xaqqa | 3.78 |

Note: Data as at end 2007

Source: MEPA

Malta has proposed 26 terrestrial SACs and 1 marine SAC for inclusion in the Natura 2000 network. Of these 13 terrestrial and 1 marine site are located in the north west area. *Table 28* below summarises the proposed Natura 2000 sites located in the localities covered by the MAG.

| Table 28: Proposed Natura 2000 sites | |
|--|---------------|
| Site Name – Terrestrial | Area (sq. km) |
| Buskett – Girgenti | 2.25 |
| Il-Ballut tal-Wardija (l/o San Pawl il-Bahar) | 0.20 |
| Il-Gzejjer ta' San Pawl / Selmunett | 0.11 |
| Is-Salini | 0.24 |
| L-Ghadira Area | 0.98 |
| L-Ghadira s-Safra | 0.02 |
| L-Imgiebah / Tal-Mignuna Area | 1.76 |
| Ramla Tat-Torri / Rdum Tal-Madonna Area | 0.75 |
| Rdumijiet ta' Malta: Ir-Ramla tac-Cirkewwa till il-Ponta ta' Benghajsa | 23 |
| Simar (l/o San Pawl il-Bahar) | 0.58 |
| Wied il-Mizieb | 0.25 |
| Xaghra tal-Kortin | 0.13 |
| Site Name – Marine | |
| Rdum Majjiesa and Ras ir-Raheb | 8.49 |

Note: Data as at end 2007

Source: MEPA

The MAG territory also has a number of dedicated sites for hunting and bird trapping. These include the Mizieb and Tal-Aħrax site.

.5.3

Air Quality

Overall, as shown in the table below, the air quality in the region is considered to be above the average for Malta.

| Locality | Code | SO ₂ (µg/m ³) | NO ₂ (µg/m ³) | O ₃ (µg/m ³) | Benzene (µg/m ³) |
|--|------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Attard | ATT | 4.04 | 28.28 | 103.47 | 2.78 |
| Lija | LJA | 3.38 | 29.05 | 93.37 | 2.93 |
| Naxxar | NXR | 4.66 | 18.37 | 119.84 | 1.90 |
| Mgarr M | MGM | 5.04 | 14.73 | 115.70 | 1.93 |
| Bugibba | BUB | 4.20 | 20.31 | 113.24 | 2.20 |
| Siggiewi | SGG | 4.07 | 16.22 | 123.39 | 2.40 |
| Mellieha | MLH | 2.58 | 18.95 | 118.47 | 1.77 |
| Dingli | DGL | 2.38 | 12.73 | 120.37 | 1.96 |
| Rabat | RBT | 4.63 | 27.76 | 103.92 | 2.91 |
| Average for the region | | 3.89 | 20.71 | 112.42 | 2.31 |
| Average for Malta | | 5.45 | 25.42 | 102.25 | 2.66 |
| Average for the region as a % of Malta | | 71.25% | 81.47% | 109.95% | 86.76% |

Note: Data as at October 2007

Note: Information on Gharghur, Iklin and Mtarfa which form part of the territory is not available.

Source: MEPA Diffusion Tube Network

Ground level ozone of (O₃) in the area is significantly higher than the Malta average. The main sources of O₃ precursors are transport, followed by energy and industry however the majority of O₃ affecting Malta is of transfrontier origin. As noted in the State of the Environment Indicators 2007 “all localities and sites registering high O₃ concentrations are areas less affected by traffic. This can be explained by the fact that air pollutants in traffic-prone areas deplete O₃ by converting it into oxygen.”

.5.4

Water (including bathing water quality)

Water is an important scarce resource and is under intense pressures from competing users (including domestic and industrial users and agricultural activities). Information on water (including bathing water) in the MAG area is not available however, in its key messages, the SOER 2005 notes that

- “Malta’s groundwaters are seriously at risk from over exploitation and pollution, risking the loss of Malta’s only renewable freshwater resource. In 2004, nitrate levels at two thirds of WSC abstraction boreholes exceeded the Nitrate Directive trigger-value, while chloride levels in the mean sea level aquifer system indicate that abstraction boreholes are highly threatened by localised seawater intrusion.
- The large share of private water abstraction, estimated at 30 percent of total water production in 2003, highlights the vulnerability of groundwater to multiple private users. So far, no private suppliers of water for human consumption have registered with the Health Department, which would ensure their compliance with Drinking Water Directive standards.

- All Malta's inland surface and transitional (between sea and land) waters are highly restricted habitats and the various animals and plants found there are in danger of extinction. Malta is legally bound to ensure the long-term protection of these habitats.
- Most of Malta's coastal waters were of acceptable status in 2004, except for inside harbours and near sewage outfalls, power station thermal discharge points, and to a lesser extent, in the vicinity of fish farms and Magħtab. Sewage overflows in St. Paul's Bay and Birżebbuġa remain a matter of concern. Malta's bathing waters meet Bathing Water Directive quality standards and mostly meet those of the Barcelona Convention."

.5.5

Waste

The North West area includes the Magħtab area which for a number of years housed the Magħtab Solid Waste Disposal Site. The proximity of the site to coastal area as well as major residential and tourist areas has had a negative impact on the territory. The SOER 2005 notes that the Scott Wilson report, which describes the site investigations carried out on the landfills, "indicates that the principal hazards presented by the landfill sites are: aerial emissions from combusting or smouldering wastes; the stability of the waste masses, the impacts on local groundwater quality from leachate during the rainy season, and landfill gas generation.

The magnitude of these hazards is dependent on the size of the sites and the age of the waste deposited. Of the three sites, the dump at Magħtab represents the greatest potential source of impacts on the Maltese environment. At Magħtab, aerial emissions of potentially hazardous gases and particulate matter are being produced by the combustion of waste. Concentrations of heavy metals, volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds and dioxins were significantly elevated above Maltese background levels in exposed waste materials and combusted wastes on the dump. Lower, but still relatively elevated, concentrations of heavy metals and dioxins were recorded in the soils surrounding the landfills. The presence of dioxins in soils (albeit at concentrations not considered hazardous to health) was attributed to aerial deposition of combustion products from the landfill. Lead concentrations were also elevated on the surrounding land but this contamination cannot be directly attributed to the landfill as traffic pollution and hunting practices are also major contributors to lead contamination in Maltese soils. No leachate was observed within the waste mass at Magħtab but potential for leachate generation after sustained rainfall exists. In the future, leachate generation may increase as combustion ceases and the landfill cools."

The Site was closed in April 2004 and an interim national facility for the receipt, treatment and disposal of municipal solid waste was set up in Ta' Żwejra within the same area. The latter facility, which was used until December 2006, was designed to produce energy from waste deposited at the site. Għallis has also been identified as a potential site for an engineered landfill to house:

- A controlled landfill for non-hazardous, non-inert waste
- A controlled landfill for certain types of hazardous waste; and
- Facility for the temporary storage, pre-treatment and transfer of hazardous waste
- Leachate and gas management plants

The localities forming part of the MAG have a number of bring in sites, totalling 107 and accounting for circa 45% of the bring in sites in Malta and Gozo.

| Table 30: Bring in sites | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Locality | No of sites |
| Mellieħa | 10 |
| Għajn Tuffieħa | 2 |
| Manikata | 1 |
| Mgarr | 2 |
| Xemxija | 2 |
| San Pawl | 1 |
| Bugibba | 2 |
| Qawra | 2 |
| Burmarrad | 1 |
| Dingli | 3 |
| Rabat | 2 |
| Ta Qali | 2 |
| Naxxar | 6 |
| Iklin | 2 |
| Balzan | 2 |
| Attard | 4 |
| Mtarfa | 2 |
| Magħtab | 1 |
| Għargħur | 1 |
| Lija | 1 |
| Total MAS | 107 |
| Total Number of bins in Malta | 983 |
| Total BIS in Malta and Gozo | 240 |

Source: WasteServ Malta

The Majjistral area features significant rural and coastline areas. It is rich in biodiversity and has a number of areas which have been designated as Special Areas of Conservation. All the located protected beaches are located in the MAG territory while the whole North-West coastline is protected under the Development Planning Act/ Environment Protection Act. Malta's bathing waters meet the quality standards of the Bathing Water Directive.

Five of Malta's twelve Special Protection Areas (which automatically form part of the Natura 2000 network) fall within the MAG area. Another 13 terrestrial and one marine site in the MAG area have been proposed.

Ground level ozone in the MAG area is significantly higher than the Maltese average, which is a feature of areas less affected by traffic (air pollutants in traffic-prone areas deplete ground level ozone and convert it into oxygen).

In terms of waste, the area includes the Magħtab area which has had considerable impacts given its proximity to the coast and major residential/ tourist areas. The site was closed in April 2004.

.6 Wider relevant research and evaluation

Based on previous experience and accepted best practice, this LDS has been compiled to complement relevant strategic policy statements issued by government. In this regard a review of the following strategic documents has been undertaken in preparing this LDS. Plans and strategies approved by MEPA and listed below followed wide public consultation processes and indicate the actions that need to be carried out to address particular issues in the local plan areas.

MEPA North West Local Plan, July 2006¹²

MEPA's North West Plan area contains the majority of the Majjistral localities except for Attard, Għargħur, Iklin and Lija (these localities are included under the MEPA Central and South Malta Local Plans). The plan aims to address the local concerns of these localities in order to enhance this area, whilst protecting its natural and cultural assets, thus providing a sustainable quality of life. Given the recreational and tourism importance of the area, a main objective of the plan is to protect and enhance the environmental quality of the Plan area. The Plan also takes into account the fact that the overall social and economic development of Malta and particularly the areas adjacent to the Plan area will influence the amount of pressure that the area will be subjected to in the future.

The Plan designates and protects major areas of the countryside and urban areas for conservation purposes and thus protects their environmental capital. The Plan also assesses the environmental assets of the landscape and provides protection. Strategies identified in this Local Plan include:

Strategy for urban settlements, including aspects relating to land use designations, land for housing and urban design. Specifically, the Plan considers changes in development zone boundaries in Mellieħa, St. Paul's Bay, Mgarr, Żebbiegħ, Rabat, Baħrija and Dingli, as well as designating boundaries within Mellieħa, St. Paul's Bay, Bugibba, Qawra, Xemxija, Burmarrad, Salina, Mgarr, Żebbiegħ, Rabat, Baħrija, Mtarfa and Dingli as residential areas. The Plan continues by listing acceptable land uses within these identified residential areas. Other boundaries within Mellieħa, Manikata, St. Paul's Bay, Bugibba, Qawra, Xemxija and Rabat were designated as Residential Priority Areas. Others policies deal with building height limitations and urban open space.

Strategy for rural settlements, mainly dealing with the classification of certain rural settlements as Outside Development Zones

Strategy for social and community facilities, covering the fields of health, community facilities (for instance libraries), education, cemeteries and the provision of public civic facilities.

Strategy for commerce and industry, which covers town centres in Mellieħa, St. Paul's Bay and Rabat, local centres in Manikata, St. Paul's Bay, Burmarrad, Mgarr, Żebbiegħ, Baħrija, Mtarfa and Dingli, entertainment priority areas in Tas-Sellum and Bugibba and micro-enterprise parks. The latter are split into industrial and warehousing development in Mellieħa, Mgarr and Naxxar, concrete batching plants, firework factories, supermarkets and areas of containment in Burmarrad.

Strategy for agriculture, fishing and aquaculture. The strategy for agriculture covers aspects relating to the supply of irrigation water, soil conservation, farm houses, livestock breeders, greenhouses, storage of farm machinery, vineyards, visitor attraction, farm retail outlets and horse riding

¹² http://www.mepa.org.mt/Planning/index.htm?local_plans/nwlp/mainframe.htm&1. Includes the MAG localities of Mellieħa, St. Paul's Bay, Naxxar, Mgarr, Mdina, Rabat, Mtarfa, Dingli and parts of Siggiewi.

establishments. Strategies for aquaculture deal with sea-based production units, marine cages and hatcheries.

Strategy for minerals and waste management, including issues relating to filling disused quarries in Mgarr, Misraħ Suffara, Tal-Magħlaq, Qasam il-Kbir and Wied Filep Quarry with excavation waste. The Plan also discusses continued quarry operations, such as in Rabat, Naxxar, Mgarr, Żebbiegħ, Siġġiewi and Għar Lapsi. In terms of solid waste management, the Plan covers aspects relating to Amenity Sites and scrap yards.

Strategy for tourism, with special regard to Mellieħa and St. Paul's Bay (which also covers Buġibba and Qawra). At the time of its publication, the Plan identified new tourist accommodation in St. Paul's Bay, Buġibba, Qawra, Mellieħa, Rabat and Mdina. It also addressed the rehabilitation or redevelopment of existing tourist accommodation in rural areas and visitor attractions in Mellieħa, Tas-Sellum, St. Paul's Bay, Buġibba, Qawra, Rabat, Mdina and Mtarfa. The Plan also defines certain development boundaries within Buġibba and Qawra as tourism zones.

Strategy for recreation, split between land- and water-based recreation, major impact sports and coastal facilities. Land-based recreation deals with the major recreation areas of Burmarrad, Buskett, Marfa and Ta' Qali. It also covers touring caravan and camping sites, horse riding, protection of sports facilities, country parkways in the Victoria and Dwejra Lines, Ta' Qali, Imtaħleb and Fomm ir-Riħ, Buskett, Għar Lapsi, footpaths in Marfa, Mellieħa, Il-Miżieb, Imtaħleb, picnic areas in Burmarrad, Buskett, Għar Lapsi, Kennedy Grove, and Mgarr, the heritage trail at the Victoria Lines and the Chadwick Lakes.

Major impact sports include golf, theme and leisure parks, hunting, shooting and trapping, shooting ranges and motorised sports.

Water-based recreation cover yachting, water recreation such as canoeing and swimming in Ġnejna Bay, Golden Sands, Għajn Tuffieħa, Mellieħa, Paradise Bay, St. Paul's Bay and Imġiebaħ, jetties, pontoons and slipways, motorised watersports and small boat sailing.

Policy relating to coastal facilities discusses issues relating to beach concessions, boathouses and beach-rooms in Marfa, Mellieħa and Buġibba/ Qawra.

Strategy for transport, including policies to provide access to pedestrians and cyclists (for instance in the hilly parts of Rabat, Dingli and St. Paul's Bay), public transport access and facilities in rural areas such as Manikata and Dingli, traffic calming measures in Mellieħa, Manikata, St. Paul's Bay, Rabat, Żebbiegħ, Mgarr and Dingli, vehicle access in the countryside, parking management in St. Paul's Bay, Mellieħa and Rabat, strategic road network improvements on the Coast Road, Mistra, Xemxija Hill and Għadira, re-grading of roads and junction improvements in the strategic network (Rabat, Marfa, Mellieħa, Qawra, Għajn Tuffieħa and Ta' Qali).

Strategy for landscape, which entails landscape conservation and areas of high landscape value (Buskett, Chadwick Lakes, Mdina, Victoria Lines and the coastal cliffs). The Plan also proposed that a number of areas should be recognised as Protected Landscape Areas under the categories published by the World Conservation Union. These include:

- *Qammieħ Point, Western Coast*
- *Ras il-Waħx, Western Coast*
- *Ras il-Pellegrin, Western Coast*
- *Il-Qlejħha and Fomm ir-Riħ cliffs, Western Coast*

- *Il-Kullana, Western Coast (near Dingli)*
- *Rdum tal-Madonna, North East Coast*
- *St. Paul's Island, North East Coast*

Strategy for conservation, including the establishment of new Urban Conservation Areas (UCAs) and retention of existing ones (Mdina and Rabat), open space enclaves in UCAs, and the designation of sites of scientific importance from the archaeological and geological point of view. The Plan also tackles the protection of archaeological remains discovered during development and the provisions for Areas of ecological importance and sites of scientific importance. Other areas of conservation tackled by the North West Local Plan relate to interpretive visitor centres, bird sanctuaries in Għadira, Simar and Ta' Qali, water quality, woodland conservation areas and afforestation projects. In order to safeguard the environment, the plan considers open space gaps, the issue of change of use and conservation of buildings of architectural or historic merit in rural areas, protection of garrigue, rubble walling and *giren*, and countryside management of the following areas:

- Burmarrad national country park
- *Buskett*
- *Marfa*
- *Ta' Qali*
- *Victoria Lines*
- *Chadwick Lakes*
- *Fort Campbell*
- *Wied il-Għasel valley, Naxxar*
- *Strategy for coastal zones. The Plan identifies the following marine conservation areas:*
- *Ċirkewwa*
- *St. Paul's Islands, Mistra Bay*
- *Qawra Point*
- *South of Fomm ir-Riħ and Ras il-Waħx*
- *Għar Lapsi*

Strategy for public utilities such as water and surface water run-off and collection, sewerage and drainage, telecommunications and electricity. In particular, the Plan recommends the production of energy from renewable sources.

MEPA Central Malta Local Plan, July 2006¹³

This plan includes policies for the Majjistral localities of Attard, Għargħur, Iklin, Lija and the other parts of Naxxar not included in the North-West local plan. The Plan follows a similar pattern to the North West Local Plan but has the following additional points relevant for these other MAG localities: Iklin, Lija and Naxxar are considered as Areas of Containment within which permitted development should be carried out strictly within certain boundaries

Certain areas of Attard, Għargħur Iklin, Lija and Naxxar were designated as Residential Priority Areas. Naxxar is considered as a secondary town centre, while there are a number of local centres in Attard, Iklin, Lija and Naxxar.

¹³ http://www.mepa.org.mt/Planning/index.htm?local_plans/cm1p/mainframe.htm&1. Includes the MAG localities of Attard, Għargħur, Iklin, Lija and Naxxar.

The Plan designates only one street in Iklin as a commercial centre. There are no industrial areas in these MAG localities, while Iklin also has one Comprehensive Development Area in Tal-Balal. MEPA also designated a number of Strategic Open Gaps in all MAG localities covered within this Local Plan.

Quarry buffer areas covered by this plan include Ta' Wied Inċita (Attard), Tat-tabib and Ix-Xwieki in Iklin and Naxxar (Targiet Għomor, In-Nigret, Ta' Birguma, Tal-Wej and Wied Bordi). Quarry re-use is also delineated as a policy in these areas.

Strategic bus corridors are envisaged in certain roads of Iklin, Naxxar and Attard

A Park & Ride site is envisaged in the disused Sgħajtar quarry in order to attract car drivers of Mellieħa, St. Paul's Bay and Naxxar.

MEPA South Malta Local Plan, July 2006¹⁴

The only MAG locality classified under this Local Plan is a part of Siġġiewi which includes the village proper and the countryside to the north and east of this settlement. Policies specifically related to Siġġiewi include:

- Parts of the village of Siġġiewi are designated as Residential Amenity Improvement Action Areas
- Siġġiewi is designated as a tertiary town centre
- Triq Hal Farrug in Siġġiewi was designated by MEPA as an area of containment
- The areas of Wied Xkora, Wied Musa, Wied Sillani and the Wied ta' Kandja valley system in Siġġiewi have been designated as areas of ecological importance/ sites of scientific importance
- Siġġiewi has a number of areas which have also been designated as areas of high landscape value
- Walking/ cycling/ heritage routes and trails in the areas of Lawrenti, San Blas, Tal-Plieri, Girgenti towards Buskett and Rabat (Siġġiewi)
- Introduction of a one way gyratory system
- Rehabilitation of softstone and hardstone quarries

Rural Development Programme 2004-2006, June 2004

Malta's Rural Development Plan for the Programming Period 2004-2006 provides a number of measures aimed at the agricultural and rural communities of Malta. These support measures enable the local community to tap EU funding through the European Agricultural Guidance & Guarantee Fund (EAGGF).

The Programme puts forward the following measures:

- Ad hoc measure to provide targeted assistance to support full-time farmers
- A measure aimed at meeting standards to help farmers adapt to demanding EU legislation standards
- Training to broaden the skills base of the agricultural workforce

¹⁴ http://www.mepa.org.mt/Planning/index.htm?local_plans/smlp/mainframe.htm&1. Includes the MAG locality of Siġġiewi.

- State aid complement targeted at Maltese agricultural products that will be negatively affected by the EU Common Agricultural Policy.
- Measure to assist producer groups to supply and market agricultural products
- Agro-environment measure to conserve and improve the landscape, wildlife and historic heritage of rural Malta.
- Less Favoured Area measure to compensate for naturally less favoured areas.

Given the high concentration of farmers and agricultural land in the North-West district, the successful implementation of these measures would positively affect the MAG territory.

Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, December 2007

- The Rural Development Programme for Malta 2007-2013 comprises seventeen measures aimed at addressing these needs, namely:
- Training, information and diffusion of knowledge;
- Use of Farm Advisory Services;
- Farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services;
- Modernisation of agricultural holdings;
- Adding value;
- Cooperation for development of new products, processes and technology;
- Improving and developing infrastructure;
- Supporting farmers who participate in food quality schemes;
- Supporting producer groups for information and promotion activities under food quality schemes;
- Supporting setting up of producer groups;
- Payments to farmers in areas with handicaps, other than mountain areas;
- Natura 2000 payments and payments linked to Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD);
- Agro-environment payments;
- Encouragement of tourism activities;
- Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage;
- Skills acquisition and animation with a view to preparing and implementing a Local Development Strategy.

A number of these measures are especially relevant to the MAG territory.

OPM, Government policy on local governance, 2008¹⁵

This policy document on local governance aims to put into place a framework within which local authorities and their partners can work. The framework, supported by the Report on the National Reform in Local Councils, provides an improved *modus operandi* based on the three guiding principles underlying the Local Government Vision 2015, namely Subsidiarity, Solidarity and Sustainability. This policy document envisages local action groups such as the MAG which are based on Private-Public Partnerships and aim to address:

- The identification of an integrated local development strategy;
- The fine tuning and implementation of a development strategy for the area;

¹⁵ http://www.lc.gov.mt/mediacenter/PDFs/1_Politika%20ta'Malta%20ghal-Governanza%20lokalit%20.pdf

- The socio-economic development through decisions that are taken by economic and social partners, as well as other representatives of civil society, such as farmers, people living in rural areas, women, young people and related community associations.
- Innovation in their respective regions, by proposing a strategy that increases the quality of life for the region and its residents, become an active policy maker and serve as an example of a working public private partnership built on the interest of the area.

NCSD, Draft sustainable development strategy, July 2004¹⁶

This report, drafted by a task force appointed by the National Commission for Sustainable Development (NCSD), puts forward a number of strategic directions, including among others:

- Safeguard the quality of fresh water resources so as to protect human health, and satisfy the requirements for human use (including agricultural usage).
- Encourage waste prevention, minimisation, reuse and recycling.
- Close all non-controlled landfills and establish new controlled landfills and treatment plants for hazardous and non-hazardous wastes.
- Develop facilities for the separate collection of wastes by Local Councils.
- Strengthen deterrence with regard to illegal tipping.
- Rigorously monitor the quality of coastal and marine waters and protect them from pollution so as to render them safe to human health, to satisfy the requirements for human use and to allow the natural biodiversity of marine eco-systems and habitats to be sustained as well as to flourish.
- Take steps to improve information regarding the state of the marine environment, and assign more resources to allow for more extensive monitoring programmes.
- Develop a comprehensive plan addressing coastal zone management.
- Strengthen and extend a system of marine conservation areas.
- Promote renewal incentives to make the best use of the existing urban fabric and reverse the decline particularly in historic cores, specifically through strategic economic and social planning addressing the physical, economic, social and environmental issues in an integrated manner, whilst encouraging the use of vacant property.
- Protect the open countryside from uses which can be more appropriately located in the urban areas and adopt codes of practice for good agricultural practice.
- Maintain and improve the heritage of the built environment and historic resources
- Manage the built environment so as to ensure the best possible quality of life, with minimal risks to human health, and the fostering of cultural and social identity of our settlements.
- Ensure closer integration of transport and land use planning so as to increase the use and efficiency of public transport, rather than increased reliance on the private car.
- Devise methods so that tourism development should fully respect the environmental capital and sustain it.
- Encourage farmers and fishermen to, as much as possible, achieve financial viability of their enterprises, through improved competitiveness, using environmentally sound methods.
- Remunerate farmers and fisherman, through government intervention, as compensation for their multifunctional roles, including the supply of environmental public goods.
- Help farmers and fishermen upgrade and modernise their machinery and equipment.
- Improve the contribution of tourism to the economy by devising schemes to increase per capita expenditure by incoming tourists.

¹⁶ <http://www.mrra.gov.mt/htdocs/docs/ncsd.pdf>

- Channel investment towards resource-efficient segments and to less resource-costly (environmentally, economically, socially) areas so as to ensure that resources are allocated to their best use.
- Improve the quality of service offered to tourists, and in general upgrade Malta's tourism product, thereby delivering value and customer satisfaction.
- Stabilise summer inflow of tourists below saturation levels and try to redirect any surplus inflows to off-peak periods.
- Implement programmes to exploit Malta's unique cultural tourist attractions.

MRRA, Waste Management Plan for the Maltese Islands 2006-2010, May 2009¹⁷

The Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs developed a Waste Management Plan for the Maltese Islands in accordance with the requirements of the relevant regulations of the European Directives on waste management.

The Plan points out that the collection of municipal solid waste, which was assigned to Local Councils, needed to be provided more cost effectively. In order to reap greater economies of scale in the collection of such waste, Local Councils were grouped into six regions¹⁸. A similar regionalisation policy was adopted for the supply of bring-in sites, whereby Local Councils issue tenders for one or more bring-in site(s) within their locality.

The Plan also puts forward a recommendation to reform the current charges paid by Local Councils to contractors for the collection and disposal of the municipal solid waste generated by households. According to the Plan, such charges should be modified to ensure that the fees chargeable to Councils originate in two forms, namely:

- a transportation fee for the collection and transport to the waste facility; and
- a fee based on the type and weight of waste deposited which is charged directly to the Local Council and not the carrier.

This would take place through the introduction of consignment notes which Local Councils would hand over to their waste collector and which would identify the quantity and origin of waste.

The motive behind this recommendation is to encourage local communities to minimize waste requiring door-to-door collection through the possible modification and alteration of patterns of behaviour, the use of bring-in sites and any other measures deemed appropriate.

PPCD, Operational Programme I, June 2007

Operational Programme I, entitled Investing in Competitiveness for a better quality of life, is one of the three programming documents¹⁹ setting out the framework within which funds made available through the Cohesion Policy will be spent over the 2007-2013 programming period. OPI is co-financed by the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund.

¹⁷ <http://www.mrra.gov.mt/htdocs/docs/Waste%20Management%20Plan%20for%20the%20Maltese%20Islands.pdf>

¹⁸ MRRA (2009), *Solid Waste Management Strategy for the Maltese Islands*

¹⁹ The other two programming documents are the National Strategic Reference Framework and OPII.

OPI identifies seven priority axes that take into account of the needs and priorities emerging from national sectoral strategies in addressing the infrastructural needs of the country. One of the priority axes focuses on safeguarding the environment, with special reference to solid waste management.

Climate Change Committee Malta, Climate change report, National Strategy for Policy and Abatement Measures relating to the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions, January 2009²⁰

An inter-disciplinary Climate Change Committee was set up in June 2008 to present the Government with a realistic strategic report to enable a sustained programme of activities. The report puts forward a number of recommendations, including:

In an ambience where international, supra-national, and regional frameworks and policies on Climate Change have a pervasive impact on national finances and economics, the Government should, at the earliest opportunity possible, graft the economics of Climate Change onto both the national budgetary and macro- and micro- economic planning framework.

Responsibility for street lighting should be centralised and the Government, should as from 2010, embark on the rationalisation of the street lighting infrastructure including the replacement, where appropriate, of street lighting by passive reflectors and 'cats eyes', and the national implementation of street lighting dimming technology to be completed by 2015.

Government should embark on the implementation of the Agriculture Waste Management Plan as from 2009.

The growing success of the programmes for the collection and recovery of recyclable municipal solid waste should continue to be reinforced.

The Government should broaden the recovery process by 2015 to include separate collection and subsequent recovery of at least 36,000 of recyclable waste and 35,000 tonnes of clean organic fraction.

The Government and local councils should re-schedule repair and maintenance work to non peak hours in order to reduce artificially created congestion and in this regard the respective employees' representatives should support the re-design of such work schedules.

EU, Common Agricultural Policy

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the system of European Union agricultural subsidies and programmes, has been gradually integrated into Maltese agricultural policy. Malta does not apply the single payment scheme system but has implemented a flat-rate model as from 2007.

The RDP for the period 2007-2013 is based on the reformed CAP. The Rural Development Committee (consisting of representatives of the 27 EU Member States) approved the RDP for Malta on 20 December 2007. The public budget is split according to the following axes:

axis 1: competitiveness – 36%

axis 2: environment and land management – 26%

axis 3: rural economy – 34%

²⁰ http://www.mrra.gov.mt/htdocs/docs/climatechange_eng.pdf

axis 4: Leader – 4%

EU, Lisbon strategy

The Lisbon Strategy, the EU action and development plan for the European Union aimed to make the EU "the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world", is a driving force behind a number of local government policy documents. A number of measures have been designed with the intention of promoting a more prosperous, environmentally responsible and socially inclusive country. In particular, measures in order to increase female labour market participation have featured in national budgets.

EU, Sustainable development strategy

The sustainable development strategy of the European Union is especially relevant for Malta. The requirement to integrate environmental considerations into all Community policies was added in the Maastricht Treaty (1992), later reinforced in the Amsterdam Treaty. Building on the so called Lisbon Strategy (2000) and its political commitment to economic and social renewal, the Gothenburg European Council in June 2001 confirmed that the Union's Sustainable Development Strategy is based on the principle that the economic, social and environmental effects of all policies should be examined in a coordinated way and this should be taken into account in decision-making. This 2001 strategy was composed of two main parts. The first proposed objectives and policy measures to tackle a number of key unsustainable trends while the second part called for a new approach to policy-making that ensures the EU's economic, social and environmental policies mutually reinforce each other. The central instrument developed for this purpose was the obligation for the Commission to submit each new major policy proposal to an Impact Assessment.

The EU also adopted the Sixth Environment Action Programme (EAP) of the European community 2001-2010 entitled Environment 2010: Our Future, Our Choice, through Decision No. 1600/2002/EC, which identified 4 priority areas, namely Climate Change, Nature and Biodiversity, Environment and Health, Natural Resources and Waste.

The LDS of the MAG needs to prioritize for implementation the strategies for the various territorial aspects of the territory as listed in MEPA's local plans and policies, the Rural Development Programme and other government/ EU-wide policies on local governance, sustainable development, waste management and climate change.

.7 Wider relevant development programme

Since the successful implementation of the Majjistral LDS is dependant on the actions and decisions of a range of other bodies, the MAG will track developments and co-operate with relevant government bodies and agencies in the wider economic and social environment, to adopt a partnership approach where possible and appropriate. There are significant opportunities to collaborate with, and participate in development initiatives being progressed by other agencies under the scope of the National Development Plan and the Rural Development Programme.

.8

SWOT analysis

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|--|---|
| Presence of a large number of rural areas and several areas with high landscape value/ assets | Traffic congestions in certain areas in certain times (including weekends) especially Selmun area |
| Polycentric area i.e. there are a number of towns / villages that act as focal points/ centres for the larger area | Lack of data at a regional level |
| Relatively good air quality | Absence of regional identity |
| Tourist attraction sites | Stress on water from agricultural activities |
| Number of beaches | Highly seasonal tourism |
| Quality and quantity of cultural heritage, including historical and archaeological sites and established cultural activities/ festivals | Concentration of illegal structures on the coast and countryside |
| Limited manufacturing industry | |
| A number of protected areas (including marine) | |
| Active civil society organisations and farmers organisations well established within farming community, and active in the promotion/enhancement of local agricultural production | |
| Tourism accommodation and speciality restaurants available in the area | |
| Contribution of agriculture to rural landscape and preventing soil erosion | |
| Agro industries/commercial enterprises / wineries / olive presses/plant nurseries | |
| Presence of satellite activities to tourism (including crafts village and equestrian) and alternative forms of tourism offers (e.g. Limestone Heritage) | |
| Sport related infrastructures and language schools | |
| Entertainment infrastructure such as the MFCC | |
| | |

| Opportunities | Threats |
|--|---|
| Niche tourist attractions | Urban sprawl |
| Promote alternative forms of tourism (rural/cultural etc..) | Increase in population in the area could put more pressure on resources |
| Further development of organic/integrated farming | Conflicting land and sea uses (recreational/production...) |
| Potential to encourage synergies among entities that manage protected/designated/tourism areas | Lack of perception of the area as a region |
| LAG to support the strengthening of regional identity | Conversion of natural areas for agricultural purposes in specific areas |
| Promote and enhance local and quality agricultural production | Fly-tipping |
| Marketing opportunity for assets of the area as a whole | Climate change effects especially on agriculture |
| Exploit marine related tourism niche | |
| Younger population compared with National average | |
| Increasing population in the area leading to more economic activity | |
| Opportunity to have informal education activities | |
| Renewable energy | |

Needs and prioritisation

This needs and prioritisation section has been developed based on the review of the consultation process and the socio-economic needs analysis for the Majjstral area and takes into account the wider relevant research and evaluation, wider development programmes and the overall SWOT analysis of the key sectors discussed in detail in the previous sections.

The design and presentation parallels the layout of the Majjstral Rural Development Programme outlined in the next Chapter and focuses on needs and priorities that can be addresses specifically by this Programme in the coming years.

| Need / sector | Priority | Measure |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Statistics / data on the territory | To facilitate data collection / integration for the Majjstral Region including information on the type of industry, employment by industry, level of education, environmental data, etc | |
| Tourism | Improve marketing initiatives of the territory (including heritage sites, cultural activities etc) | Repackage current marketing initiatives (which often tend to be undertaken on a locality basis) to incorporate entire territory |
| | Promote and increase opportunities for cultural activities | |
| | Improve mobility /accessibility in the territory and within the localities | Improvement of signage in the area (including road signage, signage for cultural / heritage sites etc) Access to fields Trails |
| Agriculture | Facilitate conversion to organic / integrated farming | Training assistance |
| | Improve / create synergies between tourism, agriculture and catering | Explore potential for rural tourism activities, including tours of wine making facilities, olive oil, organisation of traditional cooking classes Promote the use of local produce in restaurants in the area; Training assistance |
| | Increase opportunity for direct sales of agricultural products | Explore opportunities for organisation of regular markets in the different localities |
| Environment | Upgrade and embellish the area through better environmental management | |
| | Promote / enhance the landscape of the area as a key asset of the area | Leisure parks Trails |
| | Raise awareness on sustainable development and environmental issues of the territory and localities | |

Chapter 4: Majjistrat Sustainable Development Programme

.1 Vision

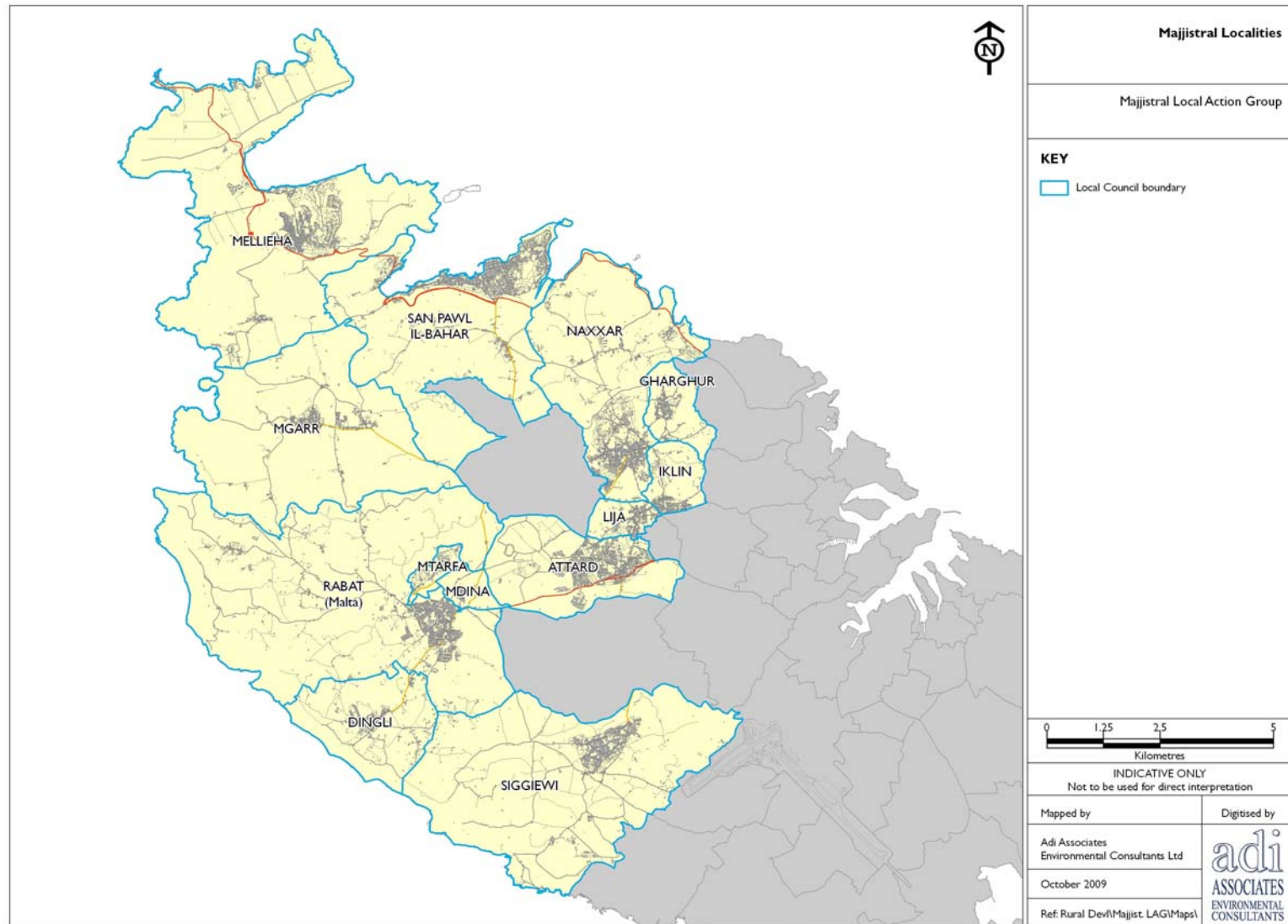
The Majjistrat Local Development Strategy will endeavour to be people driven and focussed on creating a regional identity for the Majjistrat Region, bringing the community together, and empowering it to make positive changes to enable sustainable economic, social, and environmental development

.2 Strategy

The Strategy adopts an area based approach, focussing on the Majjistrat region that includes thirteen localities as illustrated in Figure 4.1. The Strategy has been developed in accordance with Axis 4 of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (RDP) and also encompasses specific actions under Axis 1 (Measures 125) and Axis 3 (Measure 313). It adopts a cross-cutting approach as a means to implementing the objectives of the RDP.

The Strategy is based on the Needs Analysis and Prioritisation study and the consultation process described in Chapter 3. Although the needs and priorities have been described by sector, the Strategy adopts an integrated approach linking actions and actors from different sectors e.g. tourism, agriculture etc.

Figure 4.1: The Majjistral territory



Strategic objectives

The Strategic objectives have been developed having regard to the needs identified, the public consultation exercise, national and EU policy, all within the constraints of the Rural Development Programme (2007-2013), and support the principles of improving the quality of life for rural dwellers.

These are defined as follows:

- To facilitate data collection/integration for the Majjistral Region including indicators illustrating economic, social, and environmental trends for the region. This Objective will establish a clear baseline for the Region that will inform and facilitate future Strategies developed for the Region
- To foster the creation and consolidation of a regional identity
- To improve marketing initiatives of the Region's assets on a territory-wide level. The Strategy seeks to enhance marketing of cultural and natural sites, cultural activities, products, etc, at regional rather than national or locality level. There is a need to create a standard aesthetic feel to the Majjistral Region in terms of signage and information provided.
- To improve mobility and accessibility in the Region. The Region is relatively large and includes numerous natural and cultural assets of tourism interest that require clear signage to facilitate access to and between these sites.
- To improve and/or create synergies between tourism, agriculture and catering. The potential to develop rural niche tourism within the Region is a priority of the Strategy. The Strategy will support opportunities for organisation of regular markets in the different localities in a bid to increase the opportunity for direct sales of agricultural products.
- To upgrade and embellish the Region through better environmental management implemented through a variety of actions.
- To further enhance these assets and the tourism value of the Region, the Strategy will support initiatives to promote and enhance the landscape of the Region as one of its key assets. The Region boasts countryside and a number of recreational areas, which contribute to its distinctive landscape including natural and cultural features.
- To ensure that recreational and other activities that impact on the environment are sustainable as well as to raise awareness on sustainable development and the environmental issues of the Region and its localities.

.4

Targeting

The outcome of the needs analysis and the consultation process identified the following target population groups in the Majjstral Region that the Strategy seeks to focus on. These include:

Entrepreneurs. The importance of micro-enterprises to the Majjstral Region is described in Chapter 3. The role of entrepreneurs from all backgrounds is considered to be of the utmost importance for this rural development strategy. The Strategy seeks to support entrepreneurs in areas such as business planning, marketing, finance, continuous business improvement, and innovation through soft-support actions including training, support for studies, etc. Of particular importance, as identified during development of the Strategy, are those sectors that are based on traditional skills, such as the crafts sector and the agricultural sector. The Strategy has sought to provide additional assistance to these sectors;

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The consultation exercise identified that NGOs play a key role in strengthening the rural community and village life throughout the Majjstral Region. This target group needs support in capacity building, finance, marketing, and innovation. The Strategy identified the potential to support NGOs and encourage activities that are beneficial to the Majjstral Region and seek to address the Strategic Objectives.

Local Councils. The consultation exercise illustrated the need for (i) capacity-building; and (ii) further supporting capital investment to improve the aesthetic quality of the localities. In terms of capacity building, the councils expressed concern on their ability/capacity to successfully secure funds available from LEADER and other funding instruments.;

Farmers and their organizations. LEADER operates within the principles of the Rural Development Programme (2007-2013), one of the main targets of which is the farming community. The Strategy seeks to complement these efforts through interventions that will enable the rural population to remain attached to the land as productive members of society. The Strategy seeks to provide support through enabling farmers within the Region to develop and form part of a brand, increase marketing opportunities, and expand sales through setting up of markets both locally and abroad. The Strategy will also enable farmers to cooperate with other sectors thereby further expanding opportunities for sales;

Young people. The consultation process revealed that the main area in which young people feel disadvantaged in the Majjstral Region is sports whereby the diversity of options is limited. Given that this was the main area that the consultation exercise identified for young people, the Strategy targets this group in order to build on ensuring health and prosperity and improved quality of life within the Region; and

Older people. The Strategy seeks to assist people in leading independent lives for as long as possible by investing in projects that will target the elderly with respect to increasing their accessibility to activities and initiatives that promote an active lifestyle. Such initiatives promote health and improved quality of life allowing elderly citizens to remain active in the social and economic rural community for a longer period.

.5

Programme structure

The identified Strategic Objectives have set the framework for the identification of Strategic Actions and Priority Actions. These are based on the SWOT analysis presented in Chapter 3, an analysis of

relevant policies, plans and programmes (see Chapter 3), and the outcome of the public consultation exercise.

The Priority Actions identified do not exclude additional actions that seek to fulfil the overall action objective and thus do not represent the entirety of the actions to be delivered during the lifetime of the Programme.

Strategic actions

The Strategy has identified ten actions, which are presented in this section together with a description of action objectives and rationale. The ten Actions are:

ACTION 1: Studies on the assets and quality of life of the Region;

ACTION 2: Guidelines and feasibility studies for implementation of capital investment projects;

ACTION 3: Training for implementation of LEADER;

ACTION 4: Training and awareness campaigns on sustainable environmental management;

ACTION 5: Promotion of the Majjstral Region, its assets, and products

ACTION 6: Promotion of active lifestyle initiatives and the crafts sector;

ACTION 7: Improve Quality of Life and Accessibility in the Majjstral Region;

ACTION 8: Measure 125 Rural Development Programme 2007-2013;

ACTION 9: Measure 313 Rural Development Programme 2007-2013; and

ACTION 10: To promote local produce on the European market.

As described above, Priority Actions have been identified as a result of the research carried out in the development of the Strategy including issues that emerged during the consultation process.

.7 Actions and priorities

.7.1 ACTION 1: Studies on the assets and quality of life of the region

Objective

This Action aims to assist the Region to build data sets for economic and social data as well as natural and cultural assets of the Region.

Rationale

During the development of the Strategy, one of the main obstacles was locating region-wide data for the Majjistral territory. Most data sources used (see Chapter 3) present data on a national level or by locality and therefore the economic, social and environmental profile of the Region needed to be inferred. It was thus identified at an early stage that data gathering was imperative for the Region to be able to function through common objectives and goals. This initial observation was further supported by the public consultation exercise where it was repeatedly acknowledged that local knowledge on natural and cultural assets needs to be exploited and other situations, which are currently not studied at a region-wide level need to be addressed including, for example, traffic management.

Three Priority Actions have been identified that seek to fulfil the overall Action objective. The Priority Actions are:

Priority Action 1.1: Studies on valleys, sensitive areas, and cultural heritage. The SWOT analysis identified a number of the Region's strengths and opportunities in terms of its natural and cultural assets. This Priority Action will help to describe such areas and identify management measures to ensure the preservation of these assets and increase their profile both on a national and international level. Effective management of these areas and assets is in line with national policies including the Structure Plan, Local Plans and as well as EU Directives including the Habitats and Birds Directives.

Priority Action 1.2: Study on traffic management. The Region's problems with traffic management were highlighted both in the SWOT analysis and the consultation exercise. This Priority Action will facilitate assessment of current traffic situations and help in the identification of potential solutions to reduce traffic impacts. The relevant Local Plans including the North West Local Plan, the Central Malta Local Plan, and the South Malta Local Plan all identify traffic management as a key priority. This Priority Action may thus assist Local Plan goals and will also complement the Public Transport Reform plans.

Priority Action 1.3: Studies focussed on the setting up of community initiatives. The consultation exercise revealed that the Region was lacking in certain features that could serve to enhance community services. The Priority Action will seek to support studies and initiatives in all areas of a cultural nature encompassing every form of artistic expression including the performing arts. This Priority Action will allow studies including cost-benefit and feasibility studies essential to the planning for the setting up of such services.

Beneficiaries

Local Councils and the Majjstral Action Group will benefit from funds under this Action.

Outcomes (Targets)

Table 4.1 describes the indicators and quantitative targets.

Table 4.1: Indicators

| Type of Indicator | Indicator | Target |
|-------------------|--|--------|
| Quantitative | Number of studies | 4 |
| Qualitative | Recording of information on the natural environment Recording of information on the urban environment Recording of information on the social environment | |

Budget

Five per cent of the total budget available under Axis 4 has been allocated to Actions 1 and 2 for a total of €43,333.33.

Table 4.2 presents the rates of aid and maximum grant allowed.

Table 4.2: Rates of aid

| Applicant | Rate of Aid | Maximum Grant in € |
|------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Community/Public | 100% | 15,000 |

.7.2

ACTION 2: Guidelines and feasibility studies for implementation of capital investment projects

Objective

The objective of this Action is to fund prerequisite studies that are necessary for the eventual implementation of capital investment projects described under Action 7.

Rationale

Most capital investment projects and marketing actions require preparatory studies prior to project implementation, some of which may be a legal requirement and others that are required to help the project proponent ensure sufficient planning for best possible implementation. These studies are often costly and are not funded under any other fund.

The Action is aimed at providing the required research and background to form the basis on which projects under Action 7 within this LEADER Strategy for capital investment projects will be developed.

Two Priority Actions have been identified under this Action. These were chosen to reflect the type of capital investment projects identified under Action 7. The Priority Actions are:

Priority Action 2.1: Landscaping and embellishment in all localities. In order to support the creation of an identity for the Region, any embellishment and/or landscaping projects should follow a standard set of guidelines to ensure that all localities benefiting from LEADER can easily be identified as part of the Majjstral Region. To this end, this Priority Action will identify guidelines that must be considered by project applicants (Local Councils) interested in developing projects under Action 9.

Priority Action 2.2: Signposting and Island Image. Signposting throughout the Region should be uniform to support regional identity. Implementation of this Priority Action will ensure that all beneficiaries under Priority Action 9 will have the guidelines in place that will set out all pre-requisites related to signposting.

The final beneficiaries of Action 7 will be bound to follow the guidelines and recommendations that emerge from the studies funded under this Action.

Beneficiaries

The Majjstral Action Group will be the beneficiary of this Action and will therefore be responsible for ensuring that necessary background research is carried out prior to project development of capital investment and marketing initiatives to be supported through this Strategy.

Outcomes (Targets)

Table 4.3 describes the indicators and quantitative targets.

Table 4.3: Indicators

| Type of Indicator | Indicator | Target |
|-------------------|-----------|--------|
|-------------------|-----------|--------|

| | | |
|--------------|---|-----|
| Quantitative | Set of guidelines | 2 |
| Qualitative | Recording of information for improved amenity | N/A |

Budget

Five per cent of the total budget available under Axis 4 has been allocated to Actions 1 and 2 for a total of €43,333.33.

Table 4.4 presents the rates of aid and maximum grant allowed.

Table 4.4: Rates of aid

| Applicant | Rate of Aid | Maximum Grant in € |
|------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Community/Public | 100% | 15,000 |

.7.3

ACTION 3: Training for implementation of LEADER

Objective

This Action seeks to build community capacity and resources in order to maximise community participation in LEADER planning and project development.

Rationale

The Majjistrat Local Development Strategy sets out the budget available to the Majjistrat Region under Measures 41, 125, and 313 of the Rural Development Programme and how the budget will be spent. The consultation exercise revealed that there is a need to improve the opportunity for communities to benefit from the Strategy through providing them with the key skills necessary to plan and manage projects. Many potential applicants, including NGOs and some Local Councils stated that they were discouraged from participating in LEADER because they felt they lacked the skills to secure and manage the funds.

Similarly, the Majjistrat Action Group will require capacity building to ensure effective management of the Strategy and funds. Specific training and assistance shall be undertaken in the start up of Majjistrat Action Group operations.

This Action is therefore essential to facilitate maximum and efficient absorption of funding. Two Priority Actions have been identified:

Priority Action 3.1: Capacity building on Project Management/EU funding. Capacity building under this Priority Action targets the Majjistrat Action Group, Local Councils and NGOs. These groups were identified during the public consultation exercise. This Priority Action will help the relevant stakeholders to identify key skills that are needed to manage project planning and development and will focus on maximising the time and skills of volunteers. Furthermore this Action will allow local councillors, executive secretaries and NGO leaders to develop the necessary skills to apply under the LEADER Programme.

Priority Action 3.2: Capacity building on LEADER management. This Priority Action seeks to ensure capacity-building within the Majjistrat Action Group to ensure efficient management of LEADER. The capacity building is addressed both at the members of the Decision Committee as well as at the members of staff.

Beneficiaries

As described above, eligible beneficiaries under Priority Action 3.1 are the Majjistrat Action Group, Local Councils, and NGOs. It should be noted that the beneficiaries will be responsible for the organisation and management of the capacity-building programme whereas this programme will be open to all interested stakeholders within the territory. The beneficiary shall ensure that the training/empowerment action is not limited to its locality and or sector, but it has to address to the region and its stakeholders as a whole.

Priority Action 3.2 will be organised and attended by the members of the Majjistrat Action Group (including staff) as the responsible body for management of LEADER in the Majjistrat Region. This action is aimed to provide Majjistrat Action Group and its management structure with sound basis and adequate procedures to successfully manage the LEADER Programme.

Outcomes (Targets)

Table 4.5 describes the indicators and quantitative targets.

Table 4.5: Indicators

| Type of Indicator | Indicator | Target |
|-------------------|--|--------|
| Quantitative | Number of training programmes | 2 |
| Qualitative | Improved expertise in project management | |

Budget

Fifteen per cent of the total budget has been allocated to Action 3 and Action 4 for a total of €130,000 to be spent between the two Actions.

Table 4.6 presents the rates of aid and maximum grant allowed.

Table 4.6: Rates of aid

| Applicant | Rate of Aid | Maximum Grant in € |
|------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Community/Public | 100% | 100,000 |

.7.4

ACTION 4: Training and awareness campaigns on sustainable environmental management

Objective

The main objective under this action is to educate the community on important environmental issues and impacts that have an effect on the Region including, for example, waste management.

Rationale

Research on the Region and the SWOT analysis described in Chapter 3 identified the Majjstral Region as a popular area for recreational activities and general enjoyment of the countryside. In light of this, the SWOT and the consultation exercise identified the need to ensure that the very features that attract visitors are not allowed to degrade as a result of unsustainable behaviour and practices. The development of training and awareness campaigns on sustainable environmental management practices was thus identified as a responsibility to be taken on and administered by the Majjstral Action Group.

The public consultation exercise and SWOT analysis identified a number of potential target groups that would benefit from training and awareness-raising campaigns on sustainability including:

- Visitors to the Majjstral countryside;
- Temporary and new residents of the Majjstral Region;
- Training for farmers on the importance of adopting sustainable farming practices (identified from the SWOT analysis); and
- Others whose activities may impact the Majjstral Region.

Beneficiaries

The Majjstral Action Group will be responsible for the implementation of this Action.

Outcomes (Targets)

Table 4.7 describes the indicators and quantitative targets.

Table 4.7: Indicators

| Type of Indicator | Indicator | Target |
|-------------------|--|--------|
| Quantitative | Number of training programmes/campaigns | 3 |
| Qualitative | Improved quality of environment and improved litter management Improved community participation Increased sustainability of farming activities | N/A |

Budget

Fifteen per cent of the total budget has been allocated to Action 3 and Action 4 for a total of €130,000 to be spent between the two Actions.

Table 4.8 presents the rates of aid and maximum grant allowed.

Table 4.8: Rates of aid

| Applicant | Rate of Aid | Maximum Grant in € |
|------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Community/Public | 100% | 100,000 |

.7.5

ACTION 5: Promotion of the Majjistral Region, its assets, and products

Objective

The overall Action objective is to promote the Majjistral Region and to maximise visitor exposure to the assets of the Region, including local products.

Rationale

The concept of a Majjistral Region is not deep-rooted in Maltese culture. It is a fairly new concept that is nascent in conjunction with the introduction of LEADER to Malta. Therefore, there is considerable scope for investing in building the foundations for the creation and support of a regional identity both internal and external to the Region. Developing a brand in this way has the potential to generate economic and social opportunity within the Region.

The SWOT analysis identified niche tourism as a prime area for growth within the Region. The opportunity exists to exploit niche tourism, and to facilitate greater recognition of the capacity of community-based events and festivals to attract domestic and international tourists.

The consultation exercise supported the development of promotional activities and material and in addition highlighted the need for such festivals and other promotional activities should in particular target those assets and/or areas that are currently underexploited in terms of tourism.

Four Priority Actions have thus been identified:

Priority Action 5.1: Activities aimed at promoting areas and its assets. A number of landmarks are renowned within the Majjistral Region. However, the Region includes numerous assets that have not yet been fully exploited and marketed. This Priority Action seeks to assist the promotion of these lesser known features, assets, and areas specifically.

Priority Action 5.2: Festivals. The SWOT analysis and the consultation exercise identified the opportunity to increase organisation of festivals in the Region.

Priority Action 5.3: Promotion of the Region. This Priority Action seeks to promote the Majjistral Region in a holistic manner thus facilitating regional identity through the creation of promotional material and the organisation of events based around regional assets. Particular importance is given to projects that market the region and its assets at local level to tourists located in the region or in the Grand Harbour area in order to attract them to visit the Majjistral region and encourage the further spreading of tourism generated income.

Priority Action 5.4: Marketing of local produce. Support will be given to projects that focus on the marketing of produce from the Majjistral Region. This Priority Action could facilitate development of a brand for Majjistral products and should include as a target audience catering establishments. This Priority Action will also support organisation of local farmer markets.

Beneficiaries

Local Councils, NGOs, and SMEs are eligible for funding for the development of Priority Actions 5.1 and 5.2.

The Majjistral Action Group is responsible for the implementation of Priority Action 5.3.

SMEs and NGOs are eligible for funding under Priority Action 5.4.

Outcomes (Targets)

Table 4.9 describes the indicators and quantitative targets.

Table 4.9: Indicators

| Type of Indicator | Indicator | Target |
|-------------------|---|--------|
| Quantitative | Number of events | 6 |
| | Number of promotional campaigns | 6 |
| Qualitative | Increased tourism potential for the Region A brand to support the new Region and its produce/products Increased market access for farm family products Greater cooperation levels between enterprises and between agencies promoting the creation and development of rural enterprise. | |

Budget

Twenty-five per cent of the total budget has been allocated to Action 5. Therefore, Action 5 has a total budget of €216,666.67.

Table 4.10 presents the rates of aid and maximum grant allowed.

Table 4.10: Rates of aid

| Applicant | Rate of Aid | Maximum Grant in € |
|------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Community/Public | 90% | 100,000 |
| Private | 50% | 50,000 |

.7.6

ACTION 6: Open calls for Capital Investments, Marketing, Training, Studies for active lifestyle initiatives and the crafts sector

Objective

This Action aims to provide support to specific sectors which were identified through the SWOT analysis and consultation exercise to be in need of support.

Rationale

During the consultation exercise a number of potential projects emerged related to specific sectors within the rural community. This Action will ultimately facilitate Strategy management through grouping projects, regardless of project type (i.e. whether studies, marketing, training or capital investment) by sector. These sectors are:

Priority Action 6.1: Active lifestyle initiatives. The consultation exercise revealed a need to invest in initiatives that will support a more active lifestyle, particularly for target groups such as the elderly and children. These initiatives are expected to result in a positive impact on the well-being and health of rural society. Active lifestyle initiatives, including sports initiatives could also be developed into a niche tourism market, addressing seasonality problems thus supporting the National Tourism Policy. This Priority Action is expected to encourage community involvement and enhance synergies with other economic sectors including other niche markets.

Priority Action 6.2: Craft sector. This sector is vulnerable to competition from imported products. Production of local crafts requires specific skills and due to the nature of the sector is often not efficient. This Priority Action seeks to improve the competitiveness of this sector through funding initiatives such as innovative production ideas, training in traditional skills, marketing and hosting local and/or transnational events, etc.

Beneficiaries

SMEs and NGOs within the above mentioned priority sectors will be eligible for funding for various project types so far as these are within the funding capabilities of LEADER. Funds will be capped and the co-financing rate will be 50% for SMEs.

Outcomes (Targets)

Table 4.11 describes the indicators and quantitative targets.

Table 4.11: Indicators

| Type of Indicator | Indicator | Target |
|-------------------|---|--------|
| Quantitative | Number of projects supporting an active lifestyle | 4 |
| | Number of projects supporting the crafts sector | 2 |
| Qualitative | Improved sustainability of the sports sector and active lifestyle initiatives Improved sustainability of the crafts sector | |

Budget

Action 6 has been allocated 15% of the total budget for the Strategy for a total of €130,000.00. Table 4.12 presents the rates of aid and maximum grant allowed.

Table 4.12: Rates of aid

| Applicant | Rate of Aid | Maximum Grant in € |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Capital Investment: Community/Public | 90% | 20,000 |
| Capital Investment: Private | 50% | 10,000 |
| Marketing: Community/Public | 90% | 20,000 |
| Marketing: Private | 50% | 10,000 |
| Training: Community/Public | 100% | 20,000 |
| Training: Private | 50% | 10,000 |
| A&D: Community/Public | 100% | 20,000 |
| A&D: Private | 50% | 10,000 |

.7.7

ACTION 7: Improve Quality of Life and Accessibility in the Majjstral Region

Objective

This Action seeks to enhance the Majjstral environment for economic benefit and social well-being.

Rationale

The SWOT analysis identified the need to improve signage in the Region including road signage, and signage for cultural/heritage features of interest. The public consultation exercise highlighted the desire to aesthetically improve the Region as a whole as well as within specific areas. Priority Actions identified were also influenced by the available budget.

All Priority Actions will be implemented within the context of the study findings generated under Action 2 of the Strategy.

The following three Priority Actions were identified:

Priority Action 7.1: Improve signposting. This Priority Action seeks to improve signposting and ensure consistent signage throughout the Region. Similarly, consistent information tools will be developed for sites of interest and localities. In addition to signposting, this Priority Action will fund the creation and generation of maps, plans and information points. As described above, guidelines for the development of a common format for signposting and information tools will be developed through Action 2.

Priority Action 7.2: Landscaping initiatives. This Priority Action will support environmental and physical upgrading of localities through landscaping and embellishment initiatives. All initiatives will follow a set of guidelines derived from relevant studies carried out under Action 2.

Beneficiaries

Local Councils are eligible beneficiaries under this Action.

Outcomes (Targets)

Table 4.13 describes the indicators and quantitative targets.

Table 4.13: Indicators

| Type of Indicator | Indicator | Target |
|-------------------|--|--------|
| Quantitative | Region-wide signposting Landscaping initiatives | 1 8 |
| Qualitative | Increased attractiveness of the Region General enhancement of villages Improved quality of life for those living, working, and visiting the area | |

Budget

Capital investment projects under Action 7 have been allocated 40% of the budget for the Strategy for the sum of €346,666.67.

Table 4.14 presents the rates of aid and maximum grant allowed.

Table 4.14: Rates of aid

| Applicant | Rate of Aid | Maximum Grant in € |
|---|-------------|--------------------|
| Capital Investment: Community/Public | 90% | 100,000 |

Measures from the RDP

Action 8 and Action 9 are actions that fall under measures in the RDP and therefore their administration will follow the requirements set out in the RDP.

It should be noted that apart from the two measures listed below, the RDP includes Measure 323 (Action type 3(ii) amongst those measures that can be implemented by Local Action Groups. This action includes investments associated with the conservation, restoration and upgrading of the natural and man-made rural heritage. This action type was also strongly highlighted as an important need during the consultation exercise. However, the guidelines that were subsequently issued for Measure 323 omitted reference to Local Action Groups (LAGs) and their participation in this Measure. Official confirmation was also obtained from the Managing Authority confirming that LAGs are not considered eligible for funding under Measure 323 despite what is included in the RDP.

.7.8 ACTION 8: Measure 125: Infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture

Objective

This Action will administer funds available to LEADER under Axis 1, Measure 125 of the RDP under the specific action of improving accessibility to fields. The measure also allows for studies to determine which routes should be given priority.

Rationale

The RDP highlights the importance of addressing farm accessibility and this is one of the main objectives of Measure 125. Although other initiatives will be funded under Measure 125, the following lies within the administrative competence of LEADER:

Actions designed to increase the accessibility to agricultural land to farmers, including the improvement and upgrading of existing farm access roads and passageways. This may include the re-surfacing of pathways, reconstruction and/or maintenance of adjacent walls and/or water culverts where such services are required.

In order to ensure that the funds address those areas that are most in need of assistance, this Action seeks to provide funds aimed at better understanding the needs and priorities in the region related to access to fields.

Beneficiaries

The MAG and Local Councils are the beneficiaries under this Action.

Outcomes (Targets)

Table 4.15 describes the indicators and quantitative targets.

Table 4.15: Indicators

| Type of Indicator | Indicator | Target |
|-------------------|--|--------|
| Quantitative | Number of studies Number of access routes | 1 |

| | | |
|-------------|--|--|
| | improved | |
| Qualitative | Improved quality of life for rural communities | |

Budget

The budget available under this action is €166,666.67. This budget is taken from Axis 1 of the RDP. Rates of aid according to final beneficiaries indicated in the guidelines of the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs.

.7.9 ACTION 9: Measure 313: Encouragement of Tourism Activities

Objective

This Action will administer funds available to LEADER under Axis 3, Measure 313 of the RDP.

Rationale

Measure 313 is targeted at promoting economic growth in rural areas and promoting the rural heritage as a tourist product. Although other initiatives will be funded under Measure 313, the following lies within the administrative competence of LEADER:

- The setting up of trails that interlink various sites of tourist value; and
- The provision and one-time restoration of small-scale recreational amenities, such as leisure parks

Beneficiaries

Local Councils, NGOs, and SMEs are eligible for funding under this Action.

Outcomes (Targets)

Table 4.16 describes the indicators and quantitative targets.

Table 4.16: Indicators

| Type of Indicator | Indicator | Target |
|-------------------|---|--------|
| Quantitative | Number of trails implemented | 18 |
| | Number of small-scale restoration projects | 6 |
| Qualitative | Improved quality of life for local residents in the area with the development of walking and cycling trails and paths. Improved tourism potential for the area | |

Budget

The budget available for Action 10 is €1,512,222.33. This budget is available from Axis 3 of the RDP.

Table 4.17 presents the rates of aid and maximum grant allowed.

Table 4.17 Rates of aid

| Applicant | Rate of Aid | Maximum Grant in € |
|---|-------------|--------------------|
| Capital Investment: Community/Public | 90% | 100,000 |

.7.10

ACTION 10: Promote Majjistral produce and products on the European market

Objective

The objective of this Action is to support transnational and inter-territorial cooperation specifically in the development of farmer markets and direct sales initiatives in the Maltese Islands and abroad.

Rationale

This Action seeks to introduce the Majjistral Region and its produce/products to the European market and provides the opportunity for Majjistral farmers and producers to interact with other European groups. Regional tourism, food and crafts initiatives will be supported to bring the benefits of cluster marketing, branding, and networking to local enterprise. Participation in European markets will support the initiatives identified in the Strategy to create a regional identity and develop a brand for the Majjistral Region.

Beneficiaries

The Majjistral Action Group will be responsible for organising this Action. Cooperation is allowed between LEADER groups and other non-LEADER groups as long as the project is led and coordinated by a LEADER group. While joint actions may involve groups from third countries, only activities taking place within the EU are eligible for funding.

Outcomes (targets)

Table 4.18 describes the indicators and quantitative targets.

Table 4.18: Indicators

| Type of Indicator | Indicator | Target |
|-------------------|--|--------|
| Quantitative | Number of cooperative projects | 1 |
| Qualitative | Improved market access for Majjistral products and produce | |

Budget

The budget allocated to Action 11 is €166,666.67 taken from the total budget available for the Strategy.

Table 4.19 presents the rates of aid and maximum grant allowed.

Table 4.19 Rates of aid

| Applicant | Rate of Aid | Maximum Grant in € |
|---|-------------|--------------------|
| Capital Investment: Community/Public | 90% | 100,000 |

.8 Interaction with other programmes / projects

Table 4.21 summarises how the Majjistral Local Development Strategic Objectives complement and support initiatives and objectives of other relevant programmes.

| Programme | Majjistral Local Development Strategy |
|--|--|
| Rural Development Programme 2007-2013: The RDP seeks to support traditional agricultural production linking this with agro-environmental approaches and understanding the importance of cultural heritage as part of the rural environment. In terms of produce, it has identified the traditional emphasis on quantity rather than quality. The RDP recognises the need to improve the natural and social fabric of the countryside. Maintenance and conservation of rural areas and rural heritage is an important aspect of the RDP, which also identifies the value of tourism to rural areas. The RDP identifies LEADER as an ideal approach to tackling these latter issues. | The Strategy complements the RDP in that, within its parameters, and at a regional level, the Strategic objectives address improving product quality, improvement of environmental management of the countryside, marketing the Region as a rural tourist destination, and improving sales of local products. |
| Operational Programme 1: Operational Programme I (OP1) outlines the Strategy for use of funds under the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund. The title of the programme is 'Investing in Competitiveness for a Better Quality of Life'. OP1's two main objectives are: 'sustaining a growing and knowledge-based competitive economy' and 'improving Malta's attractiveness and the quality of life'. | The Strategy supports OP1's objectives through its strategic objectives and actions related to capacity building, promoting Majjistral as a Region as well as its assets and products, developing synergies between economic sectors, namely agriculture, and tourism, supporting niche businesses, improving the aesthetic value of the Region, preserving the landscape, and quality of life of the rural community. |
| Operational Programme II: Operational Programme II (OPII) defines the Strategy for use of funds under the European Social Fund. The title of the programme is 'Empowering People for More Jobs and a Better Quality of Life'. OPII's two main objectives are 'investing in human capital' and 'strengthening labour market structures'. | The Strategy complements OPII through providing support to the private sector, in particular niche businesses. |
| National Reform Programme 2008-2010 (NRP): Strategy for economic growth and jobs; Malta's Strategy to address the Lisbon Strategy | In its endeavours to support the rural community, create opportunities for farmers, and promote niche tourism, the Strategy provides support to the objectives of the NRP. |
| A Sustainable Strategy for the Maltese Islands 2006 – 2016: The Sustainable Strategy is centred on four main themes: managing the environment and resources; promoting sustainable economic development; fostering sustainable communities; and cross-cutting strategic issues. | The Strategy adopts sustainability as a horizontal principle and actively seeks to promote it thereby operating within the principles of the sustainable strategy |

Chapter 5: Financial Plan, Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

.1 Overall Financial Plan

The following financial plan provides cost estimates for the delivery of the indicative actions as developed in Chapter 4. The cost estimates are based on indicative estimates provided and approved by the Majjistral Action Group.

Based on the RDP Programming Period covering 2007 to 2013, the cost estimates have been prepared on the basis of commencement of delivery at the beginning of the second quarter of 2010, with an effective completion of allocations by the end of the fourth quarter of 2013, and the closure of the LDS by 31st December 2015.

Professional staffing requirements, operational overheads, and other costs that will be incurred in delivering the Strategy reflect estimates based on the indication provided by the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs.

.2 Methodology

The overall financial plan was developed under each axis priority described in the Rural Development Programme for 2007-2013, as shown in Table 31 below.

| Table 31: Programme Budget - RDP 2007-2013 | | | |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Axis | Total Public | EAFRD Contribution | EAFRD Amount |
| | € mln | % | € mln |
| Axis I: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural sector | 34,280,000 | 75 | 25,710,000 |
| Axis II: Improving the environment and the countryside | 25,025,000 | 80 | 20,020,000 |
| Axis III: Improving the quality of life in rural areas | 32,986,667 | 75 | 24,740,000 |
| Axis IV: Building local capacity | 3,875,000 | 80 | 3,100,000 |
| Technical Assistance | 4,084,473 | 75 | 3,063,355 |
| Total | 100,251,140 | | 76,633,355 |

Source: Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (2007), pg. 292

The Leader programme under which the MAG falls will benefit from funds emanating from parts of Axis I, Axis III, and Axis IV. The total budget available to the MAG is shown in the following table.

| Table 32: Overall MAG budget | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | Total LEADER € mln | Total MAG € mln |
| TOTAL RDP ALLOCATED TO LDS - AXIS I | 500,000.00 | |
| TOTAL RDP ALLOCATED TO LDS - AXIS III | 4,536,666.99 | |
| TOTAL TRANSNATIONAL - Axis IV | 500,000.00 | |
| TOTAL RDP ALLOCATED TO LEADER - AXIS I, III & TRANSNATIONAL | 5,536,666.99 | |
| TOTAL RDP ALLOCATED TO MAG - AXIS I, III & TRANSNATIONAL (*33% of total budget from Axis I, III & Transnational) | | 1,845,555.66 |
| | | |
| TOTAL RDP - AXIS IV | 3,875,000.00 | |
| Less: TOTAL TRANSNATIONAL | (500,000.00) | |
| Less: ADMINISTRATION (**20% of total budget for Axis IV; allocated separately below) | (775,000.00) | |
| TOTAL RDP ALLOCATED TO LEADER - AXIS IV | 2,600,000.00 | |
| TOTAL RDP ALLOCATED TO MAG - AXIS IV (*33% of total Axis IV budget of €775,000) | | 866,666.67 |
| TOTAL RDP ALLOCATED TO MAG | | 2,712,222.33 |
| TOTAL ADMINISTRATION ALLOCATED TO MAG (*33% of total administration budget) | | 258,333.33 |

* Each LAG is allocated a third of the total funds available under the LEADER programme

** As per RDP pg. 282

Source: RDP

Based on the above the overall budget available for the implementation of this Strategy will be approximately €2.7 million on LDS actions and another €0.3 million on administration of such LDS actions. Based on this budget allocation, individual budget amounts have been allocated to each of the actions identified in Chapter 4 of this Strategy. Table 33 below provides a breakdown of the budget allocation per action as well as a breakdown of the options and rates under which each action falls, and the maximum grant permissible per action application.

| Table 33: Overall budget by action | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|---------------|------------|--------------|
| | Actions | Options and rates | Maximum Grant | RDP Budget | % on Axis IV |
| | | | € mln | € mln | % |
| ANALYSIS & DEVELOPMENT | Studies on the assets and quality of life of the region | A&D Community/ Public (100%) | 15,000 | 43,333.33 | 5% |
| | | A&D Private (50%) | 10,000 | | |
| | Guidelines and feasibility studies for implementation of capital investment projects | A&D Community/ Public (100%) | 15,000 | | |
| | | A&D Private (50%) | 10,000 | | |
| TRAINING | Training for implementation of LEADER | Training Community/ Public (100%) | 100,000 | 130,000.00 | 15% |
| | | Training Private (50%) | 25,000 | | |
| | Training and awareness campaigns on sustainable environmental management | Training Community/ Public (100%) | 100,000 | | |
| | | Training Private (50%) | 25,000 | | |
| MARKETING | Cultural Activities | Marketing Community/ Public (90%) | 100,000 | 216,666.67 | 25% |
| | | Marketing Private (50%) | 50,000 | | |
| | Promotion of the region | Marketing Community/ Public (90%) | 100,000 | | |
| | | Marketing Private (50%) | 50,000 | | |
| | Marketing of local produce | Marketing Community/ Public (90%) | 100,000 | | |
| | | Marketing Private (50%) | 50,000 | | |
| INVESTMENT | Promotion of active lifestyle initiatives and the crafts sector | Open Call for Capital Investments, Training, Studies and Marketing (Community 90% - Private 50%) | 20,000 € | 130,000.00 | 15% |
| | Embellishment projects and | Capital Community/ Public (90%) | 100,000 | | |
| | | | | 346,666.67 | 40% |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------|---------|--------------|----|
| | landscaping and sign posting | Capital Private (50%) | 100,000 | | |
| RDP MEASURES | M125 - Infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture | Capital Community/ Public (90%) | 100,000 | 166,666.67 | * |
| | | A&D Community/ Public (90%) | 50,000 | | |
| | | | | | |
| | M313 - Encouragement of Tourism Activities | Capital Community/ Public (90%) | 100,000 | 1,512,222.33 | ** |
| | | Capital Private (50%) | 100,000 | | |
| | | A&D Community/ Public (100%) | 15,000 | | |
| | | A&D Private (50%) | 10,000 | | |
| TRANS-NATIONAL | Promote Majjstral produce and products on the European market | | | 166,666.67 | |
| TOTAL AVAILABLE - AXIS IV | | | | 866,666.67 | |
| TOTAL AVAILABLE - AXIS I, III, TRANSNATIONAL | | | | 1,845,555.66 | |
| TOTAL LDS – MAG | | | | 2,712,222.33 | |
| TOTAL ADMINISTRATION ALLOCATED TO MAG | | | | 258,333.33 | |

* The total Axis I budget amounts to €34.28 million, as per RDP pg. 292

** The total Axis III budget amounts to €32.99 million, as per RDP pg. 292

Source: RDP

.3

Allocation by action by year

The following patterns of budget commitment have been utilised to determine the allocation by action by year:

- in the case of capital and technical actions about half of the allocation is in the second year of the programme, while the remaining allocations are spread evenly on the remaining years.
- in the case of “soft support” actions there is a determined ‘push’ by the Action Group to organise and allocate resources at the beginning of the Strategy.
- in the case of administration expenditure, it is observed that this is split evenly across the allocation years.

The following table provides a breakdown of the allocation by type of action per year.

Table 34: Allocation by action by year

| Actions | Total RDP Budget € mln | Year 1 € mln | Year 2 € mln | Year 3 € mln | Year 4 € mln |
|------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| ANALYSIS & DEVELOPMENT | 43,333.33 | 26,000.00 | 17,333.33 | - | - |
| TRAINING | 130,000.00 | 97,500.00 | 32,500.00 | - | - |
| MARKETING | 216,666.67 | - | 108,333.33 | 54,166.67 | 54,166.67 |
| OPEN CALLS | 130,000.00 | - | 65,000.00 | 32,500.00 | 32,500.00 |
| CAPITAL INVESTMENTS | 346,666.67 | - | 173,333.33 | 86,666.67 | 86,666.67 |
| TRANS-NATIONAL | 166,666.67 | - | 83,333.33 | 41,666.67 | 41,666.67 |
| TOTAL ALLOCATED | 1,033,333.33 | 123,500.00 | 479,833.33 | 215,000.00 | 215,000.00 |
| RDP MEASURES* | 1,678,889.00 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |

* The allocation of the RDP measures is subject to MRRA guidelines

The above allocations are estimated to be disbursed over a five-year period. Given the lack of previous local experience on similar programmes the disbursements of each annual allocation are assumed to take place as follows:

(a) for allocations relating to analysis and development actions:

- 75% in year of allocation; and
- 25% in the following year

(b) for allocation relating to training actions:

- 50% in year of allocation; and
- 50% in the following year

(c) for allocations relating to other actions:

- 20% in the year of allocation;
- 40% in the subsequent year following the allocation year; and
- the remaining allocation spread evenly on the remaining years

(d) for allocations relating to administrative costs, disbursement is assumed to be split evenly.

| Table 35: Disbursement by action by year | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Action | Total RDP Budget | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
| | € mln | € mln | € mln | € mln | € mln | € mln |
| ANALYSIS & DEVELOPMENT | 43,333.33 | 19,500.00 | 15,166.67 | 8,666.67 | - | - |
| TRAINING | 130,000.00 | 48,750.00 | 65,000.00 | 16,250.00 | - | - |
| MARKETING | 216,666.67 | - | 21,666.67 | 54,166.67 | 54,166.67 | 86,666.67 |
| OPEN CALL | 130,000.00 | - | 13,000.00 | 32,500.00 | 32,500.00 | 52,000.00 |
| CAPITAL INVESTMENTS | 346,666.67 | - | 34,666.67 | 86,666.67 | 86,666.67 | 138,666.67 |
| TRANS-NATIONAL | 166,666.67 | - | 16,666.67 | 41,666.67 | 41,666.67 | 66,666.67 |
| TOTAL | 1,033,333.33 | 68,250.00 | 166,166.67 | 239,916.67 | 215,000.00 | 344,000.00 |

Note: The allocation and subsequent disbursement of the RDP measures is subject to MRRA guidelines

4 Monitoring, evaluation, review and reporting

The following section describes the internal systems that will be employed for monitoring, evaluating, reviewing and reporting on the performance of the Strategy. The following monitoring measures will be put into place:

- Approval will be required before the issuing of payment above a threshold grant ceiling of €10,000;
- Detailed inspection of a minimum of 5% of projects ;
- Monitoring of financial progress of the Strategy on a monthly basis;
- All funded projects to be reviewed and evaluated before final payment;
- 5% of such projects being subject to an audit as required under the Strategy;

In addition, all monitoring and evaluation systems need to take into account the strategic objectives set out in the LDS and need to be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the MAG's annual review of internal controls.

The Majjstral Action Group will prepare an annual report on its activities on the previous period. This report will be available for review by the Ministry of Resources and Rural Affairs.

.4.1 Monitoring

The Majjstral Action Group recognises the importance and need to implement internal monitoring systems to address the risks associated with the delivery of the LDS. Risk assessments will be designed to offset potential difficulties that occur at Strategy-Level and at Project-level. Common problems that have been identified in previous programmes include those related to implementation dynamics, such as a relatively slow rate of funding drawdown coupled with high start-up costs at the beginning of the strategy cycle. At project level there is a need for constant vigilance surrounding the eligibility of projects, and the need to ensure that value-for-money is obtained by project promoters.

The Majjstral Action Group proposes to routinely monitor the overall performance of the LDS on an annual basis. In this process the staff will review the overall targets and indicators within the Strategy, and an implementation variance report will be presented to the MAG Board. Once the Board has approved the report, the results will be published in the annual report. This process will enable the team to: -

- Identify if specific sectors are proving challenging;
- Identify where targets are not being met in particular areas;
- Identify where actions have been successful;
- Specify where there is scope for additional resources; and
- Implement appropriate action.

.4.2 Evaluation

The MAG will systematically assess and evaluate the project's operation and/ outcomes of the Strategy against the targets that are established in this LDS. It is proposed that the review and evaluation process adopted by MAG for the LDS will form part of the wider internal evaluation strategy of the organisation. Subject to the availability of the necessary resources, the MAG intends to commission a minimum of two formal evaluation reports through the lifetime of the Strategy, namely:

- Interim Evaluation Report – June 2012; and
- Final Evaluation Report – June 2015

.4.3 Review

At least once a year, the MAG Board will conduct a review of the effectiveness of the LDS's system of internal controls including financial, operational and compliance controls and risk management systems. The CEO will ensure that the MAG has in place an appropriate system of control of its operations and records and systems of inspection and report thereon. The Board will make provision for, receive and understand regular reports concerning:

- Internal audits;

- Regular management accounts;
- Cash-flow forecasts;
- Overview of contracts; and
- Other matters such as incidents on certain projects, e.g., health and safety issues.

The CEO will ensure that it is supplied in a timely fashion with information that is of a suitable quality to enable the MAG to satisfactorily discharge its duties.

.4.4

Reporting

The MAG will make use of both internal and external reporting. Internal reporting relates to reporting within the organisation e.g. to and from the Board, sub-committees and working groups etc. External reporting relates to reporting to the Ministry and relevant authorities.

Chapter 6: Networking and Cooperation

.1 National Networking and Cooperation

The Majjistral Action Group forms part of the Malta Rural Network, that has been launched for the first time in 2009. Majjistral Action Group will actively participate in the activities that will be planned at National level, so as to facilitate the success of the LEADER throughout the Country.

.2 International Networking and Cooperation

As part of the Malta Rural Network, the Majjistral Action Group also adheres to the European Rural Network.

The Majjistral Action Group Foundation has initiated international networking during the preparatory phase of the Majjistral Sustainable Development Strategy. The Decision Committee has in fact undertaken a study visit in Italy in the rural area of the Province of Arezzo.

GAL Appennino Aretino, a well established Public Private Partnership, operating since 1997, hosted the Majjistral delegation for three days. On the occasion, hands-on experience on the implementation of LEADER in the area of Arezzo were deepened and discussed in order to provide Majjistral Action Group with ideas and suggestions to successfully implement the LEADER. This networking initiative can be a good base to further develop international cooperation action and common projects.

The Majjistral Action Group will develop further contacts at EU level so as to be able to exchange experiences and to establish international links with other LEADER areas.

.3 Cooperation and Coordination with other public bodies ant local, regional and National level

The Majjistral Action Group, during the process of designing and building a local development strategy, has started to cooperate and coordinate with other public bodies. It is expected that, during the phase of implementation of the Majjistral Sustainable Strategy, the Action Group will be able to consolidate these relationships and build fruitful synergies with other entities.

In particular, the Majjistral Action Group has been able to actively involve all the 13 Local Councils of the territory, that have both participated in the organisation of the consultation process and have animated the sessions.

The Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs is the Managing Authority of the LEADER and the Majjistral Action Group, through its members of the Decision Committee has been able to coordinate for the successful implementation of Measure 341. It is envisaged that such relationship will be consolidated in the upcoming years during the implementation of the LEADER.

The Parliamentary Secretariat for Public Dialogue and Information, that is also responsible for the Local Government System has contributed to inform the general public and the localities on the LEADER process and its functioning.

It is expected that in the implementation phase, the Majjistral Action Group will coordinate with Government Agencies or Departments for the development of single projects. In the case of signposting of the area, the group will liaise with Malta Transport Authority to ensure coordination.

In the case of promotional activities that will be undertaken in the Majjistral area, MAG will coordinate its activities with Malta Tourism Authority.

Chapter 7: Horizontal Principles

This section illustrates the horizontal principles contained by the Majjistral Sustainable Development Strategy.

The process initiated in the territory by the Majjistral Action Group is based on the key features of LEADER:

- Area Based Local Development Strategies
- Bottom Up Approach
- Public Private Partnership
- Facilitating Innovation
- Integrated and Multi-sectoral Action
- Networking
- Cooperation

The seven principles have been adopted in the preparation of the present strategy and during the whole preparatory phase of the LEADER. The Majjistral Sustainable Development Strategy is strongly based on the above mentioned principles and it is geared towards the consolidation of the LEADER approach in Malta.

Apart from the full adoption of the LEADER approach and its features, the Majjistral Sustainable Development Strategy and its actions are based on the following cross cutting elements:

- Innovation
- Sustainability
- Economic Viability
- Linkages

.1

Innovation

The LEADER approach is very innovative for Malta. During the previous programming period 2004 – 2006, Malta decided not to implement the LEADER, which started under the EU programming period 2007 – 2013. Local Councils and private stakeholders have started a cooperative path to identify and address common needs of their region.

The centrality of innovation in the MAG Strategy, is in line with the expectations of the Lisbon Agenda, which identifies rural innovation and diversification as important elements to reinforcing a solid rural economy. The drive for innovation is echoed throughout the measures, with the studies aimed to gather and analyse information for better strategy design.

With reference to the programme and the actions, innovation is tackled in different manners. Malta has no regions, provinces or other forms of local administration except Local Councils, and the Majjistral region is not perceived as such by the population. The Majjistral Sustainable Development Strategy will address common needs of the area and encourage the development of new synergies and projects. The types of innovative projects that will be supported are related to:

- Training
- Marketing
- Capital Investments
- Studies

Off Farm innovation will be brought through the Strategy, especially in the area of marketing the local agricultural production. The region presents a number of farmers, organisations and producers that produce high quality local products. Due to the low size of the agricultural holdings and high internal competition, some products find it difficult to access the market. The Strategy address this common need of the region by providing local agricultural holdings with new methods and opportunities to access the market.

On farm innovation focused on the environmental impact of farming activities will also be encouraged through the LDS.

Innovation in the craft sector will be supported in terms of training, capital investments, marketing and studies.

Marketing and promotional activities create a support structure for individuals and firms that are pushing the status quo boundaries and designing new products and services that need promotion. The support for projects specifically aimed at improving the quality of life is driven by the need to reassess the way people interact with their surroundings and creatively redesign accessibility and support structures to improve this interaction.

.2 Sustainability

The definition of sustainability embraced by the Majjstral Sustainable Development Strategy is that of the Brundtland Commission of the United Nations: *“sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”*

Majjstral environmental assets, landscape and countryside are the key strengths and indeed opportunities identified. The quality of the natural environment is an important feature of Majjstral’s rural area. It has a significant role in supporting the tourism industry and encouraging new investment, and therefore has a link with economic activity.

The built environment is part of the cultural heritage, with the potential for landscaping initiatives in villages and panoramic areas. The Majjstral region is rich in archaeological features, cultural sites, areas of environmental and landscape value, providing a wealth of resources for environmental education and awareness.

Rural tourism, which can be an important area where to increase rural employment, needs to be further developed, in order to attract tourists to visit and experience the Majjstral area. The role of Majjstral Action Group, therefore, is to support and promote rural tourism offering is both attractive and sustainable.

The Strategy creates opportunities for off farm diversification and for the adoption of sustainable practices in particular thanks to soft interventions aimed at increasing awareness and encouraging environmentally friendly behaviours.

.3 Economic Viability

The Majjstral Action Group has based the Local Development Strategy on the common needs and priorities of the area. Resources will be used towards investments that can unlock the potential of the area thus generating a direct benefit for local stakeholders.

The concept of economic viability is connected with the sustainability that the Majjstral Local Development Strategy wants to encourage. Actions have been designed so as to support projects that, besides economic benefits, can produce an added value for the region also from a social and environmental perspective. Tourism in the area should be further promoted by establishing links and synergies with other sectors such as agriculture. In this regards farming community will be supported to further promote products that have a link with the territory of origin and with local traditions as well as to reduce its impact on the environment. Economic viability for the craft sector is directly supported by the Majjstral Sustainable Development Strategy, through capital investments, training, marketing and studies.

The Majjstral Action Group will support projects that promote a wider concept of return, rather than the purely financial one and will encourage the development of activities in areas that were previously neglected that have a social benefit that far outweighs the financial costs incurred.

Linkages

The experience of other member States in the implementation of the LEADER is important to understand the capacity of this programme to establish, create, consolidate and expand linkages within the territory. Active local participation is the crucial element for the success of the LEADER and the Majjistral Sustainable Development Strategy wants to stimulate synergies between public and private sectors of the area.

From a local stakeholders' point of view, the linkages are encouraged and stimulated by the programme itself. Majjistral Action Group will support initiatives like festivals, farmer markets, etc., which will allow local stakeholders to cooperate and to establish links that might lead to the development of common actions and initiatives

The Majjistral Sustainable Development Strategy is not only encouraging linkages within the region and between different actors, but it is also focused on creating regional and transnational links.

In fact, MAG actively participates in the Malta Rural Network, that has been launched in 2009 and that facilitates the consolidation of links with the other Maltese LAGs as well as with other European LAGs.

Finally, the Majjistral Sustainable Development Strategy is linked to the main European development policies as indicated in Chapter 3.6.