

MEMBER STATES' ANNUAL TOURISM REPORTING TEMPLATE

Article 3 of Council Decision 86/664/EEC¹ of 22 December 1986 establishing a consultation and cooperation procedure in the field of tourism stipulates that:

"...each Member State shall send the Commission, once a year, a report on the most significant measures it has taken and, as far as possible, on measures it is considering taking in the provision of services for tourists which could have consequences for travellers from the other Member States. The Commission shall inform the other Member States thereof".

The following reporting form aims at facilitating compliance with this Council Decision.

SECTION 1 TOURISM ORGANISATION AND GOVERNANCE

This section is aimed at reporting on the following:

- **Administrative organisation**
- **Territorial organisation**
- **Organisation and links between the national tourism authority and the provinces / regions**
- **Organisation and links between the national tourism authority and industry associations, stakeholders and customers**

1.1. Please provide a short description of the administrative and territorial organisation of public bodies responsible for tourism, indicating the relationship and cooperation between national, regional and local bodies of the core responsibilities and competences of each department (Max. 3000 characters)

Ministry for Tourism

The tourism portfolio falls under the direct responsibility of the Minister for Tourism. This Ministry is responsible for the formulation of tourism policy, for driving and monitoring its implementation at a national level. The Ministry is also responsible for Aviation and the Film Industry.

Malta Tourism Authority (MTA)

The Malta Tourism Authority falls under the responsibility of the Ministry for Tourism. MTA's responsibilities range from marketing Malta as a tourist destination; tourism product planning and development; development of human resources; and ensuring that standards are adhered to through legal enforcement. The Authority issues licences under the Malta Travel and Tourism Services Act (1999) which from its end is in line with the various European Directives, such as the Services Directive, Timeshare and Package Travel Directives, amongst others, and, it also monitors, classifies and controls the licensing of and the standards

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/Notice.do?val=123070%3Acs&lang=en&list=123070%3Acs%2C&pos=1&page=1&nbl=1&pgs=10&hwords=>

provided by tourism operators. The MTA gives advice to the Ministry on tourism operations and on the sustainable planning and development of the tourism industry as well as on the infrastructure supporting the industry. MTA also undertakes and organises activities and projects as it may consider appropriate in connection with the performance of its function.

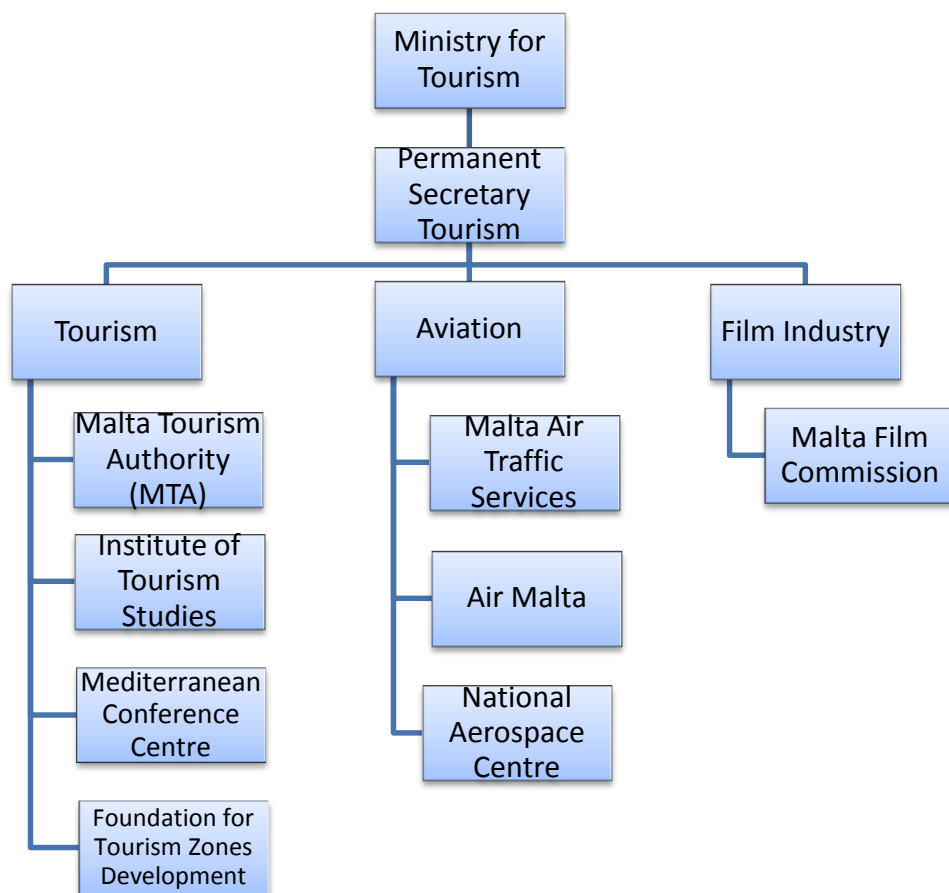
The Institute of Tourism Studies complements the work of the Ministry and the authority by providing the necessary training for the industry.

The Mediterranean Conference Centre is a national gem which contributes directly and indirectly to tourism, as it attracts numerous visitors. It also contributes in the organisation of international conferences, theatrical representations and concerts, which promote both national and international talent.

The Foundation for Tourism Zones Development focuses on the tourism product. The foundation is tasked with focusing on touristic areas in three sections of the island, the north, south and central areas, and coordinating its work with various ministries in order to create a better touristic experience for those visiting the island.

The others areas falling under the Ministry's portfolio, Aviation and Film Industry, indirectly contribute to the Tourism Industry. The National Aerospace Centre offers support to all stakeholders in the aviation industry and strengthen the country's competitiveness in the sector. The national airline Air Malta also falls within the Ministry portfolio and has an integral role in the country's tourism policy and vision. The Malta Film Commission is a government entity which acts as an advisory body responsible for the film sector on policies pertaining to the promotion, development and support of the audio-visual and film servicing industry. The aim of the Film Commission is to position Malta as a global competitive film destination, creating sustainable jobs and driving forward the development of the indigenous industry through training programmes and the Malta Film Fund.

1.2. Please provide an **organisation chart** reflecting the above described administrative and territorial organisation.



1.3. Please list and describe briefly the **relationship and main areas of cooperation between national/regional public tourism bodies and the most significant / active private organisations / stakeholders / industry associations / unions / consumer organisations**. (Max. 1500 characters)

The Ministry for Tourism and the Malta Tourism Authority maintain close ties with:

- The airline industry ensures effective connectivity to and from the island, which is essential to the tourism industry;
- Malta International Airport as a key stakeholder in the sector;
- the Institute for Tourism Studies provides training in the hospitality industry;
- the Institute for Tourism, Travel and Culture at the University of Malta provides formal education in a broad range of both undergraduate and post graduate academic programmes and has established a strong international research and consultancy portfolio focussing on European and Mediterranean tourism, hospitality, culture and travel research;
- the National Commission for Persons with Disability which provides guidance re the adaptation of buildings for accessibility;
- the Malta Environment and Planning Authority which is responsible for land use and regulation in Malta;
- the Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association which is the association for Malta Hotels and Restaurants;

- the Federated Association of Travel & Tourism Agents;
- Professional Diving Schools Association which is a stakeholder in the growing diving niche;
- the Federation of English Language Teaching Organisations which is a stakeholder in the flourishing English language teaching niche market
- the General Retailers and Traders Union which represents general retailers and traders;
- Heritage Malta which is the national agency responsible for museums, conservation practice and cultural heritage;
- Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority which deals with issues concerning consumer protection;
- Gozo Tourism Association.
- Malta Union of Tourist Guides which represents Tourist Guides
- Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry which seeks to influence the formation of policy at national and European level towards the development of an enterprise culture, the creation of favourable economic conditions to the advantage of Members and the interests of the wider community.
- Gozo Chamber of Commerce is a corporate member of the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry and is concerned with business development in Gozo.

1.4. What is the existing national/regional specific legislation on tourism? (Max. 500 characters)

The Malta Travel and Tourism Act was enacted in 1999.

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

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

- Legal Notice 82 of 2002 –(amended by Subsidiary Legislation 409.04) Tourism Accommodation

Establishments Regulations

- Legal Notice 115 of 2001 – (amended by Subsidiary Legislation 409.03) Fees Payable on the Filing of Judicial Acts in Connection with Appeals Regulations

- Legal Notice 125 of 2002 – (amended by Subsidiary Legislation 409.05) Fees (Tourism) Regulations

- Legal Notice 126 of 2002 – (amended by Subsidiary Legislation 409.06) Malta Tourism Authority (Special Procedure) Regulation

- Legal Notice 127 of 2002 –(amended by Subsidiary Legislation 409.07) Tourism Appeals Board Regulations

- Legal Notice 128 of 2002 – (amended by Subsidiary Legislation 409.08) Tourism Operations General Regulations

Regulations

- Legal Notice 129 of 2002 – (amended by Subsidiary Legislation 409.09) Travel Operators and organised Excursion Operators Regulations

<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Legal Notice 130 of 2002 – (amended by Subsidiary Legislation 409.10) Host Family Accommodation Regulations- Legal Notice 131 of 2002 – (amended by Subsidiary Legislation 409.11) Holiday Premises Regulations- Legal Notice 157 of 2000 – (amended by Subsidiary Legislation 409.01) Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations- Legal Notice 174 of 2004 – (amended by Subsidiary Legislation 409.14) Bed and breakfast (operations) in tourist accommodation establishments Regulations- Legal Notice 175 of 2004 – (amended by Subsidiary Legislation 409.15) Catering Establishments Regulations- Legal Notice 269 of 2000 – (superseded by Legal Notice 109 of 2011) Protection of Consumers (Timeshare, Long-Term Holiday Product, Resale and Exchange Contracts) Regulations- Legal Notice 282 of 2006 – (amended by Subsidiary Legislation 409.17) Injunctions for the protection of the interest of consumers (package travel and protection of buyers in contract for timesharing of immovable property) Regulations- Legal Notice 287 of 2010 – (amended by Subsidiary Legislation 409.16) Timeshare and time-share like products promotion (licensing of OPC representatives) Regulations- Legal Notice 288 of 2010 – (amended by Subsidiary Legislation 409.12) Tourist Guides Regulations- Legal Notice 357 of 2010 – (amended by Subsidiary Legislation 409.13) Recreational Diving Services Regulations <p>These legal notices outline licensing requirements, categories and facilities to be provided to the industry. The Main Act (Cap 409) and the Subsidiary Acts have been revised to transpose the Services Directive.</p> <p>Legal Notice 315 of 2016 MALTA TRAVEL AND TOURISM SERVICES ACT (CAP. 409)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Package Travel Insolvency Fund Regulations, 2016 has been published in 2016 in order to provide more security to consumers as required by the Package Travel Directive

SECTION 2 - MEMBER STATE ECONOMIC DATA AND TOURISM BUDGETS

This section is intended to provide an overview of the key statistical information about the general tourism economic environment of the Member States.

Data marked with **green** is also collected by Eurostat. Data marked with **orange** is equally collected by the OECD. The data categories match the templates of these two organisations, therefore data reported to the Commission can be transferred / used when reporting to Eurostat and OECD and vice-versa.

The statistical data provided in the tables below shall cover the year 2015 and, **if available**, 2016

The data collected through these sections will also feed into the future Virtual Tourism Observatory.

Please use the Excel templates provided below in order to facilitate coherence and comparability of the data.

Please note that you are only requested to fill in data that is available in your country. Please insert "N/A" for those that you are not able to provide.

Data requested is provided in annex to this report.

SECTION 3 NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY AND STRATEGIES

This section aims at collecting information on the Member States general strategic vision as well as the specific objectives of their tourism policies.

3.1. Please provide information in bullet points on the key mission, main medium and long-term objectives and the main targets of your national tourism policy. (Max. 1500 characters)

In 2016 the Ministry for Tourism continued to work on the actions outlined in the National Tourism Policy launched in 2015 for the period 2015-2020 with a long-term vision for 2030. This Vision is based on the principles of sustainable development with a view to safeguarding the positive aspects of the country's attractiveness as a tourism destination for the benefit of visitors and the host destination.

The National Tourism Policy aims to:

- Ensure that tourism remains a driver for sustainable development
- Consolidate summer performance
- Continue to improve tourism performance in the winter and shoulder months
- Enhance the diversification of the sector
- Create and maintain effective inter-linkages with other sectors
- Address the seasonality challenges
- Optimize the mix between tour operator business & independent travelling
- Further increase accessibility to Malta
- Enhance quality in the tourism product offer

The Specific objectives of the he National Tourism Policy include:

Economic Goals

We want tourism to:

- Remain a fair, robust and widespread economic activity;
- Sustain existing jobs and creating more sustainable all-year round jobs;
- Increase foreign income and value-added into our economy;
- Provide a fair return on investment to private investment;
- Contribute to public finances;

- Sustain air links between Malta and other countries;
- Deliver economic growth in Gozo;
- Sustain the contribution of tourism to the economy.

Environmental Goals

The quality of the environment, both natural and man-made, is essential to safeguard sustainable tourism and to maintain the attractiveness of Malta and Gozo. Evidently, a destination's competitiveness is increasingly dependent on the quality of its environment. Tourism's relationship with the environment is rather sensitive as the industry itself runs the risk of having a number of activities that lead to adverse environmental effects.

- We will ensure that tourism and the environment not only co-exist but actually complement each other and contribute to each other's well-being;

We will give added value to built and natural heritage thereby ensuring their protection;

- We will achieve a better quality of life in our urban areas (including through improving aesthetics) as this has a major influence on the quality of the tourist experience;
- We will minimise resource use and contribute to a low-carbon, eco-efficient and resource efficient economy;
- We will monitor the tourism industry and take necessary measures to mitigate pollution and to reduce the negative impacts to the environment, especially on rich biodiversity and ecologically sensitive areas such as protected areas. Tourism activities are to be in line with the area management plans that are currently being developed as well as permits and regulations established by MEPA.

Social Goals

- Tourism was and remains a main driver of social change in Malta. It connects Malta to other countries and reduces our insularity. We want tourism to continue to be a bridge whilst ensuring however that we do not lose our defining characteristics. We therefore want to have a trained and multi-tasked workforce that contributes to and enjoys a fair return from sustainable economic activity;
- To provide a forum for the exchange and sharing of ideas and cultural attitudes, which remains an essential ingredient for future economic growth and social development;
- To protect and conserve local craft and traditions and enhance Malta's intangible cultural heritage;
- To manage tourism growth and change within the limits of what is socially tolerated and acceptable.

3.2. Do you have a multi-annual national tourism strategy specific / relevant for tourism in place? If yes, please describe in bullet points the main medium and long-term objectives of the strategy as well as **who is responsible for its implementation.** **How is the implementation monitored and how often?** (Max. 2000 characters)

The National Tourism Policy is a multi-annual strategy which lists medium and long-term objectives in line with the Government's vision for Tourism.

The main organisation responsible for the execution of the tourism strategy is the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA). The Authority works in conjunction with the wider set of government entities as well as private sector stakeholders to ensure that tourism is given

priority in as many aspects of planning and development as possible.

MTA executes an annual marketing plan which concentrates on the strengthening and consolidation of tourism flows from Malta's core markets. It also seeks to grow secondary markets to develop new, emerging ones. The Plan bears a direct relationship between airline accessibility linking Malta to its tourism core markets and the flows originating from such markets. Malta's tourism strategy is based on the dual recognition of the fact that targeted tourism population can be distinguished both by nationality/country of residence and by motivational purpose of the trip.

4. TOURISM CHALLENGES, MEASURES AND INITIATIVES

This section aims at collecting information on the challenges the Member states and the tourism industry has to deal with as well as the measures put in place to tackle them.

4.1. Please identify the key challenges for the tourism sector in your country and indicate their importance /priority in the table below.

CHALLENGES	IMPORTANCE / PRIORITY		
	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Diversification of the tourism offer	X		
Protection of the cultural heritage	X		
Protection of the natural heritage	X		
ICT and innovation	X		
Connectivity and transport	X		
Employment in tourism	X		
Improving education and skills in tourism	X		
Combatting seasonality		X	
Demographic changes		X	
Improving accessibility of tourism	X		
Improving socio-economic data in tourism	X		
Economic crisis and recovery			X
Improving the sustainability of tourism offer	X		
Combatting climate change	X		
Improving the quality of tourism offer	X		
Developing responsible tourism practices	X		
Competition against other destinations	X		
Administrative / regulatory burden, bureaucracy	X		
Other, please specify	X		
Exploring new market niches	X		

4.2. Please describe briefly the main measures in your country aimed at tackling the key high-priority challenges indicated above. (Max. 2000 characters)

1. In order to diversify the tourism product we have developed niche tourism beyond the main sun and leisure sector, for instance, sports tourism; Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events (MICE); English language teaching; historical and cultural tourism; emerging niche markets such as social tourism, photography tourism, medical tourism, attracting artists, diving etc. This also helps to combat seasonality. The English language market is being actively promoted in EU member states and in third countries such as Brazil. Cruising is showing great potential as a sector that can increase tourism flows from EU MS and from third countries. Cruise passenger visitors are considered as potential tourists and may be encouraged to return for longer stays. Government continues its efforts at promoting Malta as a 'cruise and fly' destination. We are exploring ways to be part of various tourism trails, for instance, religious routes, gastronomic routes and heritage trails so that tourists travelling from distant third countries would include Malta in their European tour. MTA actively markets Malta abroad and conducts research and undertakes studies which will indicate how our islands can increase tourism flows from various EU and third countries. We are exploring ways to increase tourism flows from the BRICS countries, the USA and our established markets. This is very challenging and requires substantial preparation in terms of market research and investigation but Malta recognises the value of breaching these promising markets.
2. To protect the cultural and natural heritage - we have undertaken a number of restoration projects and rural projects aimed at improving the rural environment, utilising ERDF and EAFRD funds. An increased number of sites have been designated Natura 2000 sites contributing to the valorisation of the natural heritage of the Maltese islands. Natura 2000 sites constitute around 13% of Malta's land base area. Malta has also given a great deal of attention to the condition of the coastal areas, designating 9 Blue Flag beaches and substantially improving the quality of bathing water through the construction of three sewage treatment plants supported by EU funds. Malta has the second cleanest coastal waters in Europe.
3. To aid connectivity and transport we are tapping different markets and attracting different airlines to operate new routes. Malta is currently studying the possibility of having an air strip in Gozo and the feasibility of other options to improve connectivity to Gozo: a fast ferry between the islands is being planned in the short term, whilst studies relative to the construction of a tunnel are being carried out.
4. With regards employment and improving education and skills in tourism, training is provided by the Employment and Training Corporation and the Institute for Tourism Studies. Training is also given through a number of ESF projects.
5. Demographic changes and tourism accessibility - This social tourism niche is viewed as a niche which can provide opportunities for Malta, particularly during shoulder months. Accessibility is being promoted as a factor that can increase sustainability and strengthen the industry. Tourism is seen as an effective driver of economic growth and inclusive development, creating jobs and wellbeing for the community. In 2016, the Ministry for Tourism, together with the Parliamentary Secretariat responsible for the rights of persons with a disability, launched a set of guidelines intended to encourage and guide hoteliers to improve accessibility within their properties.



Tourism-for-all-design-guidelines.pdf

6. The policy of diversification in the tourism sector contributed to the positive impetus to the Maltese economic drive.
7. The National Tourism Policy is based on the concept of controlled growth, which is achievable through the targeting of appropriate markets with the aim of achieving higher rates of economic returns and returns on investment. It is also based on the principles of aiming for high quality delivery at all levels of the tourism value chain with a view to achieving improved competitive positioning in the international tourism market.
8. To combat climate change - we have introduced the concept of eco-certification for new hotels which includes mandatory and voluntary criteria which are aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reducing energy consumption. Sustainable transport modes including walking and cycling are also supported by the MTA.
9. To compete with other destinations we promote innovation and training in the tourism industry and encourage low-cost carriers to include Malta in their routes. The eco-certification of hotels includes measures which promote the efficient use of resources which should enable businesses to cut costs and increase competitiveness.
10. It is government policy to introduce measures which combat bureaucracy. MTA holds regular meetings with stakeholders (e.g. MEPA, with regard to new tourism projects which involve the granting of permits by various entities so as to hasten the process by discussing overlapping issues at a top level.) MTA also supports entrepreneurs who wish to convert old buildings into boutique hotels. MTA goes through the planning and application stages with entrepreneurs and holds meetings with the National Commission of Persons with Disability to facilitate the process of conversion in line with legislation.

4.3. Please identify if any of the above mentioned challenges relate to any legislative measures at EU level, and how. (Max. 1000 characters)

Challenges for the industry related to any legislative measures at EU level include:

- Connectivity and transport. Third countries do not always make it easy for us to operate and there can be problems of connectivity. The Horizontal air service agreements which the EU and its member states make with third countries would facilitate connectivity.
- Maintain accessibility within the climate change policies context. Since Malta must be accessed by air or sea these policies can result in problems of connectivity. Policies concerning climate change can also affect the sustainability of tourism so this is an area with many implications.
- Accessing European financial instruments in order to enhance the tourism product, market tourism in established and new markets, diversify into new niche markets and undertake studies in tourism sector.

- Employment in tourism might be supported by the recognition of professional qualifications in tourism and the harmonisation of rules regarding recognition of qualifications.

4.4. Please identify and describe any measures implemented in your country to increase tourism flows from other EU Member States and from third countries.
(Max. 1000 characters)

As in Section 4.2, point 1 and point 4 above, Malta aims to diversify its tourism product to provide niches which will attract tourist from various countries during different times of the year and actively aims to improve connectivity to Malta and Gozo and to study the feasibility to penetrating new markets and actively markets Malta in new and established markets.

Also as in Section 4.2, point 10 above, we support any measures which can increase the competitive edge of businesses in our market.

4.5. Please describe how promotional measures implemented in your country make use of / capitalise on the promotional campaigns carried out by the Commission
(i.e. Ready for Europe, EDEN, low-season tourism campaigns, etc.). (Max. 1000 characters)

The Ministry for Tourism and the Malta Tourism Authority have participated for a number of years in the EDEN and Calypso initiatives. Past winners are promoted on the Malta Tourism Authority and Ministry for Tourism websites. There is a link to the EDEN website from the same websites where the winners are also promoted.

The current wave of the EDEN Promotional and Awareness Raising Project started being implemented in 2016 and will be concluded in 2017. The project's aim was to create awareness about EDEN destinations across Malta and Gozo. A number of activities were implemented by the Ministry, in collaboration with MTA and MTA's foreign offices. An International EDEN conference was organised in October 2016 in Malta; a specialised itinerary and promotional video of the EDEN destinations were launched; and international print articles and blogs were published – all part of the promotion of the EDEN destinations.

4.6. Please identify and describe any measures /actions in your country which contribute to maximising the potential of national policies for developing tourism
(e.g. ensuring that tourism interests are taken into account in the development of other policies which may have impact on tourism). (Max.1000 characters)

The Government's plan emphasizes improving tourism in the shoulder months as a key priority. Several proposals in the plan are aimed at supporting tourism.

- Segment marketing and promoting Gozo as a unique destination are two measures included here and which are being actively pursued.
- Development of new tourism opportunities such as exploring the feasibility of Medical Tourism and new tourist niches are given importance.
- Importance is also given to strengthening existing cruise liners, diving, leisure, language teaching, and cultural tourism among others.
- The promotion of Malta for MICE, short-break holidays and the development of agro

and eco-tourism, promotion of careers in tourism.

The measures aimed at promoting tourism are reflected in Government's budget measures. Studies for an air-strip in Gozo are also in hand and a socio-economic study will be undertaken.

These measures and actions all strengthen the aims of the National Tourism Policy 2015-2020 to increase tourism in a sustainable manner by exploring new markets and developing new niches to improve the tourism produce and increase tourism particularly in the off-shoulder months.

4.7. Please identify and describe any measures/actions in your country which contribute to maximising the potential of EU Financial Instruments for developing tourism (e.g. information on main objectives, financing opportunities, training courses, etc.). (Max. 1000 characters)

The availability of EU Financial Instruments as an opportunity is widely disseminated to all stakeholders.

Both public and private organisations hold regular EU Financing information events including seminars, and these are well covered in the local media.

The Ministry for Tourism held an information seminar in 2016 for tourism industry stakeholders to provide information on new funding opportunities available, mainly a new grant scheme for businesses.

4.8 Please describe shortly which EU programmes are used the most frequently and for what purposes of tourism development in your country. (Max. 1000 characters)

EU programmes which are used most frequently are the ERDF, ESF and the EAFRD funds. These funds are utilised to carry out restoration works on heritage sites and to strengthen the rural tourism product as well as to provide training and capacity building for the Industry and to support SMEs.

Cultural and historical tourism is an important niche, and Malta is also aiming to promote eco-tourism especially in the off-shoulder months. This would improve the tourism product and strengthen tourism sustainability.

The Grant Scheme funded by ERDF is a useful tool in promoting sustainability in tourism by assisting tourism enterprises.

Other projects included projects which are ESF funded and these provide training to the tourism sector to improve skills, including management skills and retaining and attracting people to work in the tourism sector in order ultimately to achieve better quality in the tourism product.

A number of applications have been submitted under the current Structural Funds Programme (2014-2020). One of these proposals consists of carrying out major renovation works at the Mediterranean Conference Centre, and the development and installation of a state of the art system which will allow visitors to experience the Sacra Infermeria through modern technology.

The Ministry for Tourism also looks at directly funded programmes such as COSME. Malta seeks to apply for EDEN related calls and up to now has been always successful with one or two exceptions. HORIZON 2020 is another programme which the Ministry has explored. Interreg calls are also considered although there has been no involvement in Interreg Projects in the last years.

Sustainable and responsible tourism, whether talking about economic, social or environmental sustainability, is a broad concept and may be interpreted in various ways depending on the attributes of a Member State or region.

The following questions focus on sustainability and responsibility in tourism as described in the 2007 Commission Communication² on an agenda for sustainable and competitive European tourism.

4.9. Sustainable destination: What support is given to strengthen destination management at the national /regional/local level (e.g. supportive policy environment, knowledge networks, training programmes, technological support tools, financial support, promotional activities, etc.)? (Max. 1000 characters)

At the national level Malta recognises the importance of the tourism sector as one of the most significant contributors to its economic development. It is supported by various policies and legislation some of the most important of which are described below.

The National Environment Policy and the National Sustainable Development Policy support the protection and the development of the environment in a sustainable manner. The National Strategy for Creative and Culture Industries builds on the National Culture Policy and aims to position Malta as an attractive, contemporary and stimulating creative hub within the Mediterranean region, with strong emphasis on exchange and access to international markets. The Malta Climate Change Adaptation Strategy provides a strategy for adapting to climate change and mitigating its effects. Climate change is a phenomenon which can have a substantial impact on tourism and so this strategy can provide support to the tourism sector.

The restoration and conservation of the cultural heritage and the conservation of the natural heritage are two key measures which can enhance the visitor experience and strengthen destination management. The provision of alternative attractions such as the construction of the public aquarium through private-public partnership, and with the contribution of EU funding provides a new major attraction together with the general enhancement of tourism areas and management of various tourism zones including coastal areas. By preserving the beauty of our natural and cultural heritage through various projects an attractive and varied tourism experience can be provided to visitors in search of diverse experiences.

Integrated coastal zone management - The management of the coastal zone is the remit of several agencies and institutions having jurisdiction over particular geographical areas or uses within the coast. Spatial planning is one tool that can assist in identifying a strategic approach towards sustainable development of the coastal environment. The current Structure Plan calls for a Coastal Management Plan and provides for measures to address coastal development. The Development Planning Act has extended development control beyond the coast to the marine environment, thus enabling the Malta Environment and Planning Authority to address coastal development in a more integrated way. As noted in Section 4.2., point 2, the construction of sewage treatment plants has had a very positive effect on the quality of our coastal waters.

The Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) has undertaken the role of Beach Management, including beach replenishment projects and management operations of other coastal stretches. The beaches managed by MTA strive to meet EU and international standards in safety, bathing water quality, services and environmental awareness. The sustainable management approach, abiding to the international Blue Flag Programme Criteria resulted in the achievement of international and national Quality Awards. Awards include the Blue Flag

² http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/documents/communications/commission-communication-2007/index_en.htm

(BF) that requires applying 100% of the BF criteria and the Beach of Quality (BOQ) that requires over 70% of the same criteria. Through sustainable beach management operations locals and tourists can benefit from the good use of the coast while respecting the natural environment.

Training provided by ITS and also by MTA through various initiatives, including EU-funded projects, is aimed to strengthen destination management. Other financial instruments such as JAIME or other initiatives promoted through Malta Enterprise providing soft loans for SMEs, including those in the tourism sector can assist the development of the tourism industry.

Similarly the development of excellent IT facilities and technological support can enhance the tourism experience and is particularly important in the case of MICE activities and in the case of the hosting of large activities in the cultural or entertainment sphere.

At national level Malta is taking a number of initiatives to address waste management. These initiatives range from investment in capital projects for waste management facilities to information campaigns on waste minimisation and separation. Policies and measures have been introduced to regulate water management and conservation, power generation, landfill management. Better road networks (partly financed by TEN-T) and major projects for control of storm water drainage have been undertaken to continue to improve the management of the islands as a quality destination.

4.10. Sustainable businesses: What support is given to strengthen the sustainability and competitiveness of tourism businesses (e.g. supportive policy environment, knowledge networks, orientation of business support services to sustainability, training, financial incentives, promotional activities, etc.)? (Max. 1000 characters)

- To promote competitiveness by minimizing the use of resources, the government promotes the use of renewable sources of energy. A notable number of tourism enterprises have decided to invest in renewable energy measures either through their own funds or through a Government support scheme which was run by Malta Enterprise.
- Eco-certification - of new tourism establishments also promotes various eco-friendly measures and around 16% of the hotel industry is now eco-certified. Sustainability concerns integrated in a socially responsible manner are aimed at helping the tourism industry to innovate its products and services and increase their quality and value.
- The Grant Scheme for Sustainable Tourism Projects by Enterprises - also supported other environmentally related interventions for tourism enterprises such as the introduction of waste separation bins, the installation of room energy management systems. These measures contributed to minimise resource use, electricity and water consumption and to incentivise recycling.

4.11. Responsible tourism: What support is given to tourists and the tourism industry to promote their responsible practices and choices (e.g. awareness raising, sustainability in education, national marketing and media campaigns, promotion of certification schemes, etc.)? (Max. 1000 characters)

- Quality Assurance scheme for the MICE Sector – The scheme was launched in 2009 and is now well-established. In addition MTA actively promotes corporate social responsibility during MICE events, for e.g. by encouraging tree planting activities

among participants or by promoting donation campaigns in favour of charitable institutions. The Quality Assurance scheme has been successfully extended to include Visitor Attractions and Restaurants. To date more than 150 entities have been certified Quality Assured.

- Eco-certification – eco-certified hotels are promoted on the Visitmalta website which is the main website and the official portal for Malta, Gozo and Comino.

4.12. Please describe maximum three of the most significant planned / future tourism measures (legislative or non-legislative) which envisage to impact travellers visiting your country from other Member States or from outside Europe.

- The revision of the Visa Code is one of the most anticipated measures, which is viewed as having the potential to simplify the visa application procedures and thereby increase tourism in the Schengen area.
- The measures proposed in the coastal and maritime strategy are also anticipated to have positive effects on Malta.
- The legislation about greenhouse gas emissions may impact travellers visiting Malta as we rely on sea or air to transport tourists.

5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

5.1. Please describe maximum 3 best practices of tourism measures implemented at national, regional or local level (any type of activity). (Max. 2000 characters)

At national level:

- Improved flight connectivity – this is crucial to Malta and Gozo. Not only is it important to be connected to as many different destinations as possible it is also important that these routes are competitively priced. Routes which have connections and which require inter-line agreements are generally more expensive than direct long-haul flights and so any measures which can decrease these costs are important. The horizontal air service agreements which the EU makes with regard to third countries are important in enhancing accessibility from different destinations.
- Diversification of the tourism product- the diversification into different niches and in different markets promotes tourism sustainability.
- Presenting the authenticity of the Maltese product in a sustainable manner – this aspect permits us to attract tourists interested in the tangible and intangible aspects of the natural, cultural and historical heritage.

5.2. Please describe, in a concise manner, in your view, what policy developments / actions / activities would you expect from the Commission's tourism team that would serve better (than the current ones) the EU Member States and the industry. (Max. 2000 characters)

- A Quality certification framework to help tourism service providers promote the quality of their services and strengthen consumer confidence.
- Assistance through EU funding instruments to market ourselves in new destinations and third countries and to assist us to develop new niche markets which would promote sustainability.

- Promotion of European and member state culture and history in long-haul markets in such a manner that we can be included in possible cultural and historical tourism trails.
- Assistance to resolve issues of flight connectivity and air slots so that we can reduce the costs of travelling to Malta and become more competitive.
- Measures which would help EU member state countries to become more competitive compared to third countries.
- Measures to reduce regulatory and administrative burden for businesses.

THANK YOU