

Together for EU Tourism stakeholders meeting

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EcoMarine Malta
→ The soul of the sea ←

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#EUTourism





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→ The soul of the sea ←

“Sustainable marine life watching as tourism, educational and scientific activity.”

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What type of organization you are

- Social Enterprise
- First and only Sustainable Marine Life Watching enterprise in Malta

What is your scope, key activities and key value proposition

- Increase awareness about the marine ecosystem and being part of its conservation
- Increase knowledge about social enterprising
- Marine life spotting experience for everyone
- Ocean literacy programmes for schools and the general public
- Marine biology courses for kids and adults
- Team building for companies in collaboration with Global Mindset Development
- Scientific research on bottlenose dolphins

A company like EcoMarine can be an example for future generations who want to create profit while respecting and protecting the environment.

With regards to Transition Pathway for Tourism which aspects you consider Most relevant for your organization?

Making tourism more environmentally friendly and in implementing several ongoing legislative initiatives relating to environmental protection at Regional and National Level.

Developing comprehensive national or regional strategies taking account of economic, environmental and social sustainability of tourism.

Best practice exchange for strategy development on national, regional and local level

Supporting SMEs in their key role in the sustainable tourism ecosystem, in terms of technical assistance and the funding needed to meet the objectives of the strategy.

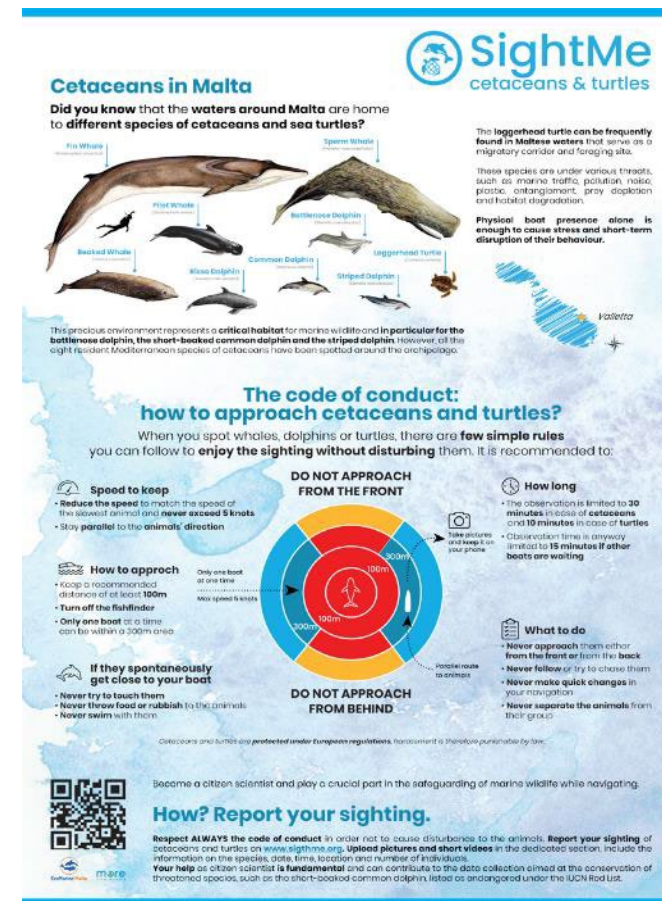
Stakeholder cooperation to agree on common practices such as Codes of Conduct to actively improve the protection and conservation of the marine ecosystem.

Topic 11

Easily accessible best practice, peer learning and networking for SMEs

In 2023-2025 we will:

- Before the summer each year Organize one webinar for the general public and one webinar for teachers to involve schools.
- We will write four blog posts in March, April, June and July about the importance and the pros of following the Code and what species is possible to encounter in Maltese waters.
- We will present the Code of Conduct during our tours to all our guests and show them how to apply it
- Yearly we will provide two workshops and explanatory meetings other marine tour operators to improve their offers towards more sustainable services
- We commit to Report to the authority any illegality we observe



SightMe
cetaceans & turtles

Cetaceans in Malta
Did you know that the waters around Malta are home to different species of cetaceans and sea turtles?

The loggerhead turtle can be frequently found in Maltese waters that serve as a migratory corridor and foraging site. These species are under various threats, such as marine traffic, pollution, noise, plastic, entanglement, prey depletion and habitat degradation. Physical boat presence alone is enough to cause stress and short-term disruption of their behaviour.

The precious environment represents a critical habitat for marine wildlife and in particular for the bottlenose dolphin, the short-bonnet common dolphin and the striped dolphin. However, of the eight resident Mediterranean species of cetaceans, none have been spotted around the archipelago.

The code of conduct: how to approach cetaceans and turtles?
When you spot whales, dolphins or turtles, there are few simple rules you can follow to enjoy the sighting without disturbing them. It is recommended to:

- Speed to keep**
 - Reduce the speed to match the speed of the slowest animal and never exceed 5 knots
 - Stay parallel to the animals' direction
- How to approach**
 - Keep a recommended distance of at least 100m
 - Turn off the fishfinder
 - Only one boat at a time can be within a 300m area
- If they spontaneously get close to your boat**
 - Never try to touch them
 - Never throw food or rubbish to the animals
 - Never swim with them
- DO NOT APPROACH FROM THE FRONT**
- DO NOT APPROACH FROM BEHIND**
- How long**
 - The observation is limited to 30 minutes in case of cetaceans and 10 minutes in case of turtles
 - Observation time is anyway limited to 15 minutes if other boats are waiting
- What to do**
 - Never approach them either from the front or from the back
 - Never follow or try to chase them
 - Never make quick changes in your navigation
 - Never separate the animals from their group

Cetaceans and turtles are protected under European regulations, harassment is therefore punishable by law.

Become a citizen scientist and play a crucial part in the safeguarding of marine wildlife while navigating.

How? Report your sighting.
Respect ALWAYS the code of conduct in order not to cause disturbance to the animals. Report your sighting of cetaceans and turtles on www.sightme.org. Upload pictures and short videos in the dedicated section, include the information on the species, date, time, location and number of individuals. Your help as citizen scientist is fundamental and can contribute to the data collection aimed at the conservation of threatened species, such as the short-bonnet common dolphin, listed as endangered under the IUCN Red List.



Ocean literacy for tourists and students
Different stakeholders same approach



Topic 21

Educational organisations to engage in developing and renewing tourism education

By 2025

- Engage five schools each year in the hands-on Ocean literacy programmes
- Organize in collaboration with Climate – Kick hub Malta Young Innovators Chlimatons

Topic 26:

Tourism services for visitors and residents alike



- Increase the summer experiences by up to five weekly tours in the high season June – September (16 weeks) involving up to 720 customers. Increase the fall, winter, and spring activities by up to two tours per week (28 weeks) involving up to 500 customers.
- Expand the fleet to two boats to double the winter numbers and offer Marine Life Spotting in Malta and weekly experiences during the high season. Increase by 60% the presence of tourists on board while continuing to share our experiences with Maltese customers and ex-pats living in Malta permanently.

Key message on how to support, and implement following the pledges.

Governments and Tourism Authorities should adopt a "**Sustainability Assessment and Recognition**" to identify companies that offer **REAL and EFFECTIVE** sustainable tourism services and support those companies performing well in such an assessment.

A European task force with **National coordinators (experts in the sector)** should be responsible for creating the standards for "Sustainability Assessment and Recognition" following the national coordinators' recommendations.

Support can be:

Reduced taxes, reduced employee costs for the company, easy access to credit grants, promotion and advertising at favourable prices, and increased presence on EU/National/Regional Tourism promotion portals.

“Six decades into the future, it will be too late to do what is possible right now. We are in a sweet spot in time. Never again will there be a better time to take actions to ensure an enduring place for ourselves within the living systems that sustain us.”

Sylvia A. Earle



Thank you!



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