



MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT,
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Malta's
Sustainable
Development
Vision for

2050



Malta's Sustainable Development
Vision for 2050

Foreword

Malta's Sustainable Development Vision for 2050 is ambitious in both scope and intent. It sets out a long-term framework for advancing sustainable development in Malta whilst taking into consideration past shortcomings and achievements.

The focus is on identifying existing gaps where further development is required and setting out realistic goals to address these challenges. It also takes into account developments at international and EU level.

Economic growth, environmental protection and social cohesion must move forward in a mutually reinforcing manner. Our Vision therefore provides a platform for an integrated approach to development across all sectors to ensure a consistent, well-coordinated and multi-stakeholder approach towards its realisation.

Decoupling economic and social development from all environmental pressures and consumption of resources is a continuous challenge in Malta as in many countries. It requires a paradigm shift in our approach to future development.

The business-as-usual approach is no longer desirable. We require new approaches and the reallocation of public and private investment, particularly in terms of innovation, research and development in those areas where we need to improve most.

We need to shift towards a green and inclusive economy, achieving equilibrium between environmental protection and economic development, whilst also ensuring that future development is socially sustainable.

Malta's Sustainable Development Vision for 2050 is grounded on these principles and is designed to lead us on this desired development path.

Achieving such a Vision will require the support and engagement of all sectors of society. Ultimately, sustainable development is everyone's responsibility, be it Government at its various levels, private sector and civil society in its many components.

This Vision therefore provides a solid foundation for collective action to meet this challenge and achieve strong and sustainable development by 2050.

Hon. José Herrera

Minister for the Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change

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Thinking about the future today

Socio-economic and environmental conditions at home, across Europe and around the world have changed dramatically. We are experiencing demographic shifts, growing pressures on ecosystems, and increasing competition for global resources and economic development.

Malta's future development will strongly be dependent on its ability to respond and adapt to these global long-term trends and challenges. Identifying new development paradigms which take into account our planet's capacities is thus essential. This requires in turn a set of coherent and effective policies, going beyond economic growth, also addressing social and ecological issues, thus restoring a sustainable, balanced and inclusive development.



Today, the world's population continues to grow, albeit more slowly than in the recent past. The world's population is projected to increase by slightly more than one billion people over the next years, reaching 8.6 billion in 2030, and to increase further to 9.8 billion in 2050 and 11.2 billion by 2100.¹

Older persons are increasing in number and making up a growing share of the population in virtually every country, with implications for nearly all sectors of society, including labour and financial markets, the demand for goods and services such as housing, transportation and social protection, as well as family structures and inter-generational ties.² The number of older persons in the world is projected to be 1.4 billion in 2030 and 2.1 billion in 2050, and could rise to 3.1 billion in 2100.³

Global economic growth increased to 3.6 % in 2017 from 3.2 % in 2016. The recovery was mainly driven by expansions in developing, emerging and developed countries alike. Future growth is likely to stay below 4 %, as economic activity normalises in most major economies without significant stimulus and fixed investment remains at a moderate level.

In many places around the world, this economic growth has fuelled reductions in poverty levels, yet more than 600 million people are still living in extreme poverty⁴. Income inequality within and among many countries has been rising. Global unemployment remains elevated at more than 190 million. At the same time, vulnerable employment remains pervasive and is likely to increase in the years to come with the number of people in vulnerable employment projected to increase by 17 million per year in 2018 and 2019.⁵

As economic and population growth increase the levels of global consumption, many countries face growing shortages of vital renewable resources such as freshwater, cropland, rangeland, forests, fisheries and other wildlife. Depletion of renewable natural resources, combined with environmental degradation and climate change, pose fundamental threats to human security. Separately or in combination with other factors, they can destabilise livelihoods, negatively affect ecosystems and undermine peace and development.

Migration is another response to resource-scarcity and to the conflict that results from such scarcity. Global migration is at record levels and likely to increase further as population growth, increased exploitation and climate change increase pressure on resources. Increasing unemployment in poorer countries will lead growing numbers to seek a better life abroad.

On the one hand, Migration can bring benefits to both individuals and countries. The individual can gain new opportunities and the country of origin receives remittances. Likewise, the country of destination obtains skills and labour. On the other hand, large-scale and persistent net immigration can result in an imbalance between demand for consumption and sustainable resources. These flows of people represent a humanitarian crisis and put pressure on the sustainability of destination countries.⁶

All these factors raise questions about the future of education, employment, the response to demographic changes and climate change, social equality and justice.

Malta's Sustainable Development Vision for 2050 therefore sets out our aspirations and priorities for future sustainable development. This roadmap is to be followed in decision-making and in drawing-up national policies and programmes.

¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division [2017]. World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision, Key Findings and Advance Tables. Working Paper No. ESA/P/WP/248, available at: https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/publications/Files/WPP2017_KeyFindings.pdf

² United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division [2017]. World Population Ageing 2017 – Highlights, available at: http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/ageing/WPA2017_Highlights.pdf

³ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division [2017]. World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision, Key Findings and Advance Tables. Working Paper No. ESA/P/WP/248, available at: https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/publications/Files/WPP2017_KeyFindings.pdf

⁴ World Poverty Clock, available at: <https://worldpoverty.io/>

⁵ World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2018, available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-dgreports/-dcomm/-publ/documents/publication/wcms_615594.pdf

⁶ http://www.un.org/en/events/environmentconflictday/pdf/GN_Renewable_Consultation.pdf

Malta's development baselines

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Malta's economic performance has been outstanding in recent years.⁷ According to the International Monetary Fund, Malta remains one of the strongest in Europe, owing to favourable economic conditions and sound policies, which advanced structural reforms and supported the strengthening of private and public balance sheets.

The European Commission notes that growth has been mainly export driven. Net exports accounted for about half the increase in real GDP since 2012, in particular of services. Exports of services have been boosted predominantly by the activities of the gaming industry, also supported by sizeable gains in tourism and transport sectors.

Inflation has stabilised at relatively low levels. Following a period of volatility in the past, Malta has shown the lowest volatility in its Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP) inflation among the euro-area members since early 2014.⁸

The competitiveness of the Maltese economy has improved throughout the past years, and have positively added to Malta's economic growth and its ability to attract foreign investment. Malta ranked 37th out of 137 countries in the 2017-18 Global Competitiveness Report, 3 places higher than the previous reporting period. Bureaucracy, insufficient capacity to innovate, inadequate supply of infrastructure and access to finance are reported in the Global Competitiveness Report as the main barriers for doing business in Malta.⁹

According to the European Commission, the SMEs sector has shown a considerable dynamism in recent years. Growth in terms of number of persons employed and value added has been above EU average and only a minority of firms appear to be financially constrained.

Malta's Research and Development (R&D) performance has improved. The improvement in the R&D performance is partly due to sustained efforts by

the public authorities to build an R&D system based on indigenous strengths, involving several policy measures to support the emergence of an innovation ecosystem and innovative firms. Structural factors continue to hamper the growth of R&D-intensive firms and thus the development of a thriving innovation ecosystem. Firms have limited capacity to scale up their R&D activities, due to their small size, reliance on internal funding for R&D expenditure and the limited size of the local market.

Labour market conditions continue to be favourable. Employment growth is among the highest in the EU, in particular due to the services sector. The unemployment rate has dropped and youth unemployment remains also much below EU average. Substantial progress has been made on policies to improve the work-life balance and "make work pay" which has helped to lower the gender employment gap, although it remains substantial. The participation of people with disabilities in the labour market also remains low.

Despite improvement in recent years, the early school leaving (ESL) rate continues to be a challenge. The tertiary educational attainment rate is rising steadily. Measures have been undertaken to improve skills governance and participation in adult learning. Despite these efforts skill levels appear low, as it may take time before achievements can be seen. These shortages are being filled with foreign labour across all skills levels.

Poverty levels, as defined by the EU, have declined in recent years and stood below the EU average. Income inequalities remain below the EU average. The most vulnerable

⁷ European Commission Staff Working Document, Country Report Malta 2018, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2018-european-semester-country-report-malta-en.pdf>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ The Global Competitiveness Report 2017-2018, available at: <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GCR2017-2018/05FullReportTheGlobalCompetitivenessReport2017%E2%80%932018.pdf>

¹⁰ National Transport Strategy 2050, available at: <http://www.transport.gov.mt/transport-strategies/national-transport>

are those persons who are inactive, unemployed, retired, or single (especially those with children). Among the foreign workforce, non-EU migrants tend to be at higher risk of poverty when compared to EU workers. Children and elders also tend to be more vulnerable than working age adults.

In recent years, Government has introduced a number of measures aimed at tackling this social blight. These include increases in pensions and allowances for the elderly, such as those living in their own residence or for those caring for them. Furthermore, there were measures aimed to encourage the participation in the labour force, such as in-work benefit schemes, increases in rent subsidies for people in need and schemes promoting an increase in the supply of social housing.

Indicators on health outcomes have improved and waiting times are being reduced. The performance of the health system has improved, as evidenced by high life expectancy, amenable and preventable mortality rates below the EU average and generally low levels of unmet need. Access to innovative medicines, mainly for cancer treatment, was improved by introducing clinical pathways and innovative procurement strategies. In addition, waiting times for surgical interventions and diagnostics are being tackled thanks to an increased capacity and commissioning of some services from the private sector. Nevertheless, some risk factors may have a negative impact on fiscal sustainability in the future. In particular, rising obesity levels pose a significant challenge to public health. Challenges remain in the redistribution of resources and activities from hospital

to primary care, and in access to innovative medicines.

The robust economic growth together with favourable labour market conditions as well as the rising numbers of foreigners further exacerbate existing bottlenecks, including in infrastructure, and put further pressure on environmental resources and climate policies.

As an EU Member State, Malta operates within one of the most well developed environmental legal and policy frameworks in the world. Over the past years, there have been a number of initiatives in order to reduce pressures on the environment and combat climate change, this includes ongoing legislative strengthening, investment in infrastructure, monitoring, institutional capacity building and upgrading/restoration projects across all sectors of development.

During the past three years Malta has embarked upon a wholesome reform of the energy sector. This has resulted in improved policymaking, more focused economic and environmental regulation as well as a reformed operational landscape. Substantial progress has been made in recent years in diversifying the energy mix. Significant efforts have been targeted at upgrading the energy infrastructure, including switching electricity production from oil to natural gas. Important measures in this area include the gasification of the Maltese power plants and the completion of the electricity interconnector with Italy. Nevertheless, progress is still limited as regards improving energy efficiency, increasing energy production from renewable sources and reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Government also introduced several

programmes to incentivise energy performance improvements in buildings, through grant schemes or soft loans for energy saving solutions. These solutions included energy-efficient appliances, energy-saving lighting systems, thermal insulation, double-glazing, solar heating, building management systems, photovoltaic panels, solar water heaters and wind energy resources.

Measures have been taken to improve road infrastructure and reduce traffic congestion. In 2016, the Government adopted a National Transport Strategy with a 2050 horizon and an Operational Transport Master Plan to 2025.¹⁰

In recent years Malta has made improvements in the waste management field, notably in terms of upgrading waste infrastructure, the setting up of waste separation and recycling systems, as well as educational programmes; including educational programmes in schools. Despite these significant investments, waste minimisation and the transition to a low-carbon circular economy remain a challenge.

Malta has, to date, suffered from significant water stress. Water scarcity is a major problem and may be exacerbated by climate change. For decades, Malta has relied significantly on desalination technology in order to augment its freshwater supplies. Government's investment in polishing plants to further improve the quality of treated sewage effluent will secure a considerable addition to Malta's water resource budget. Termed New Water, this resource serves as a platform to replace non-potable uses of water particularly in industry and agriculture.

Sustainable development governance

Sustainable development is about pursuing development strategies and measures that are viable in the long-term by balancing economic, environmental and social needs. Prominently defined in the Brundtland Report of 1987, sustainable development is still mainly referred to as

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Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The UN and the 2030 agenda

In designing the development path to a better life for all inhabitants of Malta, we are aware of our responsibilities in the global context. The Sustainable Development Vision therefore takes into account the global development plan set out in the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda [2030 Agenda].

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs] that were adopted by the UN in September 2015 represent a unique achievement for the international community. It reflects an ambitious and transformative framework that has the potential to steer global development onto a path where human welfare and human rights, economic prosperity and stable societies can be secured in an environmentally sustainable manner, while extreme poverty is eradicated.¹¹

The 2030 Agenda contains 17 SDGs. While taking a long-term view (until 2030), the SDGs have clear targets to be achieved by 2030. These goals and their corresponding targets give the impetus for urgent action.

The adopted Outcome Document “Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development” acknowledges that there are “deep interconnections and many crosscutting elements across the new Goals and targets” [paragraph17] that have to be addressed through an integrated approach. This cross-cutting nature of the SDGs itself highlights the need to exploit synergies and overcome

silos between different Ministries and Departments. How this will be operationalised will depend on how Member States decide to take up the recommendations and aspirations of the document in their national policies and institutional reforms. This is specified in paragraph 55, which states that:



The Sustainable Development Goals and targets are integrated and indivisible, global in nature and universally applicable, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. Targets are defined as aspirational and global, with each Government setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national circumstances. Each Government will also decide how these aspirational and global targets should be incorporated into national planning processes, policies and strategies.”

This strongly suggests that the national

governance level will be highly important for framing and carrying out approaches and policies that promote the SDGs. Thus, national sustainable development strategies and policies will play a central role in the implementation process.

The document makes specific reference to the efforts for implementation and follow-up at the global, regional and national level. Greater cooperation on the regional level could be a substantial element of implementing the SDGs globally.

¹¹ Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

 **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

<p>1 NO POVERTY</p> 	<p>2 ZERO HUNGER</p> 	<p>3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p> 
<p>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</p> 	<p>5 GENDER EQUALITY</p> 	<p>6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION</p> 
<p>7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY</p> 	<p>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p> 	<p>9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</p> 
<p>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p> 	<p>11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p> 	<p>12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</p> 
<p>13 CLIMATE ACTION</p> 	<p>14 LIFE BELOW WATER</p> 	<p>15 LIFE ON LAND</p> 
<p>16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</p> 	<p>17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</p> 	<p> SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS</p>

EU's Sustainable Development governance architecture

Two major EU strategies relating to sustainable development are the revised EU Sustainable Development Strategy¹² and the Europe 2020 Strategy – the EU's agenda for growth and jobs for the current decade¹³.

In November 2016, the European Commission (EC) presented its response to the 2030 Agenda and adopted a Sustainable Development Package containing:

- An overarching Communication on 'Next steps for a sustainable European future: European action for sustainability'¹⁴ delineating EU's response to the Agenda 2030. The Communication was accompanied by a Staff Working Document¹⁵, which outlines key European actions and policies in relation to the 17 SDGs.
- A proposal for a revision of the European Consensus on Development, which aims to update the EU's development response to current global challenges and promote the Agenda 2030 implementation in partnership with developing countries.
- A post-Cotonou framework on the future relations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States.¹⁶

In June 2017, the Council adopted conclusions on 'A sustainable European future: The EU response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'¹⁷. These Council Conclusions set out the EU's response to the 2030 Agenda and its approach to how it is being implemented at EU level. They cover the next steps, the means and resources required, how multilateral stakeholders can be involved, and measures on future monitoring and review.

In 2017, a reference EU SDG indicator set was developed by Eurostat to monitor progress regarding the SDGs in an EU context. The EU SDG indicator set is comprised of 100 indicators, which are evenly distributed across the 17 SDGs, so that progress in each SDG is measured by five or six indicators primarily attributed to them.

¹² Commission Communication 'Mainstreaming sustainable development into EU policies: 2009 Review of the European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development', available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0400:FIN:en:PDF>

¹³ EUROPE 2020 A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52010DC2020&from=EN>

¹⁴ COM[2016] 739 available at: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-next-steps-sustainable-europe-20161122_en.pdf

¹⁵ SWD [2016] 390 available at: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/swd-key-european-actions-2030-agenda-sdgs-390-20161122_en.pdf

¹⁶ JOIN [2016] 52 available at: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/joint-communication-renewed-partnership-acp-20161122_en.pdf

¹⁷ Available at, <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10138-2017-INIT/en/pdf>

Malta's sustainable development framework

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For the Maltese Government, the promotion of sustainable development is a fundamental goal and yardstick of Government's action.

Malta is one of the few countries having a specific Sustainable Development framework model in place which is underpinned by the Sustainable Development Act [Chapter 521]¹⁸. This legislative framework mandates Government to “mainstream Sustainable Development across the workings of Government, to raise awareness of sustainable development issues and practices across society”.

The Sustainable Development Directorate within the Ministry for the Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change [MESDC] is the Competent Authority responsible for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Act. Amongst other responsibilities, the Sustainable Development Directorate is to ensure

the development and implementation of Malta's Sustainable Development Strategy and to revise the said Strategy in line with national, EU and international developments.

The same Act stipulates other bodies along with their respective roles and responsibilities. The Permanent Secretary within each Ministry shall be the Sustainable Development Coordinator in respect of such Ministry. Every Department of Government, Agency or Entity shall have a Sustainable Development Focal Point. The Sustainable Development Focal Point shall assist the Sustainable Development Coordinator in developing the Ministry's position in respect of any request by the Competent Authority.

The Guardian of Future Generations has the role of safeguarding inter-generational and intra-generational sustainable development in Malta. The Guardian has the mandate to promote sustainable development advocacy across national policymaking, legislation and practices. In order to ensure that Government Entities are contributing towards sustainable

development, the Guardian is empowered to request any Government Entity to provide data or information or to collect data or information about any topic that could have a bearing on sustainable development. The Guardian can also propose goals and actions to Government Entities for them to take up in order to contribute towards the goal of sustainable development.

The Act also provides for the Sustainable Development Network aimed at promoting sustainable development in Malta. The Network brings together representatives from NGOs, Government and the private sector to work together toward more sustainable economic, environmental and social solutions.

¹⁸ Available at, <https://msdec.gov.mt/en/sustainabledevelopment/Documents/SD%20Act.pdf>

Our sustainable development vision for 2050

A new Sustainable Development Strategy for the Maltese Islands for 2050 is one of the priorities of the Maltese Government. In formulating a clear direction for the long-term development of the Maltese Islands, a Vision that defines our strategic focus and outlines the image of Malta that we all want to see in the future is a key and fundamental step.

The decision to draft a new long-term national Sustainable Development Strategy was influenced not only by the changing conditions but also by the fact that Malta's existing strategic development framework, which was set out in the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Maltese Islands 2007-2016, has expired.

Malta's Sustainable Development Vision for 2050 is set to become our main guiding principle for developing policies, and when planning and implementing projects. The Vision itself answers the question of why we need to think about the future today. It motivates us to face the challenges of the modern world and helps us achieve common objectives, while also giving meaning to our actions.

This Vision is designed on the following key normative governance principles for steering sustainable development¹⁹:

- LONG-TERM** > Sustainable development calls for long-term action to pursue intra- and intergenerational equality
- INTEGRATION** > Sustainable development calls for coordination and integration of economic, social and environmental policies across and between different levels of Governance
- PARTICIPATION** > Sustainable development calls for the incorporation of stakeholders into the decision-making process
- REFLEXIVITY** > Sustainable development calls for reflexive processes based on continuous reflection and policy learning cycles

¹⁹ Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the EU and national level, available at: https://www.sd-network.eu/pdf/conferences/2015_luxembourg/ESDN%20Conference%202015_Discussion%20Paper_final.pdf

Our sustainable future themes and principles for 2050

Theme	Principles	SDGs
Enhancing Economic Growth	Circular Consumption and Production Patterns	     
Enhancing Economic Growth	Transition towards a low-carbon emission economy	      
Enhancing Economic Growth	Sustainable Mobility	  
Enhancing Economic Growth	Transition towards a digital economy	 

Theme	Principles	SDGs
Enhancing Economic Growth	Creation of more high-skilled and high value-added jobs	  
Enhancing Economic Growth	Increased investments in research and innovation	 
Safeguarding Our Environment	Transition towards Low-carbon Energy	    
Safeguarding Our Environment	Sustainable Buildings and Urban Development	  
Safeguarding Our Environment	Protecting, conserving and enhancing natural capital	    
Social Cohesion and Wellbeing	Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion	      

Theme	Principles	SDGs
Social Cohesion and Wellbeing	Fair and Inclusive Labour Market	
Social Cohesion and Wellbeing	High Quality Education and Training	
Social Cohesion and Wellbeing	Good health and Wellbeing	
Social Cohesion and Wellbeing	Building Safe and Integrated Communities	



Our
common
future

How can we realise our vision?

NGOs
Private Sector
Community Organisations
General Public

Ministries
Government Entities
and Departments
Local Councils
Academia

Constituted Bodies
Civil Society

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Consultations

VISION 2050

- What do we want to achieve for the future development of the Maltese Islands



How we are going to realise our Vision

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Strategic Goals for
Sustainable Development



ACTION PLAN

- Actions that will take place:

- Policies
- Reforms
- Projects
- Initiatives

Who will carry out these actions

By when they will take place,
and for how long

What resources are needed
to carry out these actions

Whilst ensuring sustainable development is everyone's concern, Government has primary responsibility to realise Malta's Vision. Strong and effective governance arrangements are a key element to ensure successful implementation given the extensive and cross-cutting nature of sustainable development.

To implement and achieve a more prosperous, secure, sustainable and fairer future for the Maltese citizens, necessitates:



MESDC has overall responsibility for promoting sustainable development, and for overseeing its coherent implementation across Government. However, ownership by the various Ministries is essential in order to be truly holistic and effective.

The mainstreaming of sustainable development principles within Government's policies, plans, programmes and projects is paramount in ensuring coherence. By adopting a sustainable development mind-set in the workings of Government, we can ensure that all Entities and Departments are working in unison and towards a single goal.

Local Councils also have a crucial role to play in translating national policies into tangible practical actions that can help to concretise the sustainable development objectives into our individual and communities' behaviours. They can also raise awareness amongst the

local communities on the sustainable development process and how it can improve their quality of life and the wider environment.

Sustainable development is not only confined to the workings of Government but calls for consensus from diverse sectors of the Maltese society, including civil society and the private sector. The integrated and wide-ranging nature of sustainable development concepts means that they are relevant to everyone.

The basic starting point in the drafting of key development documents is to ensure that the process is open and inclusive as possible, and that the vision of the future of Malta reflects the vision of its citizens.

The Maltese Government is therefore committed to provide opportunities for meaningful participation and work in partnership with key stakeholders on sector-specific issues. This will be

done through public and sectoral consultations as well as through existing stakeholder engagement mechanisms.

The Government is also committed to continue supporting organisations to make their own contributions in achieving the Goals of the Vision.

Raising public awareness is one of the strategic priorities of this Vision. Increased public awareness will encourage more individuals and organisations to get involved in helping to achieve the Goals.

Fostering these key principles will ensure sound and solid foundations on which sustainable development actions can be mainstreamed across all forms of development. It is in this manner that we will make a difference for ourselves and bequeath to future generation a country which is in better shape than that we inherited.

Enhancing economic growth

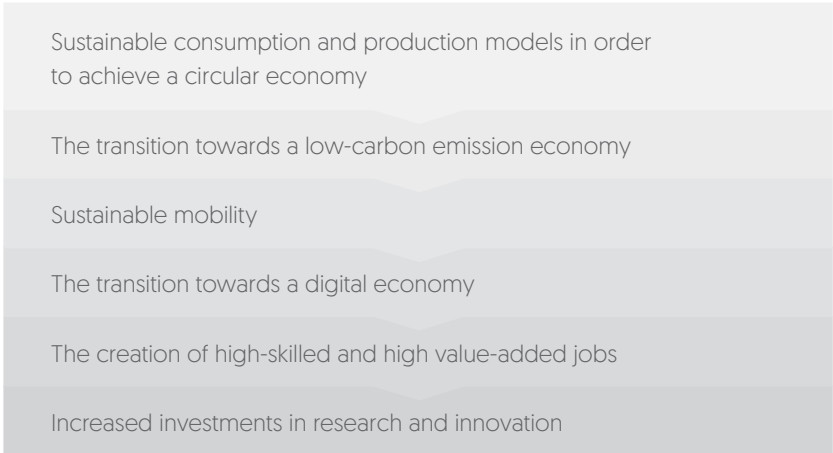
Malta's future economic growth depends on the transition towards an economic model, inspired by the principles of circular, green and blue economy, stimulated by a high level of competitiveness and innovativeness.

The new development paradigm will reduce the negative impacts on the environment by closing the loop between consumption and production, reduce the consumption of raw materials and disposal of waste, enhance human development and achieve a high level of social inclusion.



This will enable the maximisation of sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner.

The sustainability of finance is crucial for achieving our ambitious goals for economic growth and prosperity. The private sector requires both access to various sources of funding and a supportive institutional environment. This economic model will be achieved through:



Circular consumption and production patterns

Malta's future development path will be geared towards closing the loop between consumption and production cycles through waste prevention and management as well as the responsible use and reuse of resources.

New consumption and production models based on the principles of circularity address not only the negative impacts of the linear economy but lay the bases to reinforce the link between the three sustainable development pillars. It represents a systemic shift that builds long-term resilience, generates business and economic opportunities, and provides environmental and societal benefits.

Waste Prevention and Management

By 2050 Government envisages a radical transformation in the way waste is generated and managed. Government sees itself as a catalyst of such a transition however economic actors – businesses and consumers – are expected to be the driving force behind this transition towards circularity.²⁰

Our outlook to production has to change to one which is characterised by improved design concepts that make products more durable or easier to repair, upgradable or facilitating remanufacture. This approach can help recyclers to disassemble products in order to recover valuable materials and components to save precious resources.²¹

This needs to be complemented by on the ground measures that create the market for these products. Increasingly, fiscal policy will seek to reward those moving in this direction such that they may have the market advantage.²²

At the same time, the industry needs to move to an enhanced stage of symbiosis where business-to-business approaches also embrace the cycling of waste generated from one economic activity into the resource of another.

²⁰ Malta's Low Carbon Development Strategy: Our Vision, available at: https://meae.gov.mt/en/Public_Consultations/MSDEC/Documents/MSDEC%20LCDS%20Vision.PDF

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

Long-term recycling targets for municipal and packaging wastes are already on our horizon through the new targets underpinning the new Waste Package adopted at EU level.

Destined to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, these targets can only become more ambitious particularly in the case of Malta with its limited land area. Government will be

progressively developing provisions to promote the greater use of economic instruments to drive this Vision including the valorisation of the role for extended producer responsibility schemes.²³

Responsible and reuse of resources

Sustainable use of earth's natural resources is vital for peace and prosperity for all humanity. The world's population along with the number of resources consumed have gradually increased along the years and it is expected to continue in the future. Consequently, nature's carrying capacity for further development is being stretched to a point where it has been exceeded and cannot sustain the humanity and other species' wellbeing anymore. In order to safeguard both current and future generations' wellbeing we must change our behaviours and actions in order to preserve the natural environment and its natural regeneration.

By 2050 Government envisages a reduction in the consumption of natural resources to sustainable and fair levels. In order to achieve this objective, Government will lay the framework conditions to gradually reduce the input of new resources in consumption and production

patterns. This will be done through the promotion of reusing and recycling of resources used in earlier products and the use of a closed-loop system.

Our aspiration is that both consumers and businesses will gradually reduce their ecological footprints. This requires a change in human consumption behaviour and lifestyle. Hence, education and awareness raising campaigns together with community involvement and sharing of best practices shall be strongly promoted. Government will make it as easy and cost-effectively as possible for consumers to make consumption choices that conserve natural resources in everyday life.

By 2050, products and services should be delivered to customers and consumers in a smarter way.

Manufacturers, retailers and service providers should help consumers to shift towards the most sustainable products and services, through better product design and labelling, replacing physical products with services and other innovative approaches. This Vision, foresees that products and services put on the market deliver more value to their consumers and consumers will be more aware, better informed, and enabled to make more sustainable choices.

Government shall strive to provide support to investors, through building the necessary frameworks and providing support to investments which can enable new and innovative sustainable businesses. This together with other incentives will provide the necessary framework to support consumers' switch to more sustainable life choices.

Green Public Procurement

Public authorities are major consumers of goods and services thus have a pivotal role in stimulating the business community towards favouring the provision of more resource-efficient, less polluting goods, services and works. By using their purchasing power to choose goods, services and works with a

reduced environmental impact, public authorities can make an important contribution towards local, national and international sustainability goals.

Green Public Procurement can therefore be a key driver of the green economy in Malta. Government's Vision for 2050 is to

make procurement, more dynamic by introducing sustainable, strategic, innovative and circular public procurement practices.

²³ Ibid.

Low-carbon economy

The transition to a low-carbon economy is central to our future economic development model. A low-carbon economy can be a win-win situation for all those concerned.

Businesses take advantage of favourable economic policy towards low-carbon investment, which in turn shores up the competitiveness of the country and contributes to lower emissions and hence improved air quality and health benefits.²⁴

Malta's Vision is to align itself with the pace EU intends to take. The European economy is foreseen to make drastic cuts in emissions which will see a reduction of up to 80% from

1990 levels by 2050. Such cuts will be progressive with interim reduction targets of 40% and 60% by 2030 and 2040 respectively.

This will not be possible without fundamental changes in consumption and production patterns and improved utilisation of resources which are already integrated into modus operandi by other sectors not least, energy, transport, buildings, industry and agriculture.

A reliable, sustainable and competitive supply of energy is crucial for development. Our vision for 2050 is one where energy efficiency is permeated across all levels of society and renewable energy to power our needs is used in lieu of fossil fuels. Access to energy efficient products and services need to become the norm for all strata of society.

Our development also needs to upscale itself to ensure that architecture and civil engineering is complemented by energy efficient solutions to our buildings.

Industry policy should be increasingly guided towards attracting foreign investment of a low-carbon nature whilst migrating established enterprises to more low carbon alternatives.

Transport is a major source of GHG emissions. It is responsible for 21.1% of GHG emissions generated in Malta. Government's Vision for 2050 is underpinned by a commitment 'to provide a sustainable transport system which is efficient, inclusive, safe, integrated and reliable for people and freight, and which supports attractive urban, rural and coastal environments and communities where people want to live and work: now and in the future'.²⁵

In terms of emissions, the agriculture sector accounts for a very small share of national GHG emissions arising from enteric fermentation and manure management. By 2050, Government will strive to create agricultural parks which would be served by modern infrastructure that will allow better management of manure. Support will also be afforded to niche agricultural products that have a low carbon footprint.

Tourism is envisaged to remain a major contributor to the Maltese economy in the future. Tourism accommodation and operations need to adopt the highest standards of sustainability and efficiency. Our vision is that all tourism accommodation, new or refurbished, will not only meet current eco-certification criteria but will also demonstrate further ambition to shore up their own as well as the sector's resilience to climate change.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ National Transport Strategy 2050, available at: <http://www.transport.gov.mt/transport-strategies/national-transport>

Sustainable mobility

The road transport sector faces major infrastructure and sustainability challenges. Severe traffic congestion constitutes a barrier to investment, and generates significant external costs and GHG emissions (also given the expected increasing demand for transport).²⁶

The transport network and services are key to ensure the accessibility of a territory. With Malta being an archipelago of islands, a complete road network is not enough to provide acceptable levels of accessibility. Ferry connections are vital to communicate the different islands, and space restrictions necessitate the efficient prioritisation of public transport services, which are able to move larger numbers of travellers without causing congestion on the road network.²⁷

It is estimated that with no change to the current transport policy and no additional transport measures being implemented, congestion will cost the economy over €1.28 billion per year in 2050, equating to a loss of 8.2% of Malta's GDP.²⁸

Minimising transport impacts requires a holistic approach revolving around the three pillars of sustainability. For 2050 Government aspires to²⁹:

²⁶ National Transport Strategy 2050, available at: <http://www.transport.gov.mt/transport-strategies/national-transport>

²⁷ Commission Staff Working Document - Country Report Malta 2018, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2018-european-semester-country-report-malta-en.pdf>

²⁸ National Transport Strategy 2050, available at: <http://www.transport.gov.mt/transport-strategies/national-transport>

²⁹ Ibid.



Support Economic Development by:

- reducing congestion and the removal of traffic bottlenecks;
- improving reliability and efficiency to allow for better journey planning;
- strengthening transport links and connectivity, nationally (within and between the Islands) and internationally, to increase access to markets;
- reducing operational costs and improve seamless interconnectivity;
- improving the experience and ease of access for non-regular users with a view to contribute towards supporting the tourism product.

Provide Accessibility and Mobility through:

- easy access to daily facilities;
- convenient and reliable journey times;
- equitable and sustainable approach to all transport modes;
- managing freight and urban logistics.

Support Social Development and Inclusion by:

- ensuring that travel options and journey quality are suitable for all user groups;
- ensuring affordability for targeted social groups;
- increasing societal awareness on the need for sustainable travel choices;
- reducing severance and adverse impacts on specific communities;
- integrating isolated communities.

Promote Environmental and Urban Sustainability by:

- reducing and mitigating GHG emissions;
- ensuring efficient and sustainable use and management of resources;
- ensuring adaptation to climate change;
- minimising the impact of transport to enhance landscapes and townscapes;
- preserving natural habitats and biodiversity
- respecting historical and heritage resources.

Improved Public Health through:

- a clean and pleasant public realm;
- active lifestyles;
- reduced pollution (air, noise and light).

Remain Safe and Secure through:

- resilient critical infrastructure;
- an extended lifetime of high quality infrastructure;
- a reduction in injuries and loss of life from transport related accidents;
- rapid response to emergencies and accidents;
- protection against crime and terrorism.

Transition towards a digital Economy

ICT can be seen as the catalyst to achieve combined economic growth, social development and environment protection. By recognising this, Government's aspiration is to transform the country into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. This will be done through³⁰:

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Improving the wellbeing of citizens

- Digital services will be affordable, secure and accessible to all regardless of skills and economic means.
- Local digital content will be encouraged.

Enhance the delivery of Government

- The public service will be closer to civil society and enterprises, improving the Government's decision-making processes.
- Open Government and eDemocracy will be facilitated.

Transforming the way business operate

Business will be encouraged and supported to exploit:

- The opportunities of the European Digital Single Market;
- Malta's strategic location in the Mediterranean, with ready access to the European and North African markets;
- Government's strategic alliances with foreign ICT organisations;
- Opportunities to expand into new or bigger markets.

Protecting the Environment

ICT can play a determining role in reducing the energy intensity of the economy thereby increasing its efficiency by reducing emissions and contributing to sustainable growth. Government aspires to see increased ICT permeation in the following areas:

- smart energy grids;
- systems for energy efficiency;
- efficient water resources management;
- energy-positive urban and public areas;
- energy efficient mobility; and
- smart logistics.

³⁰ Sources: Digital Malta 2014-2020 and Malta's Low Carbon Development Strategy: Our Vision

High-skilled and high value-added jobs

A high quality workforce is required to attract high-value added activities and consequently drive higher economic growth and standards of living.

The technological development and digitalisation of society are causing various traditional professions to disappear, and at the same time are introducing new professions and atypical forms of work and opportunities.

Moving towards a greener economy will also drive the creation of green jobs. Specifically, but not exclusively, this includes jobs that help to protect ecosystems and biodiversity; reduce energy, materials, and water consumption through high-efficiency strategies; decarbonise the economy;

and minimise or altogether avoid generation of all forms of waste and pollution.³¹

Education and training systems need to respond rapidly. In so doing, Government will ensure that by 2050 all individuals seeking to up-skill would have access to courses which are tailored to meet emerging industry needs. Opportunities for continuous professional development for employees are essential to ensure that emerging skills requirements or shortages are met swiftly.³²

Investments in research and innovation

Future value creation, competitiveness and the effective utilisation of national resources will be dependent on a high-quality research that promotes more sustainable solutions in trade and industry and society at large.

Government will continue to ensure that research is supported in strategically important areas that have impact for the economy and for society. This includes research that has direct relevance for the enterprise

base, and meets the needs of society including improving the quality of our public services; protecting the environment, our natural resources and the climate; and ensuring food security and sustainability of energy supply.

Key to delivering our Vision is a commitment to increasing public and private investment in research. Government will further simplify and streamline support and funding opportunities and make them more

easily accessible to encourage greater engagement in research and innovation by both Maltese and foreign owned enterprises, including SMEs and large-scale enterprises.

³¹ Greening our Economy - Achieving Sustainable Future, available at: <https://www.gov.mt/en/Government/Press%20Releases/Documents/pr152171a.pdf>

³² Ibid.

Safeguarding our environment

The sustainable management, preservation and conservation of our limited land and maritime natural resources are crucial for long-term healthy living environment and food production, as well as sustainable economic activities with high value added and high-quality jobs. The integration of these objectives into sectoral policies and programmes, including the construction industry, energy, agriculture and fisheries industries and service sectors such as tourism, is therefore crucial.

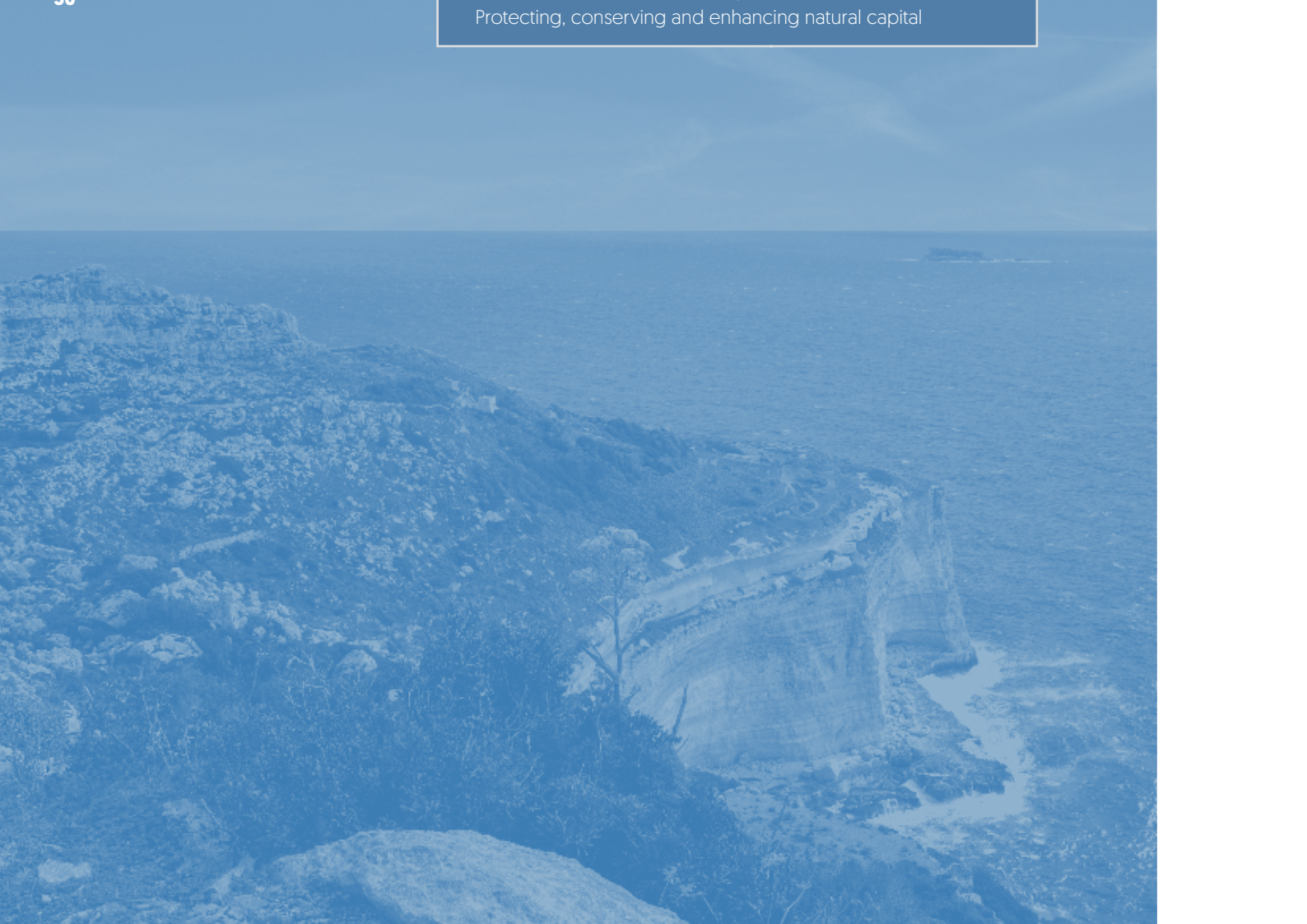
Our vision for 2050 is to enhance the sustainability and resilience of communities and territories through enhanced green infrastructure; protecting landscapes as well as biodiversity; and the secure and sufficient supply of low-carbon energy and water resources.

This will be achieved through:

Transition towards Low-carbon Energy

Sustainable Buildings and Urban Development

Protecting, conserving and enhancing natural capital



Transition towards low-carbon energy

A reliable, sustainable and affordable supply of energy is crucial for development. Our vision for 2050 is one where energy efficiency permeates across all levels of society and renewable energy powers our needs. Access to energy efficient products and services need to become the norm for all strata of society.³³

The priority increase in energy efficiency and the increased proportion of renewable energy will allow us to reduce emissions of GHG, which is also part of Malta's commitment within the EU's climate and energy package and the Paris Climate Agreement.

The Maltese Government will continue striving to achieve interconnection to the European gas grid, bringing to fruition a project which the European Commission has recognised as a Project of Common Interest, also analysing the possibility of marine LNG bunkering services in Malta.

In support of decarbonisation through cleaner power generation, the Maltese Government will continue to invest in renewable energy and energy efficiency projects mainly by further exploiting solar energy [photovoltaic and solar water heaters], heat pumps, biofuels, and energy recovery from waste.

Attracting the necessary investment in low-carbon and innovative businesses and practices will be challenging. Therefore, Government will create a framework where all sectors of society can invest to make their energy consumption more secure, economically viable and sustainable.

ICT can play a determining role in reducing the energy intensity of the economy thereby increasing its efficiency by reducing emissions and contributing to sustainable growth. It is a horizontal enabler which cuts across a number of sectors and which can dovetail in each and every sector in order to deliver these efficiency gains.³⁴

³³ Malta's Low Carbon Development Strategy: Our Vision, available at: https://meae.gov.mt/en/Public_Consultations/MSDEC/Documents/MSDEC%20LDCDS%20Vision.PDF

³⁴ Ibid.

Sustainable buildings and urban development

Global and national challenges including resource scarcity, climate change, land-use and rapid demographic shifts, make it more critical than ever to rethink about how the built environment can be more inclusive, resilient, energy-efficient, affordable, safe and healthy.

The design, construction, maintenance and retrofitting of buildings and the adaptation of urban space to

ensure there is room for both nature and people will provide significant opportunities to contribute towards a more sustainable future.

The industry has a key responsibility to provide essential infrastructure and urban solutions that meet basic human needs, support wellbeing, the movement of people and ideas, and deliver critical services, assets and goods.

Our vision for infrastructure and urban development industries for 2050 is based on the following nine pillars presented by the World Economic Forum³⁵:

³⁵ Infrastructure and Urban Development Industry Vision 2050, available at: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/IU_Industry_Vision_report_2018.pdf

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Collaborative and Fair

The industry will strive to form fair and understanding relationships by fostering collaborative practices and cooperation. This includes early and alternative dispute prevention and resolution as well as transformation practices with a focus on stakeholder needs and interests to jointly and effectively resolve critical issues.

Performance-based

The industry will promote a systems-oriented, performance-based delivery of high-quality assets and services contracted in an equitable risk and profit-sharing manner, creating increased certainty to deliver on time and on budget, and improving the productivity of the sector.

Human-centred

The industry will be known for its talented and diverse workforce and will put the customer experience, human needs and interests in the centre of decision-making.

Holistic and Systemic

The industry will create value for society in consultation with all key stakeholders across the entire built environment value chain.

Smart and Connected

The industry will promote and develop digital systems and solutions that maximise economic, environmental and social benefits while serving as the backbone for Internet of Things-enabled infrastructure and business models.

Sustainable and Affordable

The industry will lead the world in low-carbon, carbon-neutral or carbon-positive, green, resilient and affordable construction solutions.

Safe and Secure

The industry will strive to protect people and assets by reducing risks and deploying systems, which respond quickly and efficiently to prevent harm or value loss.

Long-term

The industry will propose full lifecycle optimised solutions, which are designed for affordable and flexible repurposing and recapitalisation driving long-term asset and community value.

Responsive and responsible

The industry will develop responsive and responsible leaders who are committed to inclusive development, equitable growth as well as credible and ethical behaviour.

Government role in sustainable buildings is crucial and central. Beyond providing the enabling regulatory framework and strategic plans for the sector, Government will:

- Further encourage public-private partnerships models focusing on research and experimental developments across the building's lifecycle – from its design to its operations stage.³⁶
- Establish rewards and penalties to enable the sector to deliver sustainable infrastructure.
- Provide innovative financing tools, including fiscal incentives and subsidies, that enable sustainable investments.
- Provide regular building audits to measure performance, identify improvement opportunities, and establish implementation priorities.

Protecting, conserving and enhancing natural capital

Resources are the backbone of every economy and while the availability of natural resources in Malta is limited, the consumption rates are high. At the same time, the need to consume such limited resources is putting enormous pressure on their availability. The appropriate use of these resources has to be part of the sustainable vision both for the immediate and distant future.

Terrestrial and Aquatic Biodiversity

Our Vision for biodiversity and the ecosystem services is that by 2050 these are protected, valued and in so far as possible restored for their intrinsic value.

According to the OECD Environmental Outlook to 2050, global indicators for biodiversity all show deteriorating trends to date. For example, the proportion of marine fish stocks that are over-exploited or depleted has increased over the past few decades. Today, over 30% of marine fish stocks are over-exploited or depleted,

around 50% are fully exploited and fewer than 20% have the potential for increased harvest.³⁷

Continuing with business-as-usual will have adverse and costly impacts on human wellbeing, security and economic growth. Without more ambitious policies, biodiversity is projected to decline by a further 10% globally by 2050 under the OECD Environmental Outlook Baseline scenario.

Reversing the trends in biodiversity loss will require a more consistent, co-ordinated and strategic response, driven by political commitments and broader stakeholder involvement at global, regional and national level.

³⁶ Malta's Low Carbon Development Strategy: Our Vision, available at: https://meae.gov.mt/en/Public_Consultations/MSDEC/Documents/MSDEC%20LCDS%20Vision.PDF

³⁷ OECD Environmental Outlook to 2050 - The Consequences of Inaction, available at: <http://www.oecd.org/env/indicators-modelling-outlooks/oecd-environmental-outlook-1999155x.htm>

Soil Protection

Soil is an important resource for life and the economy. It provides critical ecosystem services including the provision of food, habitat for innumerable organisms, manages water retention and distribution, acts as a natural store of carbon, as well as the provision of raw and building material.

Soil is a finite, extremely fragile resource and increasingly degrading. Soil in the Maltese Islands is in general of a shallow profile and lacks organic matter, which is a basic element for soil productivity.⁴⁰ It therefore deserves our attention.

Government's aspirations in this area is to mitigate the threats to Maltese soils, curbing deviant practices and adopt measures aimed at integrated soil conservation and management.

This in turn requires long-term planning including, but not limited to, measures that:

- Support initiatives at the field level which contribute towards improved soil quality thereby improving its moisture retention ability as well as its nutrient content;
- Promote the use of steam soil sterilisers for the sterilisation of farmland that could assist in the reduction of soil borne diseases and nematodes;
- Improve knowledge on Maltese soils by updating available statistics and data;
- Incentivise processes and practices on the build-up and

maintenance of soil organic matter, the enhancement of soil biodiversity, the reduction of soil erosion, compaction and contamination; and

- Assess the impact of the correct application of manure and other organic matter in Malta's soils particularly on the level of nitrates in order to ensure effective implementation of the Nitrates Directive.⁴¹

These goals can only be achieved through adequate investment in educational resources, in upskilling and increasing the expert pool, various research and development initiatives as well as the involvement of all the pertinent stakeholders.

Water Quality and Management

Sustainable water resources are vital to Malta's long-term prosperity. Water is necessary for drinking and it supports everyday life at work, at home and at leisure. Furthermore, many economic activities, including the touristic sector, as well as industry and manufacturing, are heavily dependent on a stable water supply.

Malta has, to date, suffered from significant water stress; natural freshwater resources continue to be insufficient to meet demand. Consequently, for decades, Malta has relied significantly on desalination technology in order to augment its freshwater supplies.

In a water-scarce country such as Malta, the sustainable water management is at the top of the Maltese Government's political agenda. Malta's approach to water scarcity focuses on the management of supply (broadening water supply base) and demand (optimising the management of water-demand) to ensure the availability of sufficient water resources to meet an efficient demand, whilst ensuring the sustainable use of groundwater resources. The supply of alternative sources of water is being invested in, with additional infrastructure planned to treat and polish wastewater for distribution as 2nd class water, better known as 'New Water'.

Government's Vision in this respect is to continue with additional research and development of this type of water in order to maximise its use and value for money such that, water scarcity issues in Malta will be a thing of the past.⁴²

⁴⁰ National Agricultural Policy for the Maltese Islands 2018 – 2028, available at: https://meae.gov.mt/en/Public_Consultations/MSDEC/Documents/National%20Agricultural%20Policy%20for%20the%20Maltese%20Islands%202018%20-%202028.pdf

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Malta's Low Carbon Development Strategy: Our Vision, available at: https://meae.gov.mt/en/Public_Consultations/MSDEC/Documents/MSDEC%20LCDS%20Vision.PDF

By 2050, it is Government's vision that the appreciation of water as a resource would have grown exponentially and that technology would have developed to an extent that it would permit its affordable adoption.

Wastewater is today divisible into its grey and black components. The market already offers greywater treatment solutions but, because of their cost, their relatively unknown performance as well as the absence of tighter standards for water use in buildings, this resource remains relatively untapped. Similarly, the longstanding provision of collection of stormwater runoff from buildings for local use has fallen by the wayside.⁴³

We aspire that, by 2050, buildings and urban areas would have become both water efficient as well as water friendly. In this respect we envisage that buildings will be more sensitive to their water use as well as to the water resource value they can generate. To this effect, we view developments in the water sector as being heavily geared towards ensuring that all runoff is collected and utilised at source together with the separation of grey from black water for

secondary, non-potable use. During this period the uptake capacity of the tourism and commercial sectors of membrane based water treatment technology, and development of support schemes to attain this capacity will continue in earnest.⁴⁴

Malta has over recent years invested heavily in a stormwater infrastructure primarily aimed to mitigate against flooding. Cognisant of the fact that, during the next three decades, a considerable part of our urban area will remain unchanged, it is worth looking at the potential Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and Natural Water Retention Systems offer for the development of a 'greener' infrastructure aimed at optimising the upstream management of stormwater thereby relieving the downstream reaches of the catchments. Urban development, particularly public areas, have to be seen as leading our cause, at becoming as water efficient as possible particularly in the light of the carbon footprint of our water production.⁴⁵

At the same time the status of existing rainwater harvesting infrastructure needs to be assessed with a view to determine whether they have sufficient potential to serve identified potential users of rainwater from such infrastructure and if so to undertake rehabilitation works and development of a management framework to

ensure the effective use of harvested rainwater.⁴⁶

The rural dimension can offer its contribution towards a more efficient use of water resources. Valleys are important geographical characteristics which serve different ecosystem services. It is therefore important to embark on integrated valley management approaches in order to maximise the contribution that such features can provide to the ecological, hydrological and geological capital of the Maltese Islands.⁴⁷

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Sustainable Agriculture

A growing population entails growing needs, which, in turn, requires current agricultural practices to maximise the use of available land while minimising damage to the natural resources, including water, soil and biodiversity.

By 2050, Government's vision is to:

- Increase capacity to implement effective actions that promote sustainable agricultural products and services with added value throughout the value chain whilst maximising the value of natural resources.
- Enhance the resilience of the agricultural sector by increasing its adaptive capacity and identifying appropriate measures to reduce GHG emissions.
- Enhance the utilisation of land and farm resources by applying sustainable cultivation practices.
- Valorise farmland for its agricultural value and non-arable land for its ecological, scenic and eco-touristic potential.
- Encourage measures for farmers to reduce their dependence on groundwater.
- Assist farmers in the integrated management of water resources through financial and knowledge based instruments.
- Facilitate sustainable agricultural production through environmentally sound agricultural practices including integrated pest management and plant nutrition.
- Develop a soil action plan in relation to agricultural use.
- Include within a sector-oriented educational and communication campaign, sustainable soil utilisation practices to increase awareness of soil as a living organism in order to promote a holistic approach to the soil's productive capacity.

Secure the legacy of indigenous plant species to preserve them for research and propagation purposes including on a commercial scale to conserve them as a genetic insurance in the face of environmental and climate risks as well as for food security in line with access and benefit sharing legislation.

Source: National Agricultural Policy for the Maltese Islands 2018 – 2028, available at: https://meae.gov.mt/en/Public_Consultations/MSDEC/Documents/National%20Agricultural%20Policy%20for%20the%20Maltese%20Islands%202018%20-%202028.pdf



Applying
sustainable
cultivation
practices



Social cohesion and wellbeing

This Chapter focuses on the promotion of the social dimension in order to ensure a dignified life for the entire population, so that everyone is enabled to fulfil his or her potential within a healthy environment.

The realisation of Malta's Sustainable Development Vision for 2050 will not be possible without social inclusion. Social fairness must be ensured, solidarity strengthened and active citizenship encouraged.

Our Vision is to strengthen the social economy by stimulating the development of human potential, reducing social and wealth distribution inequalities, promote inclusive labour and education policies, as well as eradicate labour exploitation. Efficient and accessible healthcare and basic services must also be ensured in order to achieve a higher quality of life.

To this end Government will:

Combat poverty and social exclusion

Provide the conditions for the development of human potential, through inclusive labour market and education and training

Ensure good health and wellbeing

Build safe and integrated communities



Combating poverty and social exclusion

Globalisation has increased vulnerability to social risks such as work insecurity, unemployment and engagement in the informal economy. Other trends such as demographic changes arising from an ageing population and international migration are also leading to greater vulnerabilities. While, an ageing population represents a sign of human progress, it also presents substantial socioeconomic and social protection challenges.

Although no one is entirely safe from falling into poverty or social exclusion, the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion 2014-2024⁴⁸ notes that certain individuals and groups are more exposed to this risk due to their vulnerability or life circumstances, these being:

- the unemployed;
- children and young people;
- elderly people;
- the working poor;
- persons with physical and/or mental health challenges;
- persons experiencing violence and other forms of abuse;
- asylum seekers and immigrants;
- persons with addictive behaviour;
- persons who lack life skills; and
- persons experiencing discrimination.

The Government's Vision for 2050 is to continue build on the current principles laid out in the Strategic Policy with the aim of eradicating poverty and social exclusion in all its forms till 2050, namely by:

- Increasing the activation rate with particular focus on vulnerable groups;
- Making work pay through quality employment opportunities;
- Improving educational and training services;
- Facilitating greater socio-economic mobility;

- Curtailing fraud in social benefits and taxes;
- Addressing regional and geographical-based imbalances and disadvantages by promoting community regeneration;
- Promoting active ageing;
- Promoting a more inclusive cultural framework and active cultural participation;
- Greater availability of adequate and affordable housing;
- Improving access, quality, adequacy and sustainability of social welfare, health and long-term care; and
- Promoting a 'rights-based' rather than a 'charity-based' approach to service provision.

⁴⁸ National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion 2014-2024, available at: <https://family.gov.mt/en/Documents/Poverty%20Strategy%2014%20English%20Version.pdf>

Fair and inclusive labour market

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Achieving a fair and inclusive labour market by 2050 is not just a desirable social goal in itself, but is essential to sustain long-term growth and prosperity of the Maltese economy.

Achieving this type of labour market can be difficult and requires joint action and efforts by all parties involved. To this end, Government shall continue building the necessary frameworks and the right incentives; however, employers, employees and trade unions have the prime responsibility for ensuring a healthy, strong and resilient labour market now and in the future.

Our focus for 2050 will be on creating more and better quality jobs that meet the needs of every individual in terms of pay, security, and prospects.

In doing so, it is necessary that our workforce continues to be dynamic

and is able to adapt to the challenges and opportunities emerging from new realities, including:

- demographic changes (such as ageing population and migration);
- the changing face of work brought about by globalisation and technological advancement; and
- new ways of work arrangements including atypical forms of employment.

This requires in turn adequate level of legal, economic and social security conditions and the creation of safe and healthy working conditions throughout employees' working lives.

In achieving our aspirations for 2050 there are a number of measures and initiatives that need to be considered across the public and private sectors:

- Implementing the concept of sustainable working lives, which allows employees to work longer and retire healthy.
- Facilitating workplaces to foster a physical and mental health protective environment and occupational health and safety.

- Improving system of flexicurity and consolidating and implementing further family-friendly measures.
- Implementing measures aimed at mainstreaming the concept of equal pay for equal work across all sectors.
- Promoting the increased inclusion of marginalised and underrepresented groups in the labour market.
- Consolidating legislative structures to fight precarious working conditions, labour market exploitation and any threats to the employees' personal development, without making the labour market too rigid.
- Supporting further inactive persons to get the skills they need to re-enter and remain in employment.
- Consolidating and implementing further support mechanisms for low-income earners.
- Facilitate the promotion of mobility and de-segregation in the labour market.
- Promoting private-public-social partnerships and cooperatives including social enterprises.

High quality education and training

Apart from being a fundamental human right, education is also the foundation for more equitable, inclusive and cohesive communities making it indispensable for the achievement of sustainable development.

Embarking on the path of sustainable development therefore requires a transformation of how we think and act. In order to create a more sustainable future, citizens must become sustainability change-makers. They require the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that empower them to contribute to sustainable development.

Building on the work and achievements in recent years, our vision is to move towards a high quality education system accessible to all. In so doing, Government will create the right conditions for present and future generations to overcome barriers to access quality education and lifelong learning opportunities and acquire the necessary skills and talents for employability and active citizenship.

Inclusion and equity are overarching principles that will guide all educational policies, plans and practices for the future. This includes taking steps to prevent and address all forms of exclusion and marginalisation, disparity, vulnerability and inequality in educational access, participation, and completion as well as in learning processes and outcomes. It also requires understanding learners' diversities as opportunities in order to enhance and democratise learning for all students.

Our aspiration is to generate lifelong learning opportunities from early childhood education and care to adult learning to ensure that all children, young people and adults have the opportunity to obtain the necessary skills and attitudes to be active citizens and to succeed at work and in society.

A strong joint venture between educational institutions and industry would represent a good base to support the development of curricula and study programmes that reflect the current and future labour market needs. This mechanism has already been initiated but needs to be accelerated to keep up with the pace of economic development.

We will achieve our vision by amongst others:

- including lifelong learning and training in educational programmes at all levels;
- developing knowledge and skills for life and work, and empowering citizens to use the latest digital technologies;
- promoting the concepts of sustainable development and active citizenship as educational principles;
- ensuring efficiency and quality at all levels of education;
- developing practical and technical knowledge and skills in order to improve employability;
- encouraging lower-educated people and other vulnerable and marginalised groups to participate in education and learning in order to ease the transition into and survival in the labour market, reducing the risk of social exclusion and providing for a high quality of life; and
- linking the education system to the economy in accordance with the needs of the labour market.

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There's
no wealth
without
health

Good health and Wellbeing

Health is being increasingly seen as a resource to one's daily living. It is being decreasingly seen as an end in itself but more as a means for an active and productive life. The cliché "there's no wealth without health" is progressively more and continuously being reiterated in public health and political fora and applies not only at an individual level but also at a community, national and European level.⁴⁹

Our Vision is to actively promote a society that fosters an environment that is conducive to persons attaining their maximum potential for health and wellbeing. In order to attain these goals, Government will continue build on the current principles laid out in the National Health Systems Strategy for Malta 2014-2020 to provide every individual with the opportunity to lead a healthy and active life, and to benefit from equitable access to sustainable quality healthcare.

In the coming decades, the health system will have to overcome a number of significant challenges including the continuously increasing size of the population of the Maltese Islands, ageing population, along with the influx of more of tourists and migrants. These factors are leading to a greater burden on the healthcare system as it is expected to cater for

increased incidence and prevalence of chronic conditions, such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease and cancer, changes in population lifestyle choices and environmental factors and health threats. Decreased social cohesion and increased prevalence of mental health problems place further pressure on the health system.

Other important challenges arise from the steadily increasing expenditure on healthcare services. Building on the work and achievements in recent years, Government will continue address these challenges through an amplified emphasis on increasing efficiency, productivity and cost containment with a view to ensuring the economic sustainability of the health system. Concomitantly, the healthcare system needs to be responsive to and address legitimate demands for greater patient choice and improved, faster access to services, new treatments and technologies such as in the fast-evolving fields of medical genetics and personalised medicine.

In order to address these challenges sustainably and within the available budgetary resources, the health system needs to enact effective, sustainable solutions with greater emphasis on prevention, increased efficiency and improved use of resources.

Building on the work and achievements in recent years, Government will further:

- Respond to increasing demand and challenges posed by the demographic changes and epidemiological trends focusing on course of life, children, elderly and vulnerable groups.
- Increase equitable access, availability and timeliness of health and social services, medicines and health technologies.
- Improve quality of care by ensuring consistency of care and having qualified health personnel supported by a robust information systems.
- Designing, developing and evaluating policies towards a sustainable health system targeting human resources, financing mechanisms, entitlement criteria for care and organisation of care delivery whilst improving governance and empowering future leadership for health and wellbeing to influence national decisions through whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches.

⁴⁹ A National Health Systems Strategy for Malta 2014-2020, available at: <https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/Documents/National-Health-Strategies/NHSS-EN.pdf>

Building safe and integrated communities

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By 2050 everyone will feel welcomed and proud of their identity and heritage; take advantage of the opportunities that the Maltese Islands offer whilst recognising their responsibilities to other groups and to our wider society.

Race, colour, ethnic origin, age, disability, religion, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity are merely characteristics not a social status that determines the level of rights one can enjoy. We strive for a society where by 2050 its individual components are viewed equally as persons without exceptions.

This is what true integration looks like, communities where people, irrespective of their background, live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities. Communities where many religions, cultures and opinions are celebrated, underpinned by a shared set of values that champion tolerance, freedom and equality of opportunity.

Safety is the cornerstone of any thriving neighbourhood and community. We will do our utmost to eradicate prejudice and violence, educate our citizens to be more open and inclusive towards others, and seek and address inequalities that have lingered through time in our law books as well as in our administrative practices.

In creating a community that is safe, inclusive and equitable for all residents and visitors, our Vision will revolve around the following principles:

- Respect for all human rights, freedoms, and the rule of law. Every member of society, no

matter what his or her economic resources, political status or social standing, must be treated equally under the law.

- Violators of human rights should be brought to justice. The judiciary which serves to protect just societies must be impartial, accountable and inclusive.
- Maintaining the security of all individuals and their living environment.
- All members of society are able and motivated to participate in civic, social, economic and political activities as well as participation in decision-making and policy formulation processes.
- Universal access to public infrastructure and facilities such as community centres, recreational facilities, public libraries, resource centres with internet facilities, well maintained public schools, clinics, water supplies and sanitations.
- Equal access to public information in order to make popular participation possible with well-informed members of society.
- Equity in the distribution of wealth and resources. Socio-economic policies should be geared towards managing equitable distribution and equal opportunities.
- Tolerance for and appreciation of cultural diversity.
- Mainstreaming cultural inclusion throughout all public services [schools, healthcare facilities, correctional facilities, and non-culturally related places].

Financing our vision for 2050

The transition towards a sustainable economy, society and environment will require a commitment in terms of public and private financing to secure the capacity of all stakeholders to foster sustainable development. Finance is therefore an essential lever for achieving ambitious yet sustainable goals. This transition, however, cannot be seen solely from the additional natural capital outlay that would be required but, more importantly, from the operational savings and sustainable growth that would result.

Managing sustainable financial resources will be essential for achieving a successful transition to a resource efficient, greener, circular, inclusive and sustainable model of development. Sustainable finance involves the integration of environmental, social and governance factors across the financial system with the goal of strengthening resilience, targeting more result oriented capital allocation and improving accountability. In essence, from a public financing perspective, Ministries and Entities need to factor sustainability within their interventions. Doing more with the same resources is a first step in our common obligation to mainstream sustainable development across the board.

Government's aspiration for 2050 is to develop a good and functional framework that is conducive to stimulate further investment opportunities. The aim is that of sustaining prosperity and competitiveness, keeping in mind the key role that innovation will have to play. All these attributes will need to be integrated within a context where social inclusion, the environment, and our climate are revalued upwards.

Financing a sustainable economy will require the efficient management and, where necessary, the reallocation of capital to critical priorities including improving access to finance, raising capital for sustainable infrastructure through innovative financial techniques

and financing critical areas of clean tech innovation.

Government policies and public finance will play a central role, yet given the high upfront investment required, the financial markets have a great potential for influencing how private capital is mobilised and shifted towards sustainability. Financial guarantees for sustainable infrastructure and financial tools, such as green and social bond markets, can attract investors in servicing the capital and investment needed to achieve our Vision by 2050.

Our Vision is to move away from a culture where green and social bonds are a novelty to one where the entire bond market is responsive to the need for a transition towards a low-carbon and inclusive society.

Public participation

The image of Malta outlined in this Vision Document cannot be realised without the broad consensus and commitment of all citizens.

A better future can be realised even from the smallest commitment or action by any one of us.

Throughout this document, Government set out to paint a Vision that gathers political and societal support.

To further add value to this consultation exercise we are launching the following questions to stimulate the process that will eventually lead to the development of Malta's new Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan.

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Be part of it! Be an active participant in the formulation of our common future!

- Q1.** What is your opinion on the Vision?
- Q2.** Are there any other aspects do you think are crucial to secure sustainable development by 2050?
- Q3.** What developments would you expect to see in Malta's economic policy to further reduce the decouple its growth from consequential negative impacts on the environment?
- Q4.** What developments would you expect to see in Malta's social policy to further support social inclusion and ensure a dignified life for all, and where everyone is enabled to fulfil his or her potential within a healthy environment?
- Q5.** How can Malta's environment policy support the valorisation of our limited natural resources whilst contribute to our competitiveness or wellbeing?
- Q6.** What financial instruments could complement this Vision for a sustainable future?

Next steps

The Ministry for the Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change encourages public entities, private sector organisations, constituted bodies, civil society and individuals to assist the development of Malta's new Sustainable Development Strategy by providing feedback in the form of answers to the questions put forward in this document.

Additional suggestions may also be put forward. The Ministry wishes to emphasise that this document is shaping the future of present and future generations. As such, it is in everybody's interest to assist Government in shaping the vision which will characterise our future and that of future generations.

This consultation is open up till Friday, 30 November 2018.

Electronic submissions should be sent on sustainabledevelopment.mesdc@gov.mt. Postal submission should be addressed to the Directorate General for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change, 6 Qormi Road, Santa Venera SVR 1302.

