

Malta

Maritime Spatial Planning
Country Information

Malta

Contact

MSP in general

Michelle Borg
The Planning Authority (PA)
Unit Manager
msp.malta@pa.org.mt

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Ministry for Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change
<http://environment.gov.mt/en/sea/Pages/sea.aspx>

Environmental Impact Assessment

Josianne Abela Vassallo
Environmental Assessment Unit
Environment and Resources Authority (ERA)
eia.malta@era.org.mt

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Last revision date

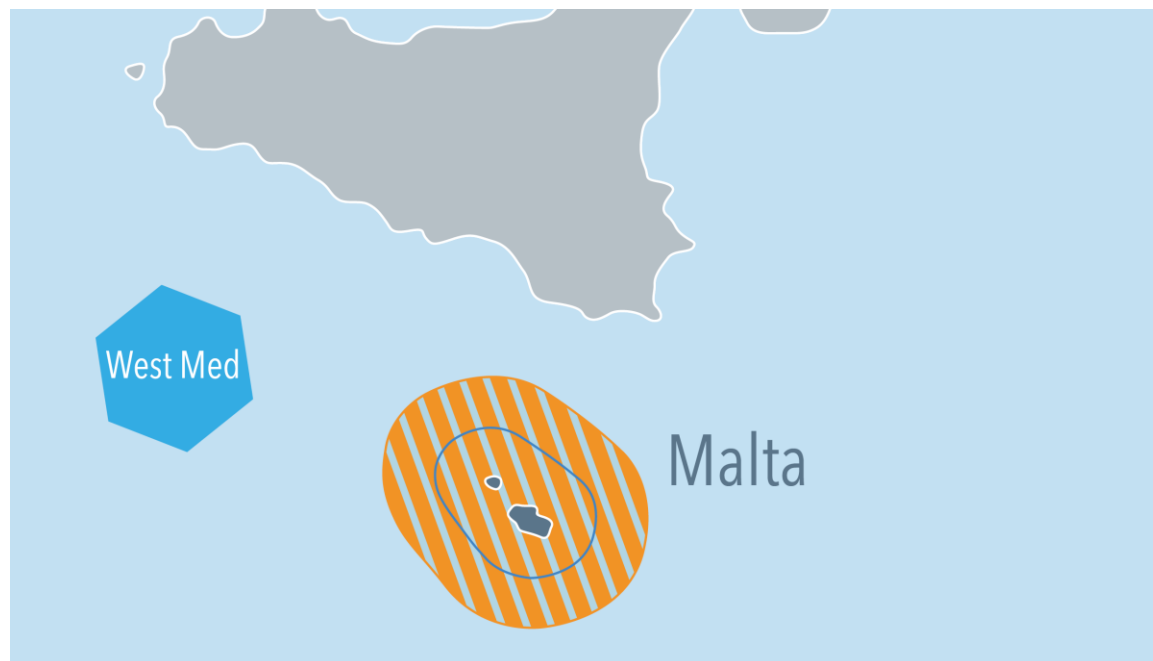
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Background Information

Basic facts on Marine Waters



— Territorial Sea Existing Plans

The marine waters of Malta consist of the following zones:

- the area of internal waters which extends from the low-water line to the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial waters is measured is approximately 199 km²;
- the area of territorial waters which extends from the baselines to 12 nm (Territorial Waters and Contiguous Zone Act, Cap. 226)ⁱ is approximately 3,830 km²;
- the area of Contiguous Zone which extends to 24 nm from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial waters is measured (Territorial Waters and Contiguous Zone Act, Cap. 226) is approximately 10,762 km²;
- the area of the Fisheries Management Conservation Zone (FMCZ) which extends to 25 nm from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial waters is measured (Territorial Waters and Contiguous Zone Act, Cap. 226) is approximately 11,480 km²;
- the area of the Continental Shelf which extends to a boundary as defined by Article 2 of the Continental Shelf Act (Cap. 535)ⁱⁱ is approximately 71,447 km² (and including the internal waters and territorial waters the total area becomes 75,475km²).

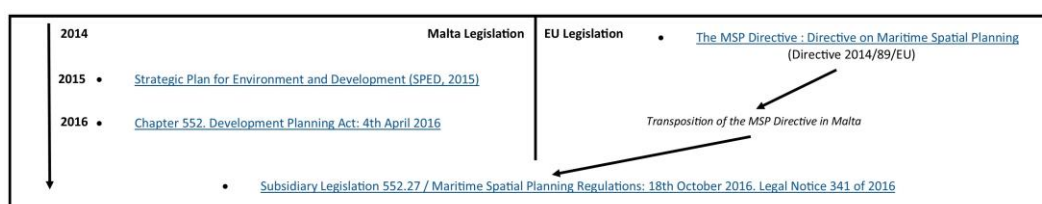
The agreement between Libya and Malta for the delimitation of part of the continental shelf is based on the judgment of the International Court of Justice (Cap. 316). This only constitutes part of the agreed boundary between Malta and Libya and the remaining part of the boundary to the east and west of this delimitation line is still unresolved. A Modus Vivendi agreement has also been in place since the 1970s for part of the boundary between Malta and Italy. This agreement is based on the median line. There are pending continental shelf boundary delimitations with Tunisia, Italy and Libya. Malta has not yet declared an Exclusive Economic Zone.

Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) authorities and legislation

General

Planning at national level

- The main legislative act for spatial planning in Malta is the Development Planning Act of 2016, which also addresses development at sea. Subsidiary legislation 552.27 under this Act was adopted on 18 October 2016 as the transposition of Directive 2014/89/EU on MSP into national legislation. The Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (SPED, 2015) is the overarching document for planning issues on land and at sea in an integrated manner. It also constitutes the national Maritime Spatial Plan.



- Difficulties arising from sectoral administration have previously hindered an integrated approach. Coordination mechanisms are being established to facilitate integration for MSP.
- The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS) has been ratified through the Law of the Sea (Ratification) Act (Cap. 362)ⁱⁱⁱ and is implemented in national legislation in the territorial waters and the entire continental shelf.
- Sectoral ministries are responsible for regulating their sectors such as fishing, marine transport, agriculture and environment protection.
- The link between ICZM and MSP in Malta has been adopted in view of the importance of the land-sea interface for socio-economic development and the related influences arising from the natural processes present.

National MSP authority

The Planning Authority (PA) is the authority responsible for MSP in Malta and is governed by the provisions of the Development Planning Act of 2016^{iv}. Aside from this, certain sectoral ministries are consulted.

Details

The legislative framework for land and sea use planning started through the Development Planning Act of 1992, as amended. Following a period of administrative changes in 2000, the environment protection and planning functions were entrusted to one organisation (the Malta Environment and Planning Authority - MEPA) and were consequently governed by the Environment and Development Planning Act of 2010. In 2016, through the new Development Planning Act and the Environment Protection Act^v, these two functions have been delegated to two distinct organisations, the Planning Authority (PA) and the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA), respectively.

The Planning Authority, falling within the remit of the Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects, fulfills its operational functions through the Executive Council which includes members from the ERA.

For the purpose of development and/or activities, Malta's marine waters are currently designated, and administrative responsibilities assigned, as follows:

- Development within 12 nm is identified and regulated by the Planning system entrusted to the Planning Authority.
- Preservation of good order and safety of navigation, including bunkering area, anchorage and swimming zones, within the 12 nm territorial waters is regulated by Transport Malta within the Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects. Regulation of Offshore Safety on the Continental Shelf relating to oil and gas exploration or exploitation operations, including the establishment of safety zones, falls under the competency of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and is currently delegated to the Continental Shelf Department.
- Exploration and exploitation of petroleum (as defined in Cap. 156)^{vi} on, under or from Malta, including the land underlying the internal and territorial waters, is regulated by the Office of the Prime Minister and delegated to the Continental Shelf Department;
- Exploration and exploitation of the natural resources on the continental shelf is regulated by the Office of the Prime Minister and delegated to the Continental Shelf Department.

- Fisheries management is regulated by the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture within the Ministry for the Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change, which can identify and establish closed areas and closed fishing seasons.
- Environment protection and resource management is regulated by the Environment and Resources Authority. It addresses the protection and management of the environment and sustainable management of natural resources and related natural heritage (including air, biodiversity, geology and other natural features), the declaration of protected areas and species, and the prevention, mitigation, offsetting or remediation of adverse effects on the environment, whether terrestrial, freshwater or marine.
- The protection, conservation, restoration, maintenance, exhibition and accessibility of cultural property, including promotion of research and regulation of archaeological or paleontological excavations or explorations on land as well as in the territorial waters and contiguous zone of Malta is entrusted to the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage through the Cultural Heritage Act, 2002.

The Planning Authority is the Competent Authority in Malta with regard to both terrestrial and maritime planning. For the purpose of Maritime Spatial Planning, in view of the different entities regulating maritime activities in marine waters under Malta's jurisdiction (namely fisheries, navigation and exploration, and exploitation of living and non-living resources on the continental shelf) and to promote closer links with the national integrated maritime policy, institutional arrangements are being put in place to enable national coordination through the Executive Council of the Planning Authority.

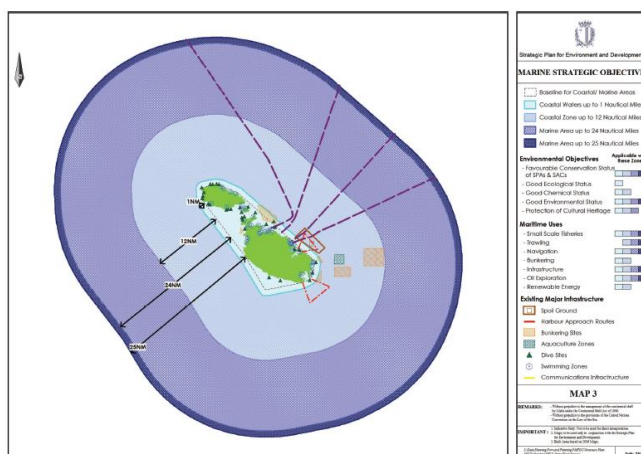
The **MSP Technical Committee** established to support the Executive Council includes representatives from the following entities:

- Continental Shelf Department, Office of the Prime Minister;
- Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Ministry for Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change;
- Environment and Resources Authority, Ministry for Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change;
- Transport Malta, Ministry for Transport –Infrastructure and Capital Projects;
- Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government;
- Malta Marittima Agency, Ministry for Tourism.

Progress

The Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (SPED), which was approved by Parliament in 2015^{vii}, replaced the Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands (adopted in 1992), and provides a framework policy for the use of land and sea. The SPED formulates the strategic spatial policy framework for environment and development up to 2020, complementing the Government's policy for the same period. The SPED covers coastal zones and marine areas in a joint chapter as one distinct spatial unit within the National Spatial Framework and is limited to the marine waters up to the 25 nm limit of the Fisheries Management Conservation Zone (adopted by Council Regulation EC No. 1967/2006 under the EU Accession Treaty, 2003). The marine spatial extent defined for the purpose of the SPED does not include the administration and implementation of the provisions of the Continental Shelf Act, and is without prejudice to possible future declaration by Malta of an Exclusive Economic Zone.

The National Spatial Framework for SPED is guided by the principle that the sustainable use of land and sea depends on the efficient use of available space. The general principles of this National Spatial Framework call for a planning framework to integrate socio-economic growth and environment management within the Coastal Zone and Marine Area. The thematic policies in the plan, which cover socio-economic development, the environment, climate change and travel patterns, are applicable throughout the spatial territory of the Maltese Islands, thus also reflecting a framework that takes into account land-sea interactions. The thematic policies within the SPED are applicable to all spatial units of the National Spatial Framework. Specific policies are also in place for the Coastal Zone and Marine Area which are informed by the principles of Integrated Coastal Zone Management and provide for synergies with the environmental objectives arising from the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and Marine Strategy Framework Directive, in support of the national integrated maritime strategy. . The preparation of the plan was based on a series of consultations and stakeholder engagement and the SPED was subjected to an iterative Strategic Environment Assessment.



The first SPED (2015-2020) has been reviewed in preparation for the second phase (2021-2026), in accordance with the MSP Directive.

Map: Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (SPED) – marine objectives

Overview of MSP-related uses and issues

- Growing intensity of use for marine space, mainly in coastal waters^{viii}, is increasing the potential for conflicts between marine use and coastal activities^{ix}.
- Current main uses: maritime transport (mainly on the north side between Malta and Sicily); short sea shipping prevails over ocean shipping in Malta itself; port of Valetta is a major port for cruise liners sailing in the Mediterranean (approx. half of the cruise ships that sail in Mediterranean Sea called in Valletta in 2012^x; cruise ship sector's contribution to the local economy in 2011 was €79 million^{xi}), yachting, fishing, aquaculture, offshore hydrocarbon exploration^{xii} (in its internal and territorial waters, and on its continental shelf). The Pelagian Province – which is situated in the maritime area between Italy, Libya, Malta and Tunisia – contains (proven) petroleum deposits; communication cables linking Malta and Sicily, as well as other cables linking other States which transit through Malta's continental shelf.
- More information is available through the Socio-Economic Assessment for the Initial Assessment reporting for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive^{xiii}.
- Malta has designated eighteen (18) Marine Protected Areas through the Environment Protection Act (Cap. 549), all forming part of the EU-wide Natura 2000 network^{xiv}; the related process leading to the protected areas' management regime is currently being led by the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA)^{xv}.
- The State of the Environment Report, as compiled by the Environment and Resources Authority, addresses the current status of the marine environment and related spatial planning issues, indicating trends which would lead to the development of a National Strategy for the Environment which will address relevant gaps.
- Future uses: renewable energy; new pipeline interconnections (Malta-Italy); research and development.

Maritime Spatial Plans

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

The current MSP plan is otherwise known as the **Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (SPED 2015)**.

The maritime spatial plan for Malta is available here: <https://www.pa.org.mt/en/strategic-plan-details/strategic%20plan%20for%20the%20environment%20and%20development>

The Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) Directive has been transposed into Maltese legislation through subsidiary legislation (S.L.552.27) under the Development Planning Act of 2016 (Cap.552) which states that the Strategic Plan for Environment and Development (SPED), and any replacement spatial strategy, shall constitute the Maritime Spatial Plan for Malta. In 2020, the Government of Malta called for a review of the SPED and as the Competent Authority for MSP, the Planning Authority has started the process which will be governed by the procedures set out in legislation.

Pilot plans or projects

Not legally binding:

A number of projects addressing aspects of maritime use, either in relation to Integrated Coastal Zone Management, the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the MSP Directive or a particular thematic sector such as fisheries, have been undertaken.

- [MSP-MED](#) project (2020-2022) funded by EC DG MARE support the establishment of coherent and coordinated plans across the Mediterranean marine regions and between Member States including the MSP competent authorities of France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, and Spain. The aims include sharing the most relevant MSP information and experiences between Mediterranean member States and non-EU countries.
- [SIMWESTMED](#) (2017-2018): cross-border project focusing on two key objectives: supporting the implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning in Western Mediterranean EU Member States; and launching and carrying out concrete and cross-border MSP initiatives between Member States.
- [MEDTRENDS](#) (2016) aimed to illustrate and map the most likely integrated scenarios of marine economic growth at the transnational level in EU Mediterranean countries for the next 20 years.
- [PEGASO](#) (2010-2014), funded by FP7, which expands to the Black Sea the instruments developed in order to support the Integrated Coastal Zone Management protocol for the Mediterranean Sea and created significant Geo Nods.
- [COCONET](#) (2011-2014): the project aims to establish a collaboration network of the key stakeholders in Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries research and management, in order to facilitate the full application of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries. The Consortium comprises research institutes with strong expertise in the field of fisheries research and assessment and offers a broad geographical coverage of the region
- [MESMA](#) (2009-2013): the project focused on marine spatial planning and aimed to produce integrated management tools (concepts, models and guidelines) for Monitoring, Evaluation and implementation of Spatially Managed marine Areas, based on European collaboration.
- [COCONET](#) (2012-2016), funded by EU 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7), which analyses the marine protected areas in the Black Sea (and Mediterranean Sea), including a pilot project and a Web GIS portal.
- [CAMP Malta](#) (UNEP-MAP): the project was oriented towards the implementation of practical coastal management projects in selected Mediterranean coastal areas, applying Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) as a major tool.

Tools and studies were developed with respect to Maltese waters in some of these projects. A transboundary pilot project, specifically for MSP, between Malta and Sicily has been undertaken under the SIMWESTMED project. Under the Maltese Information Resources Unit and the Mapping Unit, the integration of spatial information relative to the Maltese islands (mainly for the land part) was gathered under the **IntegraM** Project.

In regard to the new MSP awareness-raising project, it aims to fill the gap that currently exists and which can only be addressed through a complementary ongoing initiative for improved awareness of the principles and objectives of both Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Zone Management. A comprehensive programme that brings together civil society, private sector and regulators could pave the way for improved implementation of MSP. It is believed that through

dedicated awareness raising, different levels of stakeholders are empowered to take actions that support the coordinated efforts required in coastal and marine resource management. At the same time, particular awareness dedicated to solution-driven responses may facilitate the uptake of more sustainable economic activities that support continued social economic growth. Hence, with this purpose, the Planning Authority is benefitting from EU funds through the SRSS programme, where expertise from the EUCC will develop a guidance document to create a communication toolbox addressed to different stakeholders.

Aspects of the MSP process

Sustainable development and growth in the maritime sector

The concept of sustainable development in Malta is embedded in the Sustainable Development Act of 2012^{xvi} and the National Strategy for Sustainable Development adopted in 2006^{xvii}. One of the key strategic objectives of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development is to ensure that the new strategic plan for spatial planning and planning policies comprehensively address the issue of coastal management, so that any new coastal development is sustainable. Furthermore, the concept of sustainable development has been mainstreamed into the Development Planning Act of 2016, which defines development planning as a planning system whose main objective shall be sustainable development.

The Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) Technical Committee

The governance framework adopted in Malta for the implementation of the MSP Directive is built on a legislative framework that has led to administrative cooperation amongst relevant regulators over the years. With the Planning Authority as the lead, having been responsible for spatial planning of both land and sea, the challenge of applying MSP throughout all of Malta's marine waters, as required by the Directive, has called for more focused collaboration, particularly for those marine waters beyond the 12 nm, specifically since Malta does not have an Exclusive Economic Zone.

The Development Planning Act of 2016 re-establishes the Planning Authority with its two main decision-making bodies: the Executive Council and the Planning Board. Through the Act, it is possible for the Executive Council to call in representatives from identified entities when making decisions on plans, policies and for other guidance deemed necessary to fulfil its functions.

With the Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) Regulations of 2016 (S.L.552.27) nominating the Planning Authority as the Competent Authority to implement the MSP Directive, its Executive Council has decided to call in representatives from identified entities, to discuss matters pertaining to the following:

- i. provision of guidance on development plans and proposals for maritime uses as governed by the SPED;
- ii. provision of guidance and support on matters pertaining to the implementation of the MSP Directive in all marine waters;
- iii. provision of support in any matters pertaining to international cooperation.

In support of the decision-making role of the Executive Council, an MSP Technical Committee representing all entities concerned has been established to facilitate the ongoing implementation processes linked with the MSP Directive on a more frequent basis. The MSP Technical Committee provides a forum for cooperation at a technical level and is expected to provide support and make recommendations to the Executive Council accordingly. The Technical Committee is tasked to work towards the resolution of issues that may arise amongst the respective entities on processes linked to:

- policy development and plan making;
- licensing and permitting procedures;
- data management and collation;
- stakeholder engagement;
- international cooperation.

The main regulatory entities involved in MSP include the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, the Environment and Resources Authority, Transport Malta, the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, and the Continental Shelf Department. They are all empowered to designate the specific spatial areas and regulate activities therein within the provisions of the UNCLOS. Another entity established in 2016 is also on board. Responsible for the promotion of blue growth on behalf of the government, Malta Marittima Agency provides an invaluable bridge with the operators as key stakeholders.

Recalling a context where MSP was already in practice and where formal and informal mechanisms were already established amongst regulatory entities prior to the Directive still continues to work, the effectiveness of introducing an ad hoc governance framework to implement the MSP Directive requires time. The current adaptive approach that the MSP Technical Committee is taking with the support of its members, is expected to strengthen parallel initiatives aimed at developing

national capacity and skills in pursuit of sustainable blue growth. In 2016^{xviii}, the Government of Malta established a specific agency, Malta Marittima^{xix}, to address growth in the maritime sector. One of the Agency's main objectives is to bring industry and government stakeholders together to focus on and promote the continued and enhanced development of the marine and maritime industries in the Maltese Islands.

The Green & Blue Development Unit (GBDU)

The year 2016 saw the setting up of the Green and Blue Development Unit (GBDU) within the Planning Authority. The primary aim of this unit is to assist the Planning Authority in executing its role, by promoting sustainability through mainstreaming blue/green policies in the spatial planning. The unit is also responsible for coordinating the Authority's function in relation to Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Maritime Spatial Planning. In the coming months, the unit shall be participating in an EU-funded project on Maritime Spatial Planning, entitled, "Supporting Implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning in the Western Mediterranean Region" (SIMWESTMED).

In 2017, (its first full year as a unit), the GBDU worked to achieve the targets set out in its business plan and is participating in two leading projects - SIMWESTMED Project and the EnRoute Project on Green Infrastructure/Urban Ecosystems. Two major tasks in 2017 were the implementation of the legal requirements of the PA emerging from the Public Domain Act and the establishment of the ISO 14001 system. The unit has also been actively involved in the monitoring of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process in spatial planning, drafting of a Legal Notice on afforestation and providing input to the SOER Land and Coast Chapter and other policy-making initiatives.

Malta Marittima Agency (<http://www.maltamarittima.org.mt/>)

In 2016^{xx}, the Government of Malta established a specific agency, Malta Marittima^{xxi}, to address growth in the maritime sector. One of the Agency's main objectives is to bring industry and government stakeholders together to focus on and promote the continued and enhanced development of the marine and maritime industries in the Maltese Islands. In accordance with the National Integrated Maritime Policy published in 2015, Malta Marittima's involvement in MSP involves it actively promoting the efficient management of economic activities, exploring opportunities and providing policy direction with respect to potential conflict between the different activities.



Ecosystem-based approach (EBA)

The SPED policy framework for the Coastal Zone and Marine Area aims to facilitate the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and work towards good environmental status. As the ecosystem-based approach is mandated by the MSFD, the SPED inherently supports its implementation.



Resilience to climate change impacts

The SPED vision sees the coastal zone and marine area as playing a significant enabling role in reducing the impact of climate change in the Maltese Islands and to strengthen their capacity to adapt to climate change. The SPED supports the implementation of the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy prepared in 2012^{xxii}.



Land-sea interactions

The legislative framework for land and sea use planning is provided by the Development Planning Act of 2016. The Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (2015) provides a planning framework to integrate socio-economic growth and environmental management within the coastal zone and marine area as covered by the Plan, thus facilitating an integrated approach to land-sea interactions.



Stakeholder Involvement

The preparation of the SPED was based on several national sectoral and thematic plans and policies prepared between 2006 and 2013 and subjected to their respective stakeholder and public consultation processes. Furthermore, the preparation of the draft SPED was supported by additional consultations with different Ministries. The draft was then subjected to public consultations where stakeholders were invited to submit their views on the documents available online. An environmental NGO (*Din l-Art Helwa*), the Catholic Church's Environment Commission (*Kummissjoni Interdjoċesana Ambjent*) and the Malta Developers Association (MDA), submitted representations and expressed their views in the media with regard to the SPED.

Upon publication of the approved SPED, a report was published to illustrate how each contribution was considered and a justification for whether or not it was taken into account.^{xxiii} The final draft plan was submitted to the government for approval by Parliament in accordance with legislative provisions.



Use of best available data

The SEA process for the SPED made use of the best available data at the time.



Transboundary cooperation

No ad hoc mechanism is set up for regional coordination on MSP. The SIMWESTMED project established the first transboundary pilot project between Malta and Sicily, specifically for MSP. Within the framework of the Development Planning Act 2016, the Planning Authority is identified as the Competent Authority responsible for decision-making pertaining to EC Regulation 347/2013 concerning Projects of Common Interest. In performing this function, the Planning Authority's purposely set-up National Projects Unit is responsible for coordinating with other Competent Authorities in other Member States.

Working through existing regional cooperation fora, the Planning Authority is the focal point representing Malta within the EU MSP Expert Group and EU ICZM Expert Group and for the UNEP MAP Priority Actions Programme - Regional Activity Centre (PAP RAC).

Regional cooperation mechanisms adopted for the implementation of related national and international law, including multilateral environmental agreements, provide further assistance. In this respect, the Barcelona Convention administered through the Environment and Resources Authority, provides the mechanism for regional cooperation on environmental matters.

Coherence with other processes

Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)

The EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive was transposed into Maltese legislation through the publication of the Marine Policy Framework Regulations 2011 (Subsidiary Legislation 549.62). The regulations establish the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) as the Competent Authority. Whilst retaining its role as Competent Authority, the OPM delegated its tasks to the Ministry responsible for the environment, which in turn, coordinates the strategic approach and policy direction for the implementation of the Directive. The technical implementation of the Directive is entrusted to the Environment and Resources Authority.

The implementation of the MSFD: (i) ensures participation or involvement of all relevant stakeholders in order to ensure consideration of different aspects and uses of the marine environment; (ii) is based on integration and streamlining of marine-related policies and considers the work undertaken as part of the Ecosystems Approach of the Barcelona Convention; and (iii) acknowledges uncertainty and limitations in marine knowledge. The implementation of the MSFD in the second cycle is geared towards a more quantitative approach with a view to improve the definition of progress towards the achievement of Good Environmental Status, in line with Commission Decision 2017/848/EU.

Habitats Directive

The EU Habitats Directive was transposed into Maltese legislation through the publication of the Flora, Fauna, and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations, 2006 (Subsidiary Legislation 549.44).

Malta contributes to the Natura 2000 network by identifying, proposing, and designating Special Areas of Conservation of International Importance and Specially Protected Areas as established through Subsidiary Legislation No. 549.44. To date the Maltese Islands, have 34 terrestrial and 18 marine protected areas under the Natura 2000 network process of the EU Habitats Directive. Whereas the terrestrial sites cover approximately 13.5% of the Maltese land area, the marine protected areas occupy about 35% of the waters around the Maltese Islands up to 25 nautical miles. These MPAs cover all habitats and species addressed by national legislation and the EU Habitats Directive and were made possible through the provision of a combination of national funding and additional EU funding.

Malta's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)

As a Party to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Malta is required to establish a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)^{xxiv} with the purpose of integrating biodiversity concerns into plans, programs and policies of those sectors that are drivers of biodiversity change. Through such integration, the pivotal role biodiversity (natural capital) plays for economic prosperity, social welfare and human well-being, in terms of ecosystem goods and services provided, is acknowledged.

The mandate for Malta's NBSAP development also stems from the EC Council Decision of 25 October 1993 concerning the conclusion of the Convention on Biological Diversity (93/626/EEC), the 'Convention on Biological Diversity (Incorporation) Regulations, 2002' (S.L. 549.27), the 'Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations, 2006' (S.L. 549.44), Malta's National Reform Program (2005-2008), Malta's National Strategy on Sustainable Development, and the National Environment Policy^{xxv} (NEP).

Through the adoption of the NBSAP, commitment has been made to achieve national targets by 2020 in support of Malta's natural heritage. Some of the targets address both direct pressures and underlying causes of biodiversity loss. A number of other targets aim to improve the status of Malta's biodiversity and enhance the benefits of biodiversity and associated life supporting services. While these targets are aligned with targets adopted at a global level, as well as with EU biodiversity targets, Malta's proposed targets are intended to reflect national priorities and capacities.

With the theme 'Working Hand-in-Hand with Nature', Malta's NBSAP adopts a long-term vision and sets out national targets with action-driven and outcome-oriented measures grouped under thematic areas. The NBSAP acts as a policy driver to set Malta on the right track to meet its biodiversity and environmental objectives and obligations as identified in Malta's National Environment Policy (2012), as well as the 2020 global and EU targets for biodiversity.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)

Progress on the implementation of ICZM in Malta has been spearheaded by the land use system, and efforts made towards the implementation of the EU ICZM Recommendation have been recorded in the national reports prepared in 2006 and 2010.

The Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development of 2015 provides for a planning framework to integrate socioeconomic growth and environment management within the coastal zone and marine area. The policy direction is aimed at prioritising legitimate coastal uses, minimising user conflict, protecting biodiversity, cultural heritage, landscapes, public access, safeguarding against coastal erosion, and increasing resilience to climate change impacts. Specific synergies are inbuilt to ensure congruency with the Integrated Maritime Policy, Water Framework Directive and Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

The SPED was identified as requiring a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), as per Regulation 4(2)(a) of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations (Legal Notice 497 of 2010), and an SEA was consequently prepared.

The Environmental Report which was subject to public consultation explains the SEA framework and methodology, elaborates on the environmental baseline, describes the assessment of the environmental impacts of alternative strategies and the chosen option and identifies the monitoring requirements.^{xxvi}

Sources

Consulted references

- Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (SPED) <https://www.pa.org.mt/en/strategic-plan>

Relevant legislative acts

- Development Planning Act, 2016 (Cap. 552)
- Environment Protection Act, 2016 (Cap. 549)
- Environment and Development Planning Act of 2010 (Cap.504)
- Territorial Waters and Contiguous Zone Act, 1971 (Cap. 226)
- The Continental Shelf Act 2014 (Cap.535)

Specific citations

ⁱ<http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=8728>

ⁱⁱhttps://mti.gov.mt/en/Document%20Repository/OED%20-%20Legislation/Continental_Shelf_Act.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ<http://justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=8832&l=1>

^{iv}<http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=12451&l=1>

^v<http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=12446&l=1>

^{vi}<http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=8679>

^{vii}<http://www.pa.org.mt/sped>

^{viii}Malta Environment and Planning Authority (2007): An overview of the state of Marine Spatial Planning in the Mediterranean Countries– Malta report.

^{ix}Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (SPED) (2015).

<https://www.pa.org.mt/en/strategic-plan>

^x<http://www.vallettawaterfront.com/content.aspx?id=343294>

^{xi}ibidem

^{xii}Economically important energy resources, since they are predominantly used as a combustible fuel source (coal, petroleum and natural gas) and its derivatives (plastics, solvents); Pancontinental Oil & Gas (2001): Malta – Pelagian Shelf; Mediterranean Oil and Gas Plc., Operations. Total Petroleum Systems of the Pelagian Province, Tunisia, Libya, Italy, and Malta

^{xiii}<https://eracms.gov.mt/en/Documents/MSFD-InitialAssessment-EconomicSectorsReport.pdf>

^{xiv}Eighteen (18) marine Special Areas of Conservation of International importance have been designated through Legal Notice 311 of 2006 and GN 682 of 2018. Additional information available here: <http://era.org.mt/en/Pages/Natura-2000-Malta.aspx> and <http://era.org.mt/en/Pages/Natura-2000-Datasheets-Maps.aspx>

^{xv}Additional information available here: <https://era.org.mt/en/Pages/Natura-2000-Management-Planning-for-marine-sites-in-Malta--Gozo.aspx>

^{xvi}<http://justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lp&itemid=23444&l=1>

^{xvii}https://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/64812/SD_Strategy_2006.pdf

^{xviii}Legal Notice 41 of 2016.<http://justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lp&itemid=27297&l=1>

^{xix}For more information see: <http://www.maltamarittima.org.mt/>

^{xx}Legal Notice 41 of 2016.<http://justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lp&itemid=27297&l=1>

^{xxi}For more information see: <http://www.maltamarittima.org.mt/>

^{xxii}<https://www.gov.mt/en/Government/Publications/Documents/MSDEC/National%20Adaptation%20Strategy.pdf>

^{xxiii}<https://www.pa.org.mt/en/strategic-plan>

^{xxiv}<http://era.org.mt/en/Pages/NBSAP.aspx>

^{xxv}<http://environment.gov.mt/en/decc/Pages/decc.aspx>

^{xxvi}<https://www.pa.org.mt/en/strategic-plan>