

SEA SCREENING TEMPLATE

Part A – Plan/Programme (PP) and Responsible Authority

Title of PP: Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development

Responsible Authority:

- Malta Environment and Planning Authority;

Contact Person:

- Mr Joseph Gauci (MEPA)

- Ms. Michelle Borg (MTCE)

Position:

- Unit Manager, MEPA

- SPED Co-ordinator, MTCE

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Date: 23rd December 2011

Part B – Key Facts

Responsible Authority: Malta Environment and Planning Authority

Title of PP: Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development

Purpose of PP:

The Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands, approved in 1990 and adopted in 1992, is a 20 year strategy. Given the socio-economic and environmental changes that have taken place over the past two decades and the current socio-economic context a new strategic plan to address the allocation of space for development needs in the Maltese Islands is required for post 2012.

With the Environment and Development Planning Act (EDPA) of 2010, strategic planning has shifted from traditional land use planning to a more holistic spatial approach that ensures the integration between development needs and environment protection. With this shift in planning approach the Strategic Plan for Environment and Development will replace the Structure Plan as the key strategic document for development and will provide a more holistic approach to spatial planning on both land and at sea. In accordance with Article 51 of the Environment and Development Planning Act (EDPA) of 2010 SPED must ensure the sustainable management of land and sea resources and the protection of the environment.

Is the PP the result of legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? Explain.

The SPED is required by legislative procedure as per Articles 51 to 53 of the EDPA of 2010. This Act has replaced the previous Environment Protection Act of 2001 and the Development Planning Act, 1992 (as amended).

Period covered by PP: 2012 - 2020

Envisaged Frequency of Updates: In accordance with the EDPA the SPED shall be monitored and reviewed as often as may be necessary, provided such review does not take place within a period of less than five years. Every such review shall be made in accordance with the goals and objectives of a revision of the SPED as may be approved by Cabinet. Nevertheless the SPED can be reviewed in parts as the need arises by means of a Resolution of the House of Representatives (Articles 51 (2) and (3)).

Area covered by PP:

The SPED will cover the national territory, including all land area, and the marine environment up to the 25 nautical mile limit of the Fisheries Conservation Zone as identified in the attached Map.

Summary of PP content:

The SPED is the national strategic document regulating the sustainable management of land and sea resources in the territory of the Maltese Islands. It shall be based on an integrated planning system which: (i) ensures the sustainable management of land and sea resources together with the protection of the environment; and (ii) guides the development and use of land and sea space.

According to the EDPA the SPED must ensure that:

(i) plans, policies and programmes issued under the EDPA are spatial, holistic and comprehensive so that all factors in relation to land and sea resources and related environment conservation are addressed and included and to balance demands for development with socio-economic consideration and the need to protect the environment;

(ii) sectoral policies, activities and inputs are interpreted and coordinated with each other combining the inputs of all disciplines and groups;

(iii) all actions are based on clear understanding of the natural and legitimate objectives and needs of individual land users;

(iv) it follows other national policies and plans.

The preparation of the SPED is required to give due regard to:

a) the current economic policies affecting development;

(b) the current social policies affecting development;

(c) the environment policies affecting development;

(d) the policies of the Government with respect to the matters set out in sub-article(5) of the EDPA;

(e) the resources likely to be available for the implementation of the plan;

(f) all possible land and sea-use options in selecting the best use for a given area of land or sea.

The SPED shall therefore translate existing government plans and policies into spatial terms to direct the planned and required socio-economic development of the Maltese Islands in appropriate locations. The SPED will also guide the spatial aspect of new Government plans and policies including those emerging from the EDP Act and will form the primary basis for decisions on applications related to environment and development. The SPED will not revise the existing development boundaries.

On the basis of the above the final document is expected to set out policies directing where economic and social activities can take place within the Maltese Islands and up to the 25 nautical miles. The Plan shall be illustrated by diagrams as necessary and is to be accompanied by an explanatory memorandum giving a reasoned justification for each of the policies and proposals contained in the Plan.

Part C – SEA Criteria

SEA Criterion	Yes/No (no other answer except Yes/No)	Explanation
Is the PP subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government (Regulation 3)	Yes Yes	The SPED is required by the Environment and Development Planning Act of 2010. It shall be prepared by the responsible authority through a legislative procedure by Government and afterwards to be endorsed by the House of Representatives.
Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Regulation 3)	Yes	The SPED is required by the Environment and Development Planning Act of 2010.
Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive?	Yes Yes	The SPED shall determine the spatial needs of the Maltese Islands and extends to incorporate all the sectors mentioned here and subsequently shall set a framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive.

SEA Criterion	Yes/No (no other answer except Yes/No)	Explanation
(Regulation 4(2)(a))		
Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Articles 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Regulation 4(2)(b))	No	The Plan Proponent is in consultation with the Competent Authority for the Habitats Directive to officially determine whether an Appropriate Assessment is required.
Does the PP determine the use of small areas at local level OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Regulation 4(2)(a) (Regulation 4(3))	No	The SPED is intended to set the strategic framework for spatial development at a national level and will not be determining the use of small areas at a local level. The SPED will replace the current Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands and is therefore to be considered as a plan replacement.

SEA Criterion	Yes/No (no other answer except Yes/No)	Explanation
Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Regulation 4(4))	Yes	The plan is intended to set the national strategic framework for spatial development which will guide the spatial aspect of Government plans and policies including those emerging from the EDP Act and will also form the primary basis for decisions on applications related to environment and development.
Is the PP likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Regulation 4(5))	Yes	In guiding the accommodation of the wide range government policies and plans that deal with issues such as growth in economic development, energy generation, transport, waste management, social infrastructure and community facilities and environment protection at a national level the SPED is likely to give rise to significant effects on the environment.
Is the PP's sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency OR	No	The nature of the SPED does not fall under these provisions.

is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7	No	
OR		
Is it a financial or budget PP?	No	

Part D – Likely Significance of Effects on the Environment

Responsible Authority: Malta Environment and Planning Authority

Title of PP: Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment	Likely to have significant environmental effects? Yes/No (no other answer except Yes/No)	Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)
the degree to which the PP sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	Yes	<p>The Plan will set out Malta's national policy framework for future spatial development and shall determine the use of land and sea resources and hence will be influencing the location, nature and size of activities which would need to take into account the proximity, scale and density of the designated areas. It shall be allocating the necessary land or sea resources in such a manner as to promote synergies and reduce conflicting operations.</p> <p>Potential significant impacts may arise from new or increased development projects at sea that can affect the status of the marine environment. Another potential significant impact could arise from measures to reuse built heritage in the countryside, as the cumulative impact of new activities may actually give rise to deterioration of the landscape, soil sealing and increased noise from provision of vehicular access.</p>
the degree to which the PP influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	Yes	The SPED's function is a strategic one, and shall regulate spatial use of the Maltese Islands' land and maritime territory up to 25 nautical miles. It shall reflect government policy direction and action earmarked by the different plans, programmes or policies. It shall however guide the same plans,

		<p>programmes and policies as well as potential new ones and in particular those emerging from the EDP Act 2010, with respect to use of land and maritime territory.</p> <p>Policies that are promoting the shift to green modes of transport are expected to support plans on air quality, public transport as well as climate change mitigation measures. Policies that promote green public open spaces in urban areas not only improve the urban quality of life, but could potentially support the implementation of plans dealing with environmental health and biodiversity.</p>
the relevance of the PP for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	Yes	<p>The SPED should be seen as a long term spatial strategy aimed to facilitate and promote the efficient use of land and sea space. This should lead to reduced impacts on natural resources and environmental quality. The plan adopts an integrated approach to ensure that activities and their interaction with social, environmental and economic dimensions do not diminish environmental quality.</p> <p>The spatial organisation of land uses and provision of green open spaces within urban areas based on the public transport network should lead to reduced needs to travel which will in turn help reduce impacts on air quality and noise levels associated with traffic generation. This is expected to improve the environmental health quality for the population.</p>
environmental problems relevant to the PP	Yes	<p>The environmental problems associated with development at a national level have already been identified by the State of the Environment Report. These relate to impacts on biodiversity through habitat degradation or loss; increased air and noise</p>

		<p>pollution through vehicular traffic; reduced potential for aquifer recharge due to land uptake; increased potential for local flooding with increased soil sealing; soil loss through agricultural land abandonment and coastal erosion due to inappropriate methods of construction and improper siting; generation and disposal of construction and demolition waste.</p> <p>The Plan aims to reduce and if possible reverse the trend of such impacts. In setting a strategic policy framework that safeguards legitimate coastal uses within the coastal zone the SPED is expected to reduce user conflict and protect the undeveloped coast. This is expected to give rise to positive impacts on natural habitats and water quality.</p>
<p>the relevance of the PP for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. PPs linked to waste management or water protection)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The SPED will not be the main tool to implement Community legislation on the environment. In providing an integrated framework to guide the spatial allocation for development in accordance with government plans and policies it will be supporting the implementation of the respective plans prepared specifically to fulfil the obligations of Community legislation on the environment.</p>
<p>the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>In view of the socio, economic and environmental characteristics of the Maltese Islands, it is acknowledged that the probability for environmental impacts is likely to be significant if policies are not prepared in an integrated manner. The negative impacts arising from redevelopment within the urban zone may potentially be of a limited duration and reversible. However the frequency may be high in view of the potential extent of redevelopment that can potentially take place.</p>

		Similarly, impacts arising from mineral extraction may be irreversible due to land clearing and long term, due to the life time of the quarry operation.
the cumulative nature of the effects	Yes	The SPED approach will determine the cumulative effects. As indicated above the inter-linkages between different sectors are considerable. Given the small territory and high population density of the Maltese islands any strategic policy is likely to affect a number of sectors. It is the scope of the Plan to ensure that cumulative impacts arising from its implementation are positive rather than negative. The impacts arising from the reuse of existing buildings in rural areas is likely to generate a cumulative negative impact on landscape and soils in view of the significant amount of such structures that are present.
the transboundary nature of the effects	Yes	On the basis of current knowledge there are no land uses that give rise to transboundary impacts. Potential effects will depend on the use of maritime and land use space defined in the SPED, nevertheless it is envisaged that such implications may be low.
the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	Yes	The plan aims to decrease risks to human health and to make sure that the necessary planning approaches and required facilities to safeguard human health and the environment are in place in accordance with national, European and International regulations and policies.
the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	Yes	Potential significant impacts arising from the SPED can either be experienced at a national scale or even at a local level. For example, policies supporting green modes of transportation would be expected to have an overall positive impact on national air

		<p>quality as well as in areas that are currently subject to heavy traffic. Measures to safeguard biodiversity are likely to affect the rural and marine environments however the quality of life of the entire population is expected to benefit as well in view of the improved amenity value of the rural and marine environments.</p>
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Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment	Likely to have significant environmental effects? Yes/No (no other answer except Yes/No)	Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)
the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values (iii) intensive land-use	Yes	The Maltese Islands are characterised by a rich biodiversity and cultural heritage of significant value. In directing urban development within the development zone, due to the high population density and concentration of activities in the urban conurbation, environmental limit values and quality standards may be exceeded.
the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	Yes	Potential significant impacts on landscapes may arise from policies addressing acceptable uses Outside the Development Zone and from policies guiding the design of development within urban areas. Such policies may improve urban landscapes yet potentially introduce conflicting features with the rural and coastal landscapes.

Part E – Summary of Environmental Effects

(Provide a summary of the significant environmental effects of the PP)

- Potential significant impacts may arise from new or increased development projects at sea that can affect the status of the marine environment. Another potential significant impact could arise from measures to reuse built heritage in the countryside, as the cumulative impact of new activities may actually give rise to deterioration of the landscape, soil sealing and increased noise from provision of vehicular access.
- Policies that are promoting the shift to green modes of transport are expected to support plans on air quality, public transport as well as climate change mitigation measures. Policies that promote green public open spaces in urban areas not only improve the urban quality of life, but could potentially support the implementation of plans dealing with environmental health and biodiversity.
- The spatial organisation of land uses and provision of green open spaces within urban areas based on the public transport network should lead to reduced needs

to travel which will in turn help reduce impacts on air quality and noise levels associated with traffic generation. This is expected to improve the environmental health quality for the population.

- In setting a strategic policy framework that safeguards legitimate coastal uses within the coastal zone the SPED is expected to reduce user conflict and protect the undeveloped coast. This is expected to give rise to positive impacts on natural habitats and water quality.
- The negative impacts arising from redevelopment within the urban zone may potentially be of a limited duration and reversible. However the frequency may be high in view of the potential extent of redevelopment that can potentially take place.
- The impacts arising from the reuse of existing buildings in rural areas is likely to generate a cumulative negative impact on landscape and soils in view of the significant amount of such structures that are present. Similarly, impacts arising from mineral extraction may be irreversible due to land clearing and long term, due to the life time of the quarry operation.
- Policies supporting green modes of transportation would be expected to have an overall positive impact on national air quality as well as in areas that are currently subject to heavy traffic. Measures to safeguard biodiversity are likely to affect the rural and marine environments however the quality of life of the entire population is expected to benefit as well in view of the improved amenity value of the rural and marine environments.
- In directing urban development within the development zone, due to the high population density and concentration of activities in the urban conurbation, environmental limit values and quality standards may be exceeded.
- Potential significant impacts on landscapes may arise from policies addressing acceptable uses Outside the Development Zone and from policies guiding the design of development within urban areas. Such policies may improve urban landscapes yet potentially introduce conflicting features with the rural and coastal landscapes.

Part F – Screening Outcome

Screening is required under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations, 2010 (Legal Notice 497 of 2010). It is our view that:

- An SEA is required because the PP falls under the scope of Regulation 4(3) of the Regulations and is likely to have significant environmental effects
- An SEA is required because the PP falls under the scope of Regulation 4(4) of the Regulations and is likely to have significant environmental effects
- An SEA is not required because the PP is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.

An SEA is required because the PP falls under the scope of Regulation 4(2) (a) of the Regulations and is likely to have significant environmental effects.

Michelle Borg

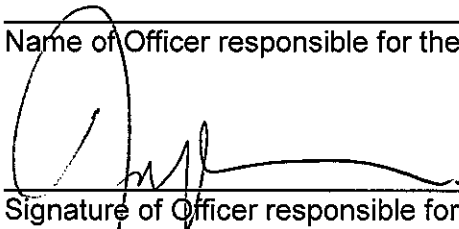
Name of Officer responsible for the Screening Report



Signature of Officer responsible for the Screening Report

Joseph Gauci

Name of Officer responsible for the Screening Report



Signature of Officer responsible for the Screening Report

Malta Environment and Planning Authority

Name of Responsible Authority

23/12/2018

Date

Notes to Responsible Authorities:

1. The SEA Focal Point cannot provide any feedback to incomplete Screening Templates
2. All responsible authorities should provide the SEA Focal Point with an original signed copy of each Screening Template prepared
3. All responsible authorities should provide the SEA Focal Point with a copy of the public notification which is obligatory under Regulation 4(7) of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations, 2010.