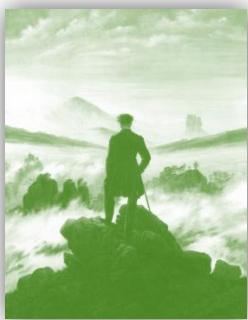




Malta Action Plan

Three T - PP4



... a trail brought me here



Contents

.....	1
INTRODUCTION	3
PART I – GENERAL INFORMATION	4
PART II – POLICY CONTEXT.....	5
PRESENT STATUS OF THE POLICY INSTRUMENT:.....	5
PART III – DETAILS OF THE PLANNED ACTIONS.....	6
1.1 <i>The background</i>	6
1.2 <i>Evaluation results justifying the specific Actions chosen for implementation</i>	6
1.3 <i>List of Actions</i>	6
1.3.1 ACTION 1	7
1.3.1.1 Steps/activities required for its implementation	8
1.3.1.2 Players involved	8
1.3.1.3 Timeframe.....	8
1.3.1.4 Costs.....	9
1.3.1.5 Financial resources needed.....	9
1.3.1.6 Funding sources and disbursement plan	9
1.3.1.7 Actions needed to secure funding	10
1.3.1.8 Expected impacts from the Action implementation (with KPI defined).....	10
1.3.1.9 Risk assessment. Remedial actions to contain/minimize risks.....	10
SUMMARY FOR ACTION 1	10
1.3.2 ACTION 2	13
1.3.2.1 Steps/activities required for its implementation	13
1.3.2.2 Players involved	14
1.3.2.3 Timeframe.....	14
1.3.2.4 Costs.....	15
1.3.2.5 Financial resources needed.....	15
Dr David Mallia (Project Leader) - €28.63	15
1.3.2.6 Other resources needed	15
1.3.2.7 Funding sources	15
1.3.2.8 Actions needed to secure funding	15
1.3.2.9 Expected impacts from the Action implementation (with KPI defined).....	16
1.3.2.10 Risk assessment. Remedial actions to contain/minimize risks.....	16
SUMMARY FOR ACTION 2	16
1.3.3 ACTION 3	17
1.3.3.1 Steps/activities required for its implementation	17
1.3.3.2 Players involved	18
1.3.3.3 Timeframe.....	19
1.3.3.4 Costs.....	19
1.3.3.5 Financial resources needed.....	19
1.3.3.6 Funding sources	20
1.3.3.7 Expected impacts from the Action implementation (with KPI defined).....	20
1.3.3.8 Risk assessment. Remedial actions to contain/minimize risks.....	20
SUMMARY FOR ACTION 3	21
PART IV – PROCEDURES TO EFFECTIVELY MONITOR THE ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION.....	24
APPENDICES:	25

Introduction

Climate change and air quality are among the key challenges facing Malta in the 21st century. Societies in general, and particularly those living within limited confines, have to cope with the effects of dramatic climate change, global diminishing of fossil fuel reserves, and the need to guarantee air quality. Malta needs to re-shape its economy by focusing on sectors which are increasingly sustainable in terms of energy and fuel consumption.

Currently, Malta's largest income and employment sector is tourism. For this to remain so in the long term, tourism needs to become increasingly sustainable offering more diverse products which are environmentally sustainable, and which contribute to the quality of, rather than impacting upon, the tourism product Malta has to offer. Needless to say, one of the main contributors to fuel derived pollution within the tourism sector is the transport element. The use of private and rented cars not only adds considerably to the emissions count, but it also impacts on the already overcrowded traffic thoroughfares which crisscross the country.

With these issues in mind the Planning Authority (PA), and its main stakeholder the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA), are participating in the Thematic Trail Trigger (ThreeT) Project to identify such sustainable tourism activities which while providing an authentic experience of the Island alleviate and reverse the negative impacts caused by the transport factor linked to tourism activities.

Through the PA's participation in the ThreeT Project efforts will be made to confront this complex challenge through three interlinked actions which will serve to set an example of how initiatives can be undertaken to enhance the tourism experience through a more sustainable product and influence policy to ensure that such activities are not compromised by external factors such as unsympathetic development. The actions will target a section of the coastal areas, with the long-term ambition of extending them along the whole coastal perimeter of the Islands.

It is noted that tourism activity in Malta has only recently started to spread from a few concentrated areas along the coast to less accessible, and as such less compromised, coastal areas. The project aims to turn the perceived weakness presented by lack of accessibility into an asset. And while doing so ensure that the characteristics which are crucial for the attractiveness and authenticity of experience in such coastal areas are safeguarded.



Part I – General information

Project: Thematic Trail Trigger (ThreeT)

Partner organisation: Malta Planning Authority

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant): Malta Tourism Authority

Country: Malta

NUTS2 region: MT001

Contact persons: Dr David Mallia & Joe Azzopardi

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Part II – Policy context

- The Action Plan aims to impact:**
- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme**
 - European Territorial Cooperation programme**
 - Other regional development policy instrument**

Name of the policy instrument addressed: OP1 – Fostering a competitive and sustainable economy to meet our challenges Priority Axis 5: Protecting our Environment – Investing in natural and cultural assets.

Present status of the policy instrument:

The Policy Instrument addressed (PA5) in ERDF Operational Programme I for 2014-2020 (OPI) specifically identifies the protection of Maltese environment through investments in natural and cultural heritage as a priority area. PA5 describes the Maltese islands as possessing a unique cultural landscape with rich heritage varying from museums, fortifications, baroque architecture and archaeological sites. Cultural heritage is identified as an important niche market that contributes towards all year-round tourism on the Islands. This has also been attested by the 2013 'Market Profile Survey' commissioned by the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA), stating that cultural heritage is one of the Maltese major attractions, with 77.6% of tourists visiting Malta tend to prefer sightseeing, whereas 50% of tourists also make it a point to visit historical sites/museums. Whilst OPI acknowledges the importance of increased competitiveness in cultural heritage in the local tourism sector, there is however a distinct lack of focus on a tangible strategy for the creation of one or more 'National Heritage Trails'. This is required to promote the actual individual sites, which are rich in both environmental and built heritage, consolidating their protection status, by creating greater accessibility to these sites, to be frequented and enjoyed by the general public and tourists alike. Modal links are required so as to create, facilitate, and increase accessibility from one site to the other.



Part III – Details of the planned actions

1.1 The background

Good Practices Earmarked for interest, tutoring and mentoring support facilitating the transfer, local Stakeholder meetings/workshops,

GP 03	Tourist Passport	PP5
GP 10	Via Sancti Martini – The Establishment of Saint Martin’s International Pilgrimage	PP8
GP 11	The network of hiking and biking trails in Transylvanian Highlands	PP7
GP 28	Iron Curtain Trail: Sustainable mobility along the EuroVelo route	PP8
GP 42	Industrial heritage management: the thematic route of the TeH2O Water, Industry & Crafts	PP5
GP 55	TITSA Good practice Sustainable public transport	PP10

1.2 Evaluation results justifying the specific Actions chosen for implementation

The various Good Practices (GP) visited during a series of study visits (SV), and listed above, have proved to be of interest in that most of them are thematic based heritage trails with a historical or architectural common element. This is religious in the case of GP10 - **Via Sancti Martini** (PP8), Industrial in the case of GP42 - **TeH2O Water** (PP8) and military in the case of GP28 - **Iron Curtain Trail** (PP7) and of the fortified churches circuit which forms part of GP11 - **The network of hiking and biking trails in Transylvanian Highlands** (PP7). The diverse ways in which the common thematic element is presented has inspired an additional dimension to the trail being designed in Malta.

Apart from the sustainable transport element, which is partly inspired by GP55 - **TITSA Good practice Sustainable public transport** (PP10), the Malta trail will be given an architectural and historical dimension through the identification of fortified buildings along its perimeter. These consist of an interesting mixture of Late Renaissance, Baroque, and Early Modern defence posts which can effectively illustrate in an interesting fashion the development of the concept of coastal defence over a 400-year period.

The GPs provided first-hand experiences on how to approach the story telling aspect of a trail, and how the historical and artistic elements can be conveyed in an interesting, effective and interactive fashion. They also provided insights on how thematic trails can be organically developed, how the extent of the trail can be presented and explained, and how a coherent route/s can be created and maintained. Diverse ways to entice visitors are inspired by GP03 - **Tourist Passport** (PP5).

These are elements which will be transferred to the trail being envisaged. The ideas and inspirations collected through the SVs will be passed on to various stake holders which will be involved in the development of the trail.

1.3 List of Actions

Action 1: Restoration intervention – “The Planning Authority will follow the ongoing restoration work being carried out by Malta Tourism Authority at the Red Tower in Mellieha ensuring this is brought to a successful conclusion”. This restoration is co-funded in an ERDF PA5. 0101 “The Northern Coastal Watch Project”.

Action 2: Preparatory work for the potential formulation of a Pilot National Trail – “The Planning Authority will co-operate with the Malta Tourism Authority and other potential Stakeholders in preparing for the potential upgrading of the existing Malta Goes Rural Mellieha Trail, which includes also the Red Tower and other cultural/natural assets along the Northern Coastal Watch as a pilot national trail.

Action 3: Exploration and possible initialisation of the Policy formulation process for National Trails through a legal context – “The Planning Authority, in collaboration with other relevant entities, will be

actively participate in the initialisation of the formulation of a Policy for National Trails”.

1.3.1 ACTION 1

Restoration intervention – “The Planning Authority will follow the ongoing restoration work being carried out by Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) at the Red Tower (1647) in Mellieha ensuring this is brought to a successful conclusion”. This restoration is co-funded in an ERDF.05.101 (PA5) “The Northern Coastal Watch”.

It must be noted that although the restoration of the Red Tower has already started, this activity was always planned to take place as a result of the ThreeT project. The restoration project was chosen in preparation for the ThreeT application following discussions with the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA); the main stakeholder and the Funds and Programme Division (the local Managing Authority of the European Territorial Cooperation Programmes Unit) to ensure that there will be enough time to influence the Operational Programme I for 2014-2020 during the life time of the project considering that this happened towards the tail end of the said Operational Programme. This was done to ensure that the project results in a tangible action and that the self-performance indicators can actually be realised in time. Furthermore, the lessons learned from the ThreeT project particularly through the Good Practices identified and the tutoring sessions attended, will be used to enhance this action by focusing on the use of the actual building once restored, of integrating in a Pilot National Trail envisaged in Action 2 and increasing its visibility through promotion of the site as part of a trail. Thus, rather than just having a restoration of a building on its own, through the lessons learned from the project, this action will now provide a context to the restoration process ensuring that a compatible use of the building is found, its continuous upkeep and long-term maintenance are implemented and increased exposure to the public is obtained. There is every possibility that without the Actions contemplated in this plan, the site would have remained underutilised and in a few years start to decay once again, needing a new restoration intervention in another ten years' time. So, this action will also valorise the funds invested in the actual restoration process and ensure a longer life span to the investment and works carried out.

In addition to the above it is also contemplated that this action combined with the other two actions of this Plan will provide a concrete example on the importance of having a long-term comprehensive strategy when it comes to restoration and valorisation of the Maltese historical and cultural assets rather than investing in small scale restoration projects of particular monuments/building in an ad hoc fashion. This will give the Malta Tourism Authority and the Ministry of Tourism increased leverage in influencing also the upcoming Operational Programme to provide focus on the comprehensive context and long-term use when allocating funds for investments in natural and cultural heritage.

The restoration of the Red Tower, which has been identified as one of the main nodes of the envisaged coastal trail, is well underway. The “The Northern Coastal Watch Project” also includes the Santa Maria Battery (1716) on Comino, and Dwejra Tower (1652) in Gozo, which presents possibilities for sea-based connections through sustainable transport.

Link to Good Practices adapted from the Study Visits:

The link of the good practices to the project leading to the development and design of Action 1 is as follows:

The lesson learnt from **Via Sancti Martini** (Hungary) consisted of the idea of a thematic trail based on architectural heritage nodes, linked to a trail. In their case it was religious in nature, in our case it is military and defensive. Similarly, to the Via Sancti Martini trail, each trail node in Malta's trail will include information specific to the site being visited but also to the overall thematic trail.

Similar ideas were also taken from **TeH2O Water** (Poland). In this case the following were observed and deemed to be relevant:

- how industrial sites had been restored or rehabilitated;

- but also that the restoration project included a long term programme of use for the sites which would ensure the long term maintenance of these historic sites, whilst enhancing the tourism potential of the area.

In our case, the restoration of the tower leads to a fortification trail, as the main theme, with built heritage elements.

From the **Iron Curtain Trail** (Hungary), the idea of emphasising the historical aspects of a trail based on a military defensive strategy was of relevance. Similar aspects were also collected for the Fortified Churches trail within the **Network of hiking and biking trails in Transylvanian Highlands** (Romania) which also presented the possibility of emphasising the interaction of both historical sites and their natural setting which is also the case with the Red Tower at Mellieha, Malta. Furthermore, this action will also valorise the funds invested in the actual restoration process.

Lessons were also learnt about best practices in trail governance and the involvement and motivation of stakeholders in this process, which was also a contributing factor in the overall restoration of the Red Tower which is held in trust by a local NGO. A common element acquired from all the good practices listed above was how the overall theme consolidates the cultural and historical assets, which lead to the development of a story told through the trail itself. This includes the way information on the assets is presented and promoted.

Finally, the restoration of the Red Tower will provide a main node along the envisaged trail in Action two and will also provide the impetus for further restoration of heritage buildings along the trail.

1.3.1.1 Steps/activities required for its implementation

- Monitoring of the restoration intervention of the Red Tower through the Development Planning Permit and approved Restoration Method Statement.
- Submission of project for planning permission
- Approval of project and commencement of works
- Submission of modified proposal for restoration works
- Approval of modification
- Recommencement of works
- Further modification to proposal
- Completion of Restoration Works
- Monitoring Red Tower Restoration and its results in terms of number of visitors / visitor management & upkeep of the tower.

1.3.1.2 Players involved

Malta Tourism Authority: (main consultant & stakeholder in the project) will guide and assist in the drawing up of the recommendations.

Din I-Art Helwa: (stakeholder) National Heritage Conservation NGO, who manages the Red Tower and other heritage sites along the “Northern Coastal Watch Project”. These sites will be nodal points along the proposed pilot trail.

1.3.1.3 Timeframe

Project started – 01/04/2018

Project completed – 31/12/2022

Mod. 5B-3T-14

ACTION PLAN

PROJECT LEADER: Din I-Art Helwa (DLH)

PROJECT ARCHITECTS: Architecture XV (XV)

MANAGING AUTHORITY: Planning Authority (PA)

RED TOWER RESTORATION

ID	TASK	STATUS	OWNE	DEPENDENCY	START DATE	END DATE	DURATION	2015		2016				2017				2018				2019				2020				2021				2022				STATUS			
								Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2		Q3	Q4	
1	Submission of project for planning permission approval of project and commencement of works	Complete	XV		08/04/2015	01/10/2015	127																																		Not Started
2	Submission of modified proposal for restoration works	Complete	DLHPXV		01/10/2015	01/02/2016	88																																	In Progress	
3	Approval of modification	Complete	XV		08/02/2016	29/02/2016	16																																On Hold		
4	Recommencement of works	Complete	DLHPXV		01/03/2016	01/10/2018	675																																Decided		
5	Further modification to proposal	Complete	XV		16/10/2018	01/02/2019	73																																Cancelled		
6	Completion of Restoration Works	Complete	DLHPXV		03/02/2019	15/03/2019	30																																		
7	Monitoring Red Tower Restoration results	In Progress	DLHP	A	30/03/2020	31/12/2022	588																																		

1.3.1.4 Costs

The Northern Coastal Watch Project – ERDF.05.101 (PA5)

Restoration of St Agatha Tower (Red Tower), Mellieha Area 145sq m Cost €302,000

Restoration of Santa Marija Battery, Comino, Ghajnsielem Area 575sq m Cost €200,000

Restoration of Dwejra Tower, L/O San Lawrenz, Gozo Area 120sq m Cost €83,000

Total Eligible Funds = € 585,000

1.3.1.5 Financial resources needed

Restoration of St Agatha Tower (Red Tower), Mellieha

€197,058 have been obtained from the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) and €49,265 have been made available by MTA. The MTA also covered other works at the tower amounting to €55,677. The overall investment cost amounts to €302,00 (246,323 +55,677).

The funding of additional expenses by MTA financed the involvement of conservation architect Mr Edward Said of the firm Architecture XV as project architect commissioned to write the Restoration Method Statement, submit the necessary Planning Application and obtain the Planning Permit, and supervise the restoration works. Additional expenses such as soft furnishings, electronic equipment and signage are also being funded through the MTA additional fund.

Planning Authority will monitor the restoration works in collaboration with the Superintendence for Cultural Heritage.

1.3.1.6 Funding sources and disbursement plan

Proposed funding source structure	Funding secured (Y/N)	Amount (currency) (see 1.3.1.5 above)	%
Policy instrument (EU/State Program/regional/local)	ERDF	€197,058	65.25%
Other public bodies' contribution (identify and describe)	Malta Tourism Authority	€49,265	16.31%
Other (specify)	Malta Tourism Authority	€55,677	18.44%
TOTAL (currency)		€302,00	100%

1.3.1.7 Actions needed to secure funding

Funding, as described above, has already been secured since the ERDF project has been approved and is underway.

1.3.1.8 Expected impacts from the Action implementation (with KPI defined)

A) Restoration of historic fabric

Restoration of historic fabric equivalent to a minimum of 2.5% of 5000sq m, which is 125sq m. The Red Tower has a footprint area of 145 sq m. The cost of the restoration project amounted to €302,000.

B) Funds effected

The combined cost of the restoration projects of Dwejra Tower (120sq m) and Santa Maria Battery (575sq m) amounted to €283,000.

Thus, the total cost of **The Northern Coastal Watch Project** amounts to € 585,000

C) Increase in visitors

Visitors figures for Red Tower:

Whereas The Red Tower received an average of 30k visitors per annum, from the reopening in September 2020 till December 2020 there were only 3421 visitors (i.e. circa 30%).*

** Visitors numbers are not a valid indicator at this point in time due to the current Covid 19 situation, as the tower has been closed for extensive periods of times.*

1.3.1.9 Risk assessment. Remedial actions to contain/minimize risks

Actions	Risks	Level	Remedial Action
Restoration of Red Tower	1st risk: due to the imminent closure of the operational programme ERDF during the 3T, discussion happened before, to secure the funds. Risk was closure of Operational Programme before beginning of 3T	High	discussions happened before to secure the funds, and application submitted before closure of the operational programme. (see also description of action).
	Adequate Monitoring of visitors in view of pandemic. Mitigation Risk Covid has also hindered the launch and opening of the site. Mitigation to operate in line with current restrictions Risk Visitors numbers have dropped as a result	High	operating in line with imposed health & safety restrictions (to avoid total closure & fines). Nevertheless, visitor numbers will be far lower than usual.

SUMMARY FOR ACTION 1

Output 1

The restoration work being carried out by Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) at the Red Tower has, and will result, in preserving the 17th Century fortification which is a key element within “The Northern Coastal Watch Project” which groups together a series of diverse fortifications that formed part of the strategy for the defence of the North Coast of Malta by the Order of the Knights of St John collectively known as The Northern Coastal Watch Project.

Output One - As a result of the inclusion of this restoration project within the Three T Project and the lessons

Mod. 5B-3T-14

ACTION PLAN

learned from the Good Practices visited and the tutoring sessions attended a particular focus is being placed on the use of the building once restored by integrating the building in the Pilot National Trail envisaged in Action 2 of this Action Plan. This will result in increasing its visibility through promotion of the site as part of a trail. Thus, rather than just having a restoration of a building on its own, through the lessons learned from the project, this action will now provide a context to the restoration process ensuring that a compatible use of the building is found, its continuous upkeep and long-term maintenance are implemented, and increased exposure to the public is obtained.

Output Two – An increased number of annual visitors is envisaged once the tourism situation returns to normal. This will ensure that in the difficult, post Covid 19 crises, The Red Tower will be provided with new means to attract visitors, resulting in a steady income which will be used for regular maintenance of the site.

Output Three – The Red Tower will become the focus of the Northern Coastal Watch Project in the same way as observed in other thematic trails illustrated during study visits of the Three T Project.

ACTION STEP/ ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE PLAYER	STARTING DATE	END DATE	RESOURCES REQUIRED (staff, tech, etc.)	EXPECTED OUTCOME
Sourcing for funding of restoration project	Malta Tourist Authority (MTA) – co-financing of project	3 rd July 2018	30 th October 2019	MTA Staff, Project Manager, Project Architect	Restoration of Red Tower
Restoration intervention	<p>The external surfaces (walls, staircase, parapet walls and turrets at roof level) which were all originally rendered in characteristic red-ochre lime-based plaster were in varying stages of decay. Externally, all the facades were restored;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - interventions included the restoration works on both the external and internal walls as well as the vaults of the Tower; - introduction of ciangatura flooring to bring the Tower flooring in line with its original scheme; - mechanical and electrical works required including CCTV security system; - installation of energy efficiency internal lighting as well as external lighting in order to provide more 	3 rd July 2018	30 th October 2019	Project Manager, Project Architect	Restoration of Red Tower

Mod. 5B-3T-14

ACTION PLAN

	illumination to the Tower in the evenings.				
Submission of project for planning permission	Architecture XV	08/04/2015	01/10/2015	Project Architect	Restoration of Red Tower
Approval of project and commencement of works	Din I-Art Helwa / Architecture XV	01/10/2015	01/02/2016	Project Architect	Restoration of Red Tower
Submission of modified proposal for restoration works	Architecture XV	08/02/2016	29/02/2016	Project Architect	Restoration of Red Tower
Approval of modification	Architecture XV	01/03/2016	01/10/2018	Project Architect	Restoration of Red Tower
Recommencement of works	Din I-Art Helwa / Architecture XV	16/10/2018	01/02/2019	Project Manager, Project Architect	Restoration of Red Tower
Further modification to proposal	Architecture XV	03/02/2019	15/03/2019	Project Architect	Restoration of Red Tower
Completion of Restoration Works	Din I-Art Helwa / Architecture XV	01/04/2019	30/09/2020	Project Manager, Project Architect	Restoration of Red Tower
Monitoring of Works	Project Manager funded through EU Funds and co-financed by MTA	01/10/2015	30/09/2020	PA Monitoring	Restoration of Red Tower
Final certification of works	Project Manager funded through EU Funds and co-financed by MTA	30/09/2020	30/09/2020	PA Monitoring	Restoration of Red Tower
Monitoring Red Tower Restoration results	Din I-Art Helwa / Planning Authority	30/09/2020	31/12/2022	PA Monitoring	Restoration of Red Tower

1.3.2 ACTION 2

Preparatory work for the potential formulation of a Pilot National Trail – “The Planning Authority will cooperate with the Malta Tourism Authority and other potential Stakeholders in preparing for the potential upgrading of the existing ‘Malta Goes Rural’ Mellieha Digital Trail, which includes also the Red Tower and other cultural/natural assets along the Northern Coastal Watch as a pilot national trail”.

This will include lessons learned from the ThreeT project on providing a theme for a trail, on connecting the nodes of interest to sustainable modes of transport and on promoting the trail efficiently to increase both local and foreign visitors to the area. The trail will be plotted on a digital map, which will feature historic and natural assets along its perimeter. It will also feature visitor services along the trail, including transport means to and from the designated trail.

Policy Improvement and link to the ThreeT Project

The main function of Action 2 is to support Action 1 and is aimed at implementing the ideas obtained from the good practices referred to above and consolidating them through the creation of the proposed Pilot National Trail. Hence its scope is to provide concrete context to restoration. The methodology of gathering information on the natural, cultural and historical assets and how to link these nodes were also obtained the good practices listed above.

The policy in Operational Programme 2014-2020 is influenced through the first Action. The aim of this supportive action is to give a concrete example of how to funds allocated to the restoration can be better utilized through a comprehensive strategy realised through a Trail.

The restoration of individual cultural and historical assets will not automatically create a trail. Thus Action 2 seeks to support such an intervention with the creation of a Pilot National Trail, in line with the Operational Programme. This will be augmented by utilising green transport modes to connect the different nodes.

As a result of Action 2 these ideas will now be physically implemented and tested, with any shortcomings being identified and solutions proposed. All this through the creation of the National Pilot Trail on the ground (once approved by Malta Tourism Authority). This will result in an improved Pilot National Trail, which will eventually be implemented through the forthcoming Operational Programme 2021 – 2027, subject to the final approval of submissions for influencing this Operational Programme and eventual publication.

To this effect the Malta Tourism Authority will continue to hold meetings with the relevant Ministries to obtain support for the implementation of a Pilot National Trail. It should also continue to follow up on the request made to the Planning and Priorities Coordination Division, who administers the Operational Programme, so that the next Operational Programme which is currently being revised and specifically where *Priority Axis 5: Protecting our environment – investing in natural and cultural assets* is concerned, takes into account this need so as to allocate funds for the implementation of the Pilot National Trail.

At this stage it is not yet known when the new Operational Programme will be approved since it is beyond our control. But progress will be monitored and any changes to the policy that may occur during the lifetime of the project will be reported.

1.3.2.1 Steps/activities required for its implementation

- Incorporation of the Red Tower as the main nodal point in the Preparatory work for the potential formulation of a Pilot National Trail (see Action 1);
- Information transfer to and from Din l-Art Helwa, the NGO responsible for the management of the Red Tower;
- Survey of area where the trail is to be implemented;
- Identification of other historical and natural assets in the area to define the exact configuration and design of the trail and define which if any require similar restoration interventions;
- Identification of transport and tourist facilities in the area;
- Plotting of these assets on GIS;

Mod. 5B-3T-14

ACTION PLAN

- List of available assets and services by location and type;
- Identification of further works needed for the establishment of the trail;
- Creation of digital map.

1.3.2.2 Players involved

- Malta Tourism Authority (stakeholder) who have previous experiences in creating and marketing similar trails;
- Din I-Art Helwa: (stakeholder) National Heritage Conservation NGO, who manages the Red Tower and other heritage sites along the “Northern Coastal Watch”. These sites will be nodal points along the proposed pilot trail;
- Majjistral Park: for a possible eventual link of the trail with the park close-by;
- Bicycle Advocacy Group: for expertise in making the trails usable by cyclists;
- Rolling Geeks: for their expertise in self-driven electric vehicles;
- MS Adventure: for their expertise in organising outdoor activities;
- Nature Trust: for their expertise on how to present and preserve natural assets;
- Bird Life: who manage the Ghadira Nature Reserve Bird Sanctuary (close-by).

Majjistral Park / Bicycle Advocacy Group / Rolling Geeks / MS Adventure / Nature Trust actively participated as Stakeholders to the ThreeT project.

1.3.2.3 Timeframe

Project started – 01/01/2019

Project completed – 31/12/2022

PROJECT LEADER: Planning Authority (PA)
STAKE HOLDERS: Malta Tourism Authority (MTA);
Majjistral Park (MP); Din I-Art Helwa (DLH)

PREPARATORY WORK FOR POTENTIAL FORMULATION OF A PILOT NATIONAL TRAIL

ID	TASK	STATUS	OWNER	DEPENDENCIES	START DATE	END DATE	DURATION	2019				2020				2021				2022				STATUS	
								Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
					01/01/2019	31/12/2022	1044	[Green bar]																Not Started	
1	Red Tower incorporated as nodal point in Preparatory work for potential formulation of a Pilot	Complete	DLH/PA		01/01/2019	15/02/2019	34	[Green bar]																	In Progress
2	Information transfer PA/DLH (Red Tower)	Complete	DLH/PA		15/02/2019	28/02/2019	10	[Green bar]																	Complete
3	Survey of trail area	In Progress	PA/MTA/MP/DLH		01/03/2019	30/06/2021	609	[Green bar]																On Hold	
4	Identification & assessment of historical & natural assets in the area	In Progress	PA/MTA/MP/DLH		01/03/2019	30/06/2021	609	[Green bar]																Overdue	
5	Identification & assessment of transport & tourist facilities in area	In Progress	PA/MTA/MP/DLH		01/03/2019	30/06/2021	609	[Green bar]																Canceled	
6	Plotting of these assets on GIS	In Progress	PA		01/03/2019	30/06/2021	609	[Green bar]																	
7	List of available services by location and type	In Progress	PA		01/03/2019	30/06/2021		[Green bar]																	
8	Identification of further works needed for the establishment of the trail	Not Started	PA/MTA/MP/DLH		01/04/2019	30/09/2020	393																		
9	Creation of map	Not Started	PA		30/09/2020	31/12/2020	67																		

1.3.2.4 Costs

The envisaged costs for the realisation of this action consist of a number of, as yet unknown, working hours by Planning Authority employees. The PA will directly finance this action.

1.3.2.5 Financial resources needed

Staff costs to cover the man hours allocated to the implementation of this action by Planning. Following is a list of PA employees already identified for the various tasks required and their hourly rate:

Dr David Mallia (Project Leader) - €28.63
 Daniela Formosa (GIS operator) - €19.5
 Audrey Ann Brincat (Historical Research)- €20.26
 Robert Galea (Transport Expert) - €24.78
 Joe Azzopardi (Co-Ordinator) - €17.36

1.3.2.6 Other resources needed

None for this particular action.

1.3.2.7 Funding sources

Proposed funding source structure	Funding secured (Y/N)	Amount (currency) (see 1.6.1 above)	%
Policy instrument (EU/State Program /regional/local)	nil.	0	0
Other public bodies' contribution (identify and describe)	nil.	0	0
Own resources	Planning Authority	Yet to be established	100%
Other (specify)	nil.	0	0
TOTAL (currency)			100%

1.3.2.8 Actions needed to secure funding

It is expected that the basic groundwork in developing the trail and its proposed extension will be carried out in-house since the Planning Authority includes among its staff, persons who have the necessary skills and expertise to collect and analyse the necessary information. In this regard the necessary surveys, data collection and analysis will be carried out by Planning Authority Staff. During this process, online meetings between Planning Authority staff will be carried out. The resulting information will subsequently be made available to the Malta Tourism Authority, who owns the current "Red Tower Walk" trail with a view to extending it according to the results acquired.

Mod. 5B-3T-14

ACTION PLAN

1.3.2.9 Expected impacts from the Action implementation (with KPI defined)

The creation of a digital map of the trail including assets of historical and natural significance and also visitor support services will result in a greater uptake and frequency of use of the trail. The trail will also include a calendar of events which can be held along its route such as thematic hiking excursions, guided walks, nature and historic treasure hunts, military re-enactments, and star gazing events.

All above as inspired by study visits held during the ThreeT project.

1.3.2.10 Risk assessment. Remedial actions to contain/minimize risks

Actions	Risks	Level	Remedial Action
Creation of a Digital Trail	1st risk: Physical meetings required to carry out the task cannot be held in view of the Covid19 pandemic.	High	Organisation of digital online meetings.

SUMMARY FOR ACTION 2

Output 2

Output One - The pilot national trail will create a set standard for all trails within the Maltese Islands which will benchmark the level of experience quality by visitors to such trails.

Output Two – It will present information regarding the trail in an innovative, non-invasive, manner through the digital map.

Output Three – It will provide feedback and identify additional criteria to be submitted for discussion, and possible inclusion, in the National Trail Policy which is being envisaged to be initiated within Action 3 of this Action Plan.

ACTION STEP/ ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE PLAYER	STARTING DATE	END DATE	RESOURCES REQUIRED (staff, tech, etc.)	EXPECTED OUTCOME
Identification of assets (Natural / Historical / Tourism facilities/ transport)	PA	01/03/2019	30/06/2021	inhouse	Database
Survey of the trail extent and collection of coordinates of assets	PA	01/06/2020	30/06/2021	inhouse	Digital Map
Plotting of assets on GIS based map	PA	01/10/2020	30/06/2021	inhouse	Digital Map
Designing the digital map	PA	01/02/2021	30/06/2021	inhouse	Digital Map
Presentation of completed digital map to stakeholders active in the area of the trail		01/02/2021	31/05/2021	inhouse	

1.3.3 ACTION 3

Exploration and possible initialisation of the Policy formulation process for National Trails through a legal context – “The Planning Authority, in collaboration with other relevant entities, will be actively participating in the creation of a Policy for National Trails”.

In an Island country the size of Malta, and with an ever-expanding population, it is important to have a policy enshrined in the national legal context so as to protect areas earmarked for the implementation of National Trails. It is hoped that through this we will ensure not only the implementation of a high-quality pilot National Trail as envisaged in Action 2, but we will also formulate the criteria which all future National Trails must include. Furthermore, it is hoped that the policy will ensure that unsympathetic development, the compromising of highly important natural and cultural assets, and non-compatible activities are not permitted within close proximity of identified National Trails.

While it is acknowledged that due to factors beyond our control the policy change will not be implemented during the lifetime of the project, we feel it is important to include this action in the Action Plan. This is because the action originated as a direct result of this project and including it in the plan will ensure continuity well beyond the project's lifetime. We believe that this action is important to bring about holistic change in Malta and through this project we will initiate the action, monitor its development and report and changes that might happen during the project's lifetime.

1.3.3.1 Steps/activities required for its implementation

Formulation of working order and legal criteria for the creation of the National Trails Policy in consultation with Planning Authority management. This should be a joint initiative between the PA and MTA. Level of authorization required to initiate, actuate and conclude the policy formulation: Minister responsible.

The PA will assist with the drafting of the procedural steps that would eventually lead to the formulation of a National Trails Policy as listed below:

Procedural Steps

- Formation of working committee to include representatives from Malta Tourism Authority/Planning Authority / Transport Malta / Lands Authority. The Committee will be chaired by the Malta Tourism Authority who will also draft the document with advice from the other members.
- Minister for Tourism to submit a request for the creation of the policy to the Minister for Planning;
- Minister for Tourism to include list of objectives for the said policy which are defined by the Minister of Planning;
- Minister of Planning to discuss objectives with Minister of Tourism to finalize first draft.
- Objectives to be subject to a 30-day public consultation period of not less than three weeks;
- Compiling of post public consultation document;
- Presentation of post public consultation document to PA Executive Council;
- Identification of who will chair this committee, who will do the actual drafting;
- Finalisation of first draft of policy document by working committee;
- First draft of policy document to be subject to a consultation period of not less than six weeks. Documentation to include the draft policy, statement of the representations together with responses.
- Refer draft to the Standing Committee on the Environment and Development Planning;
- Compiling of post public consultation document;
- Presentation of final draft including post public consultation document to PA Executive Council;
- If the Executive Council does not make changes to the proposed policy, the finalised policy document as approved by the PA Executive Council is forwarded for ministerial approval. If Minister does not agree with final draft, this is to refer a position statement with changes and Executive Council carries changes according to Minister's statement and refers to Minister.

- SEA Screening is then carried out.
- Minister approves policy.
- Executive Council publishes final policy.
- End.

The Planning Authority has also identified a list of basic criteria for national trails, so as to provide a first basic platform for initiation of discussion by the working group, as listed below. This non-exhaustive list was inspired by lessons learned from ThreeT project through the study visits and tutorial sessions.

List of criteria

1. Identify what are the fundamental components of a successful trail;
2. Identify factors and assets along the trail which give the same trail its unique character and appeals to the specific interest of the potential user;
3. Guarantee access to all sections of land over which the trail passes;
4. Ensure the high quality of the Trail Experience and that the expectations of the trail users are being met;
5. Ensure that the trail infrastructure follow best practice;
6. Ensure that solid and continuous trail management structures, plans and processes are in place to ensure the trail can continue to meet and exceed the required standard;
7. Consider and address all potential safety issues along the trail and create a system to monitor and manage risk of injury to walkers on an ongoing basis;
8. Consider the impact of the trail on the environment (including land designation when developing a trail and put measures in place to protect the environment and minimise the impact.
9. Defining the trail boundaries and identifying starting points and level of difficulty.
10. Citizens and stakeholders engagement.

The importance of a common team which gives character to a trail was learned through visits to the **Via Sancti Martini** (PP8), Industrial in the case of GP42 - **TeH2O Water** (PP8) and military in the case of GP28 - **Iron Curtain Trail** (PP7) and of the fortified churches circuit which forms part of GP11 (The network of hiking and biking trails in Transylvanian Highlands).

Particularly inspiring in terms of issues such as access, safety, trail infrastructure and management was the study visit to the **The network of hiking and biking trails in Transylvanian Highlands** (PP7). Very inspiring was also the idea of the **Tourist Passport** (PP5).

In terms of Malta's Action Plan the visits referred to above are particularly topical as the first two actions are focused of the "The Northern Coastal Watch Project" which includes a series of fortified positions ideally collected in one trail which emphasises their link through the defensive strategy which brought them all into being over a 300-year period. This provides an overall collective theme as described above while the implementation of something similar to the **Tourist Passport** could provide a route map guiding visitors from one fortification to the next.

1.3.3.2 Players involved

- Minister of Tourism: Leading Ministry
- Malta Tourism Authority: Steering the Committee, Leading the Policy Formulation
- Ministry for the Environment, Climate Change & Planning: Ministry that will approve the final policy
- Planning Authority: Minor support to other Authorities and advising Ministry of Planning
- Ministry of Transport: Stakeholder in view of transport issues
- Transport Authority: Input in policy formulation

1.3.3.3 Timeframe

Project start – 01/01/2022

Project completion – 31/12/2027

MAIN STAKEHOLDER: Ministry of Tourism (MT)
MANAGING AUTHORITY: Malta Tourism Authority (MTA)
STAKEHOLDER: Ministry of Planning (MP)
SUPPORTING AUTHORITY: Planning Authority (PA)

Exploration & possible formulation of Policy for National Trails

ID	TASK	STATUS	OWNER	DEPENDENCIES	START DATE	END DATE	DURATION	2022												2023												2024												2025												2026												2027												STATUS
								Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4																																					
								J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D													
					01/01/2022	31/12/2027	1565																																																	Not Started																								
1	Formation of Steering Committee headed by MTA	Not Started	MTA		01/01/2022	30/09/2022	195																																																	In Progress																								
2	Minister for Tourism submits request for the creation of the policy to the Minister for Planning	Not Started	MT/MP		01/10/2022	31/12/2022	65																																																	Complete																								
	Minister for Tourism to include list of objectives for the said policy which are defined by the Minister of Planning.	Not Started	MT		01/01/2023	30/06/2023																																																		Not Started																								
5	Minister of Planning to discuss objectives with Minister of Tourism to finalize first draft.	Not Started	MT		01/07/2023	30/09/2023	65																																																	Cancelled																								
6	Objectives to be subject to a 30-day public consultation period of not less than three weeks.	Not Started	MP/MT		01/10/2023	31/03/2023	-131																																																																									
7	Compiling of post public consultation document.	Not Started	MTA		01/11/2023	31/01/2024	66																																																																									
8	Presentation of post public consultation document to PA Executive Council.	Not Started	MTA/PA		01/02/2024	31/03/2024	42																																																																									
9	Committee chair (MTA) will initiate drafting of policy document (MTA)	Not Started	MTA		01/05/2024	31/12/2024	175																																																																									
10	Finalisation of first draft of policy document by working committee.	Not Started	MTA		01/01/2025	30/09/2025	195																																																																									
	First draft of policy document to be subject to a consultation period of not less than six weeks. Documentation to include the draft policy, statement of the representations together with responses. Refer draft to the Standing Committee on the Environment and Development Planning.	Not Started	MTA		01/10/2025	31/12/2025	66																																																																									
12	Compiling of post public consultation document.	Not Started	MTA		01/01/2026	30/09/2026	195																																																																									
13	Presentation of final draft including post public consultation document to PA Executive Council.	Not Started	MTA		01/10/2026	31/12/2026	66																																																																									
14	If the Executive Council does not make changes to the proposed policy, the finalised policy document as approved by the PA Executive Council is forwarded for ministerial approval. If Minister does not agree with final draft, this is to refer a position statement with changes and Executive Council carries changes according to Minister's statement and refer to Minister	Not Started	MT/MP/PA		01/01/2027	31/03/2027	44																																																																									
15	SEA screening	Not Started	MP		01/04/2027	30/04/2027	65																																																																									
15	Minister approves policy	Not Started	MP		01/07/2027	30/09/2027	66																																																																									
16	Executive Council publishes final policy.	Not Started	MP		01/10/2027	31/12/2027	66																																																																									

1.3.3.4 Costs

Self-financed by individual authorities and ministries involved. The envisaged costs for the realisation of this Action consist of a number of, as yet unknown, working hours by employees of the individual authorities and ministries involved.

1.3.3.5 Financial resources needed

Since this is a policy formulation exercise the only envisaged expense are the labour hours of the staff members of the various entities involved in the Policy making Team, which cannot be quantified at the moment.

1.3.3.6 Funding sources

Proposed funding source structure	Funding secured (Y/N)	Amount (currency) (see 1.6.1 above)	%
Policy instrument (EU/State Program /regional/local)	nil.	0	0
Other public bodies' contribution (identify and describe)	nil.	0	0
Own resources	Minister of Tourism: Leading Ministry	Yet to be established	40%
	Malta Tourism Authority: Steering the Committee, Leading the Policy Formulation	Yet to be established	20%
	Ministry for the Environment, Climate Change & Planning: Ministry that will approve the final policy	Yet to be established	10%
	Planning Authority: Minor support to other Authorities and advising Ministry of Planning	Yet to be established	10%
	Ministry of Transport: Stakeholder in view of transport issues	Yet to be established	10%
	Transport Authority: Input in policy formulation.	Yet to be established	10%
TOTAL (currency)			100%

1.3.3.7 Expected impacts from the Action implementation (with KPI defined)

Efforts leading to the exploration and possible initialisation of the Policy formulation process for National Trails through a legal context / meetings / reminders.

Drafting of the procedural steps that would eventually lead to the formulation of a National Trails Policy.

1.3.3.8 Risk assessment. Remedial actions to contain/minimize risks

Actions	Risks	Level	Remedial Action
Exploration and possible initialisation of the Policy formulation process for National Trails through a legal context	1st risk: Physical meetings required to carry out the task cannot be held in view of the Covid19 pandemic.	High	Organisation of digital online meetings.

SUMMARY FOR ACTION 3

Output 3

The Planning Authority (PA), in collaboration with other relevant entities, will be actively participating in the initialisation of a Policy for National Trails. It is very important for Malta to have a policy for National Trails enshrined in the national legal context so as to protect areas earmarked for the implementation of National Trails. It is hoped that through this we will ensure not only the implementation of a high-quality pilot National Trail as envisaged in Action 2, but we will also formulate the criteria which all future National Trails must include.

Output One - Drafting of the procedural steps that would eventually lead to the formulation of a National Trails Policy.

Output Two - Drafting of List of basic criteria for National Trails.

Output Three – Number of Meetings / communication exchanges / reminders with the aim of identifying the Working Group members and the initialisation of a Policy for National Trails.

ACTION STEP/ ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE PLAYER	STARTING DATE	END DATE	RESOURCES REQUIRED (staff, tech, etc.)	EXPECTED OUTCOME
Formation of Steering Committee headed by MTA	Malta Tourism Authority	01/01/2022	30/09/2022	In house	Formation of a working committee to kick-start the process
Minister for Tourism submits request for the creation of the policy to the Minister for Planning	Ministry of Tourism / Ministry of Planning	01/10/2022	31/12/2022	In house	Formal start of the legislative process
Minister for Tourism to include list of objectives for the said policy as defined by the Minister of Planning;	Ministry of Tourism	01/01/2023	30/06/2023	In house	Planning Instruments are translated into objectives of the proposed policy
Minister of Planning to discuss objectives with Minister of Tourism to finalize first draft.	Ministry of Tourism	01/07/2023	30/09/2023	In house	High level ministerial discussions to finalize first draft
Objectives to be subject to a 30-day public consultation period of not less than three weeks;	Ministry of Planning / Ministry of Tourism	01/10/2023	31/10/2023	In house	Public Consultation – as required by legislation – will involve the public in the proposals
Compiling of post public consultation document;	Malta Tourism Authority	01/11/2023	31/01/2024	In house	Comments and suggestions from the general public to feed into the policy draft

Mod. 5B-3T-14

ACTION PLAN

Presentation of post public consultation document to PA Executive Council;	Malta Tourism Authority / Planning Authority	01/02/2024	31/03/2024	In house	Formal presentation to the Managing Authority to check compliance with legislation
Committee chair (MTA) will initiate drafting of policy document (MTA)	Malta Tourism Authority	01/05/2024	31/12/2024	In house	Revision of existing document to incorporate any necessary legislative changes
Finalisation of first draft of policy document by working committee;	Malta Tourism Authority	01/01/2025	30/09/2025	In house	Finalised first draft of policy document
First draft of policy document to be subject to a consultation period of not less than six weeks. Documentation to include the draft policy, statement of the representations together with responses. Refer draft to the Standing Committee on the Environment and Development Planning;	Malta Tourism Authority	01/10/2025	31/12/2025	In house	Public Consultation – as required by legislation – will involve the public in the proposals of the policy document
Compiling of post public consultation document;	Malta Tourism Authority	01/01/2026	30/09/2026	In house	Comments and suggestions from the general public to feed into the policy draft
Presentation of final draft including post public consultation document to PA Executive Council;	Malta Tourism Authority	01/10/2026	31/12/2026	In house	Formal presentation to the Managing Authority to check compliance with legislation
If the Executive Council does not make changes to the proposed policy, the finalised policy document as approved by the PA Executive Council is forwarded for ministerial approval. If	Ministry of Tourism / Ministry of Planning / Planning Authority	01/01/2027	31/03/2027	In house	Final changes to the final policy document as necessary, followed by approval by Managing Authority and endorsement by the respective Ministers



Mod. 5B-3T-14

ACTION PLAN

Minister does not agree with final draft, this is to refer a position statement with changes and Executive Council carries changes according to Minister's statement and refer to Minister					
SEA screening	Ministry of Planning	01/04/2027	30/06/2027	In house	Strategic Environment Assessment of the finalized document for compliance with EU legislation
Minister approves policy	Ministry of Planning	01/07/2027	30/09/2027	In house	Final ministerial approval
Executive Council publishes final policy.	Ministry of Planning	01/10/2027	31/12/2027	In house	Publication of policy in Government Gazette.

Part IV – Procedures to effectively monitor the Action Plan implementation

Action	Indicator	How monitored (mode, frequency...)	By whom
Action 1	Restoration works to be completed fully	Site inspections & progress reports	SCH & PA & MTA
Action 2	Steps of actions	Progress reports to monitor. Completed actions to be presented on paper or digitally	PA
Action 3	Steps of actions	Monitoring will be carried out by means of reminders and compilation of progress reports throughout the process.	PA, Ministers and CEOs of the responsible Authorities

Appendices:

Map showing the Red Tower, the existing 'Malta Goes Rural' Mellieha Trail and the Majjistral Park.
(Actions 1 & 2)

