

Structure Plan Review  
**Monitoring Report 1996-97**

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Monitoring Report: 1996-1997  
Planning Authority, January 1999

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# 0. Executive Summary

0.0.1 The 1996-1997 Structure Plan Monitoring Report aims to:

- gauge progress in the implementation of Structure Plan policy;
- review potential gaps in policy;
- identify areas of policy which may require re-evaluation; and
- identify key social and economic trends which may imply a need for policy review.

0.0.2 This Executive Summary begins by considering broad contextual changes of relevance to Structure Plan implementation. The second section summarises progress during the years 1996 and 1997 in the implementation of the Structure Plan. The final section presents an overview of the issues raised by the monitoring programme.

0.0.3 The 1996/97 Monitoring Report is the second in the series of these reports. The first, which was published in March 1997, covered the period 1990-1995. In effect this document builds on the analysis of progress identified during the previous period. Reference to the first document is made throughout the current Monitoring Report.

## **0.1 Context for Implementation**

0.1.1 Structure Plan implementation has continued within a context of economic and demographic growth. This growth has, in turn, led to a general increase in awareness of the need to safeguard the environment.

### ***Economic Growth***

0.1.2 During the period 1996/1997 the Maltese economy continued to expand, although at a slower rate than in the previous monitoring period. This growth was again accompanied by a high level of development pressure in many locations and in many sectors of economic activity. Investment in property is still high, especially in the housing development sector.

0.1.3 To sustain the rate of economic growth the Structure Plan envisaged an influx of foreign labour particularly to deal with the issue of skill shortages in certain sectors of the economy. The projected influx has been realised by returning migrants as well as naturalised/registered persons with their diverse skills.

### ***Demographic Change***

0.1.4 Population change in the Maltese Islands still exhibits a relatively high net-migration balance, a slowdown in the natural population growth, an increasingly ageing population and an increase in the number of households. Effectively, this has resulted in a larger demand for dwellings.

0.1.5 As indicated in the Monitoring Report 1990-95, population growth is running ahead of Structure Plan expectations. The forecasts had suggested a population of 399,000 living in private households in 2010. This is inclusive of migrants and foreign residents. It is estimated that the total population of the Maltese Islands in 1997 was about 383,000 which represents an increase of 5,000 from the base population in 1995.

0.1.6 Net Immigration is still the main factor creating population increase in the Maltese islands. Even though the number of returned migrants is slowing down, there is a positive net balance of persons arriving in Malta.

0.1.7 The rate of growth of the elderly population has been higher than envisaged in the Structure Plan and it is likely to have ramifications for patterns of housing demands, social/community facilities, health services etc.

0.1.8 The number of Maltese persons aged less than 15 years is expected to decrease in the period to 2010. This is likely to imply a continuing long-term decrease in the natural growth rate of the Maltese population, as the size of the population in the reproductive age groups declines. This would have a significant effect on the size of the future labour force available to sustain continued economic growth in these Islands.

0.1.9 Household size continues to fall. There are various factors contributing to this phenomenon: a) the ageing population trend has resulted in an increased number of elderly people living alone, b) the increasing rate of female participation in the workforce c) choices on family size d) the increasing number of separations, and e. the growing preference of some young, single people for independent living, among other patterns of social change. A steady decline in household size is likely to result in an increase in the number of households.

### ***Relations with the EU***

0.1.10 In November 1996, the Maltese government at the time put on hold Malta's application for EU membership. Since the preparation of this report, and following a change in government, Malta's application for membership has been re-activated.

### ***Sustainable Development***

0.1.11 The need to move towards sustainable development is now universally acknowledged to be a desirable goal of planning policy which, in principle, requires that today's growth does not irreparably damage the environment for future generations. During the monitoring period, there was increased emphasis both on the quality of development achieved and on minimising its adverse environmental impacts. The principle of sustainable development is expected to pervade all aspects of strategy formulation as part of the work on the Structure Plan Review.

## ***0.2 Initial Priorities in Implementation***

0.2.1 The initial priorities in implementation were primarily confined to raising awareness and gaining acceptance by the society at large about the need to adhere to the principles of land use planning and to the process of development control to guide the future development of land uses to appropriate areas. With the intervening years (since the Structure Plan came into effect), the importance of planning policies in the Structure and Local Plans has gained general acceptance as a means to protect and enhance the environment of the Maltese Islands, to resist further uncontrolled development of virgin land and to channel the primary focus of development towards the development zone in particular the urban areas within it.

0.2.2 A significant milestone in the period 1996-97 was the first amendment of the primary legislation, the Development Planning Act 1992. The Development Planning (Amendment) Act was adopted in August 1997. It introduced changes to the development control process and the structure plan review process. Among other changes, the amended Act increased the period of time available for the Planning Authority to review the Structure Plan (from 2 to 5 years). It also introduced the concept that the Structure Plan can be reviewed in part by

Parliamentary Resolution, provided that such review does not adversely affect the rights acquired by any person prior to the effective date of such review.

0.2.3 The Structure Plan Review process began in November 1997 with the approval by the Authority of the Project Management Plan for the review. Work is now progressing on the first stage of the process with the examination of the issues for the review in the main topic areas. The second stage of the review is expected to commence in September 1999.

0.2.4 The passage of another two years has witnessed further considerable qualitative improvement in the appraisal of environmental issues related to development projects. Public consultation is now an important part of policy work and it generally underlies the development of planning policy oriented work in the PA. It requires seeking views of the public and relevant agencies through various stages of policy development and incorporating relevant amendments prior to setting new policies and securing amendments to existing policies approved by the PA board. It is important that the Authority builds on its success in this area.

0.2.5 The Planning Authority is focusing resources on the preparation of Local Plans. Following the approval of the Marsaxlokk Bay Area Local Plan, the second local plan, that for the Grand Harbour, was issued for consultation in June 1997. Work has commenced on three of the remaining five local plans.

0.2.6 The Inter-departmental Planning Committee (IDPC) and the Planning Consultative Committee (PCC) have continued to be involved in the planning process.

0.2.7 The Development Planning (Amendment) Act, 1997 established the Users Committee, comprising representatives of interested national constituted bodies, to supervise the general functioning of the Authority, ensuring transparency, uniformity and fairness in the Authority's procedures and decisions in the interest of the general public.

0.2.8 The strategy for Structure Plan implementation embraces six key facets:

- a) development control process
- b) major projects
- c) policy formulation
- d) initiatives to link capital budgeting to Structure Plan implementation
- e) identification of new major projects
- f) provision of framework for cooperation amongst government departments, parastatals and the private sector.

0.2.9 As reported in the previous monitoring report, the success of this strategy remains partial:

- the amendments to planning legislation (e.g. statutory time limits, involvement of the general public in the application assessment process, etc.) have generally strengthened and clarified the development control process;
- the establishment of the Major Projects Group (MPG) has introduced a high level of consistency in the PA's approach to major projects and the preparation of development briefs;
- a significant amount of work has been undertaken during the monitoring period in plugging gaps in certain aspects of planning policy on an *ad hoc* basis or through the aegis of local plans;
- no action has been taken to date on the capital budget request guidelines for new public sector initiatives agreed in 1992 which were intended to be limited to the Structure Plan implementation process;

- the identification of further key projects needs to be progressed as part of the Structure Plan Review process;
- cooperation between the Planning Authority, Government departments, parastatals and the private sector still remains unsatisfactory.

### **0.3 Implementation Agencies**

0.3.1 Reference was made in the previous monitoring report to the need for the establishment of effective coordinating committees and improved informal relationships for strategic planning purposes between the PA and a number of government ministries and departments. It is important to note that considerable progress has been made with regards to the latter during the monitoring period as many of the topic studies coordinators now have established useful contacts in the various government departments to progress their studies, however, the interdepartmental coordination with strategic planning still remains weak. The list of topic studies include for example, housing, tourism, recreation, commerce and industry, minerals, waste, etc.

0.3.2 The Structure Plan provides the various public utilities with a common, comprehensive and long-term context within which to plan and operate. Strategic studies have been initiated/completed during the monitoring period by some of the public utilities in line with the relevant policies of the Structure Plan. In general, however, it would appear that government departments and other public sector agencies make limited use of the Structure Plan to guide their investment and future plans.

0.3.3 Finally, the local councils have continued to play a key role in the implementation process of environmental upgrading and embellishment projects.

### **0.4 Information gaps**

0.4.1 Strategic planning policy evaluation and development is still hindered by a lack of comprehensive and up-to-date national data sources. Examples include: agricultural land; rural land cover; the marine environment; the minerals and waste industries and development completions. Subject studies are being carried out in some of these areas in order to rectify this situation. It is assumed that the Structure Plan Review process will help alleviate this problem.

0.4.2 Other information gaps which were encountered in the analysis of data in this monitoring report included the absence of data on all vacant employment generating premises which comprises an important data source to monitor trends in employment. In addition, data on completed developments is lacking and data on approvals is being used as a surrogate for completions which cannot, by definition, provide an accurate picture on the ground. The only source of measuring housing completions, for example, at present is the compliance certificate which is issued by the PA prior to the confirmation of the installation of water and electricity services in a completed building. The difficulty with this approach is that if there is a completed block of flats (which contains say eight apartments and four of which have water/electricity installed in them) the data on compliance will only reflect four completed units. It therefore, presents a distorted picture of the situation.

0.4.3 There was no further progress on the gathering of information on potential national, regional and export demand for mineral resources. Likewise, information on the capacity of existing quarries to provide stone, aggregates and marble as required, has not been compiled by the Minerals Board.

0.4.4 The difficulty associated with lack of information about the environment, particularly about marine and coastal areas, minerals extraction, and agricultural land quality, is still a matter of concern. Information supplied through the local

plans process, and the carrying out of a number of environmental impacts studies remains incomplete.

## **0.5 Progress against Structure Plan Goals**

### ***Accommodating Development***

0.5.1 The first goal of the Structure Plan is “to encourage the further social and economic development of the Maltese Islands and to ensure as far as possible that sufficient land and support infrastructure are available to accommodate it”. The policies and proposals of the Structure Plan provide an adequate framework (including supply of land) to cater for the development demands during the Plan period.

0.5.2 The Structure Plan provides three key indicators of growth (population, dwellings and labour supply) against which the attainment of this goal can be measured. The annual rate of growth of all three indicators has been higher than that envisaged in the Structure Plan. It should not be construed to be a weakness of the Plan as it simply reflects a short to medium term trend. Whilst it is difficult to predict the way the trends in these indicators may turn out over the long term, the important thing is to monitor the changes and the assumptions which underpin them in order to ensure that the plan’s strategy is not undermined.

0.5.3 Development demands in the various sectors of the economy have been successfully accommodated during the monitoring period. As far as the housing sector is concerned, available land supply particularly in the Temporary Provision Schemes has and will continue to sustain a high rate of growth in residential development during the Plan period. On the employment front, the office, retail and industrial sectors account for the majority of jobs. The rate of development of new office, retail and industrial floorspace has remained in excess of that required to meet the projected need for such floorspace.

0.5.4 Infrastructural investment remains at a high level but it was running at higher levels in the early 1990s. Implementation of appropriate development proposals of major utility undertakings and health and other service providers (like education) were also not constrained during the monitoring period.

### ***Constraining Growth on Undeveloped Land***

0.5.5 The second goal of the Structure Plan is “to use land and buildings efficiently and consequently to channel development activity into existing and committed urban areas, particularly through a rehabilitation and upgrading of the existing fabric and infrastructure thus constraining further inroads into undeveloped land and generally resulting in higher density development than at present”.

0.5.6 Since the Structure Plan allocated land well in excess of the requirements during the Plan period and envisaged the provision of 50,000 dwellings in the TPS, the bulk of the development requirements have continued to be accommodated within the planned development zone. This is not surprising since the development zone contains a large supply of undeveloped land in the TPS. The amount of vacant land currently available for development in the TPS is estimated to be about 487 Ha (representing 61% of total land in the Schemes as at 1988) and the release of this land is not subject to any phasing provision. It will ensure that urban development is contained within the development zone during the currency of the Structure Plan. Persistence with this strategy, however, makes it difficult to attain the second part of the goal to upgrade the existing fabric because developers are unlikely to be eager to opt for developing/redeveloping sites in existing urban areas so long as the alternative of developing greenfield sites available in abundance remains an easy option.

0.5.7 The outcome of this approach has been that the emphasis, for example, for new housing remains on virgin land within the Temporary Provision Schemes (62% of all housing approvals for example) whilst the corresponding percentage for approvals in existing urban areas was only 38 percent.

0.5.8 On the other hand, there is a considerable underutilisation of land and buildings in some areas. It is particularly pertinent in the older urban areas. Underutilisation of industrial land in the established industrial areas also remains a problem. In addition, the urban areas continue to be afflicted by the problem of derelict and partly constructed sites.

### ***Upgrading the Environment***

0.5.9 The third goal of the Structure Plan seeks to secure an improvement in the quality of all aspects of the environment of both urban & rural areas. The Plan provides a framework for environmental upgrading which embraces the need for the designation of urban, rural and marine conservation areas.

0.5.10 The level of public sector investment in rehabilitation and conservation has increased but it remains low in relation to the scale of the task involved. It is important to reiterate the comment made last year in this context which remains pertinent that the Government has yet to accept a role as a major player in the direct funding of rehabilitation work. The Planning Authority has demonstrated its commitment towards Urban Rehabilitation through its involvement with the Cottonera Balconies Scheme and the Urban Environmental Improvement Partnership Schemes.

0.5.11 The approach to urban conservation remains largely negative, based on the control of development and on area designation, rather than positive or proactive, with the encouragement and funding of schemes for enhancement, rehabilitation and sensitive redevelopment. The general absence of proactive programmes to attract/generate appropriate types of development in the Urban Conservation Areas, therefore, has not helped to positive improvements. Above all, the need for additional funding for rehabilitation and refurbishment projects or fiscal tools to attract investment in these areas should not be overlooked.

0.5.12 Significant progress was made in designating Urban Conservation Areas (UCAs) and the scheduling of buildings during the monitoring period. However, in view of the sheer size and urgency of the scheduling task, it has been extremely difficult to strike the right balance between responding to development pressures and achieving the scheduling objectives and there remains concern over the lack of respect by some decision makers for urban conservation policy.

0.5.13 The Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) has been extremely active in reviewing development proposals and offering specialist advice to the PA and it has also succeeded in making its procedures and practices more efficient during the monitoring period.

0.5.14 The Structure Plan designated most of the countryside as a Rural Conservation Area (RCA) where there is a general presumption against urbanisation. Despite this, a considerable amount of urban development continues to take place outside the development zone. Residential development has increased in the RCAs while pressure for commercial and industrial development and social and community facilities remains strong.

0.5.15 Increasing number of initiatives have continued to be undertaken on the proactive side of rural conservation such as the planning of sites for recreation, countryside management schemes, etc. Other relevant initiatives during the monitoring period included the scheduling of valleys and the relaxation of rules governing the erection of rubble walls. The new General Development Order (No.2 of 1997) stipulated that development permission was no longer required for the construction of new rubble walls. As far as the valleys are concerned, 40

valleys were scheduled during this period. In addition, a fair number of local councils have started to implement projects for the recreational use of valleys.

0.5.16 A number of surveys of marine areas have been carried out as part of the work on the preparation of local plans. However, no Marine Conservation Areas (MCAs) have been designated during the monitoring period.

0.5.17 No new large developments were approved on the coast outside the development boundary during the monitoring period.

0.5.18 It was noted in the previous monitoring report that the Environmental Impact Assessment procedure has now become an established feature in the evaluation of major projects. However, the quality of these assessments continue to vary depending on the availability of local expertise which remains a concern.

0.5.19 There has been some limited progress in tackling environmental problems related to construction sites in that fewer cranes now seem to be blocking roads and the number of building sites surrounded by temporary walls (not hoardings) is on the increase.

0.5.20 The National Environmental Education Strategy (NEES) has emerged during the monitoring period as a important initiative in the field of environmental education. Through the action of NEES, environmental education in Malta had moved from a fragmentary phase of uncoordinated initiatives to a coordinated phase characterised by a national will to coordinate activities and make best use of available resources.

## ***0.6 Key issues for the Structure Plan Review***

0.6.1 The monitoring report raises a wide range of issues but the issues which need specific consideration in the Review of the Structure Plan are presented below under the framework of some key topic areas. It should be noted, however, that many of the strategic issues identified reiterate the themes highlighted in the previous monitoring report which is inevitable in view of the short time span (two years) which the report reflects on.

### **A. Settlement Pattern**

i) There is a signification over allocation of land for housing development in the current Structure Plan which would be adequate to cater for the housing needs for the next thirty years.

- Is there scope for re-allocating some residential land within Schemes for other purposes, for which allocations may be needed in the future?
- Can the status of land zoned for development in the Temporary Provisions Schemes be reconsidered where the Structure Plan objectives are jeopardised (example: land on valley sides)?
- Is there any potential for introducing some phasing to the release of Schemed land, linked to having allocations for each Local Plan Area?

ii) The geographic pattern of development is one of dispersal rather than concentration (for example there has been a loss of population from the Inner Harbour Area).

- Given the current focus of population distribution being on the South and Central Local Plan Areas, is it feasible to move towards a balanced pattern of development in all the Local Plan Areas?
- Can regeneration of the Inner Harbour Areas be achieved to reverse population decline without compromising Urban Conservation Areas?



iii) There is little incentive for property rehabilitation/conversion and regeneration of urban areas whilst other development opportunities are so wide spread.

- Are financial incentives appropriate to encourage rehabilitation within the urban conservation areas and appropriate conversions in other urban areas to encourage the efficient use of buildings?
- What opportunities can be realised through the redevelopment of vacant and underutilised sites within the inner urban areas?

### ***B. Housing***

iv) A more controlled approach to the release of housing land is vital if the quality of residential areas is to be improved and some management of settlement growth is to be achieved.

- Is it feasible to introduce a phased provision of housing land in Local Plans and to ensure that a reasonable choice of sites and locations is always available?

v) Effective solutions will be required to bring the significant stock of vacant residential property into use.

- Some of the effective solutions to bring such properties into residential use may lie outside the scope of land-use planning. Should the PA be responsible for taking and coordinating new initiatives in this regard or is this best dealt with by other relevant agencies?

### ***C. Commerce and Industry***

vi) A clear strategy is required for the location of new industrial development in consultation with the Malta Development Corporation and other interested parties.

- Is it feasible to relate growth of commercial and industrial centres to recent patterns of population growth?
- Should the ad hoc patterns of industrial and commercial development outside the development zone be allowed to continue?

vii) Retail modernisation is happening on an ad hoc basis. There is an urgent need to develop a strategy which reflects a sustainable retail hierarchy.

- How could such a strategy ensure that appropriate level of investment is channelled into the town centres to reflect the hierarchy of retail facilities in those centres?

### ***D. Agriculture***

viii) Despite a strongly supportive approach for the agricultural sector in the Structure Plan, there has been a steady loss of agricultural land although the rate of decline has now decelerated.

- Should the Review retain its supportive approach to the agricultural sector in view of its modest contribution to the National Economy and reconsider its approach (e.g. by reflecting on the multiple role of the countryside) to the issue of loss of land?

### ***E. Minerals***

ix) Current policy places emphasis on safeguarding minerals production and on maximising self-sufficiency in building materials.

- Should the Review aim to secure a shift in emphasis from safeguarding minerals production to demand management (tailored to meet the real needs of industry for example)?

### ***F. Tourism***

x) The potential for the over supply of tourist accommodation particularly in some of the existing tourist areas, is now a matter of concern.

- Should the Review examine the feasibility of introducing a moratorium on the development of new tourist accommodation in some of existing tourist areas?
- How can planning policies be adjusted to encourage the refurbishment and upgrading of existing facilities, rather than new additions to the stock of tourist accommodation?

### ***G. Recreation***

xi) The provision of the location of recreation, sport and entertainment sector is generally on an ad hoc basis and needs to be set within the framework of a planning strategy.

- Is it feasible to develop a coordinated planning strategy for the provision of these facilities since the responsibility for the provision of such facilities lies with a disparate number of organisations/agencies?

### ***H. Transport***

xii) An integrated transportation strategy is required as part of the Structure Plan Review which introduces a shift in emphasis from private to public transport.

- Should the scope of a transportation strategy be confined to securing better/improved planning of road network improvements and public transport or should it aim to secure a shift in emphasis from private to public transport?

### ***I. Urban Conservation***

xiii) Strategic policies towards urban conservation have made a limited impact because a) funding directed toward rehabilitation and refurbishment projects has been inadequate b) wide availability of opportunities to develop elsewhere.

- How can the urban conservation policy be made more effective with such a wide range of opportunities available to develop elsewhere?
- How can the potential roles of the private sector in funding rehabilitation projects be increased?

### ***J. Rural Conservation***

xiv) The Structure Plan designates most of the non-urban areas of Malta and Gozo as Rural Conservation Area.

- Are the Rural Conservation Areas too large to serve as a mechanism for concentrating conservation and management resources?

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Monitoring the Structure Plan

1.1.1 This is the second monitoring report on the Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands and it essentially covers the two year period of 1996 and 1997. The first Monitoring Report covering the 1990 - 95 period was published in March 1997.

1.1.2 The overall aim of the Monitoring Report is to review progress against each Structure Plan goal and identify areas where policy may require modification or where potential gaps in policy may exist etc. in order to improve the Planning Authority's management of the development process. The report signifies the importance the Planning Authority attaches to ensure that the implementation of the plan succeeds in achieving its stated intentions which are broadly encapsulated in its three strategic goals outlined below.

1.1.3 This report and its findings will be treated as a position statement for the Structure Plan Review.

## 1.2 Structure Plan Goals

1.2.1 The Structure Plan has three major goals;

- i. To encourage the further social and economic development of the Maltese Islands and to ensure, as far as possible, that sufficient land and support infrastructure are available to accommodate it.*
- ii. To use land and buildings efficiently and consequently to channel development activity into existing and committed urban areas, particularly through a rehabilitation and upgrading of the existing fabric and infrastructure thus constraining further inroads into undeveloped land and generally resulting in higher density development than at present.*
- iii. To radically improve the quality of all aspects of the environment of both urban and rural areas<sup>1</sup>.*

## 1.3 Implementation of the Plan

1.3.1 Responsibility for reviewing the Structure Plan, preparing detailed plans, and coordinating their implementation, has been given by Parliament to the Planning Authority. Some aspects of the Structure Plan are implemented directly by the Planning Authority, but many other activities of the Authority reflect the coordinating role of the Plan. To secure realisation of the Plan, the Planning Authority needs to work with a wide range of agencies and interests through interdepartmental committees and working groups, seeking to integrate the powers and expertise of individual agencies.

1.3.2 The Plan's agenda is radical and challenging. Historically, Malta has a very poor record in relation to strategic planning, the control of development and the enforcement of land-use controls. The planning system has in the past, been viewed with deep public cynicism. There has been a sense of isolation from the planning process, planning decisions took place behind closed doors. There has also been a widespread belief that what appeared on the ground had little to do with the content of plans and much more to do

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<sup>1</sup>Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands, Draft Final Written Statement, December 1990, p7.

with an individual's ability to pressurise the right people in Government. Flouting of planning regulations was blatant, widespread and frequently ignored. Effective implementation of the Structure Plan requires a profound change in perceptions, attitudes and behaviour which cannot be achieved overnight.

1.3.3 Since the inception of the Planning Authority, it has made significant strides into ensuring that the underlying principles of the Structure Plan are being adhered to primarily through its development control functions and altering the public perception of planning per se. In addition, the Planning Authority has supplemented the strategic advice through the publication of Local Plans, several planning policy documents (21 policy and design guidance documents to date) and development briefs for a variety of projects. The advice/guidance contained in all these documents is expected to shape the nature and level of physical development and strengthen the foundation of land use planning on the Maltese Islands in the years to come.

1.3.4 Statistical information contained in this report generally relates to the year 1996 and 1997 unless stated otherwise. There are several sources used for the collection of the data used in this report and these range from the 1995 Population Census to the latest volume of the 'Economic Survey' published by the Economic Planning Division of the Ministry of Finance and Commerce. In addition, the findings of various surveys and studies undertaken by the Planning Authority in recent years have been used wherever appropriate to examine trends and assess their implications.

1.3.5 The report also draws on the information held in the relevant units and specialist knowledge of individual professional members of staff who are charged with steering the work on several topic areas like minerals, waste, coasts, archeology, agriculture, aquaculture, tourism/recreation, etc. Whilst it is difficult to identify the names of all the individual members of staff who have helped in the compilation of this report, it is recognised however, that the report needs to assist the process of addressing any enquiries on the contents of this document. Accordingly, in the first instance, enquiries of a more general nature regarding the monitoring report may be made to Mr. Saviour Formosa (tel. 2290 1589) or to Mr. Bijon Bhowmick (tel. 2290 1527).

## 1.4 Report's Structure

1.4.1 This report replicates the structure of the monitoring report produced last year. It generally follows the broad goals of the Structure Plan and examines them in the following sections:

- Section 2 Accommodating Development;
- Section 3 Constraining Urban Growth;
- Section 4 Upgrading the Environment; and
- Section 5 Framework for Implementation

1.4.2 Each of these broad goals encompass a wide range of themes. For analytical purposes, it has been considered important to sub-divide the broad themes into a series of manageable policy objectives (which underline these themes) as support data/information can usually be obtained at this level to probe further into the efficacy of these objectives.

## 2. Accommodating Development

The first goal of the Structure Plan is to encourage the further social and economic development of the Maltese Islands and to ensure, as far as possible, that sufficient land and support infrastructure are available to accommodate it (3.5).

2.0.1 The Structure Plan includes a wide range of policies designed to channel, encourage and coordinate social and economic development. These include:

- **initiatives to encourage social and economic development.** These seek to: improve public sector planning; establish appropriate standards for public sector provision; encourage private and voluntary sector involvement in development projects; designate land for future development requirements; promote specific key developments; and prepare development briefs and management schemes, where appropriate.
- **provisions to ensure that land and infrastructure can accommodate the required growth.** The intentions here are to: improve coordination of infrastructure planning and maintenance; establish improved infrastructure standards; upgrade the road network; enhance public transport; and implement a national system of irrigation water supply.
- **measures to improve the management of financial and land resources.** These include proposals to: encourage a more commercial approach to Government's estate management; capture private sector contributions to infrastructural work, in appropriate cases; and intervene to assemble appropriate development parcels, where necessary, to achieve effective urban regeneration.

2.0.2 This section reviews progress in these areas. The review begins with a general overview of the economic context within which social and economic growth, capital investment and development have taken place over the period 1996-97. Sectoral reviews are then presented for: housing; social and community facilities; commerce and industry; agriculture, horticulture and fisheries; minerals; tourism and recreation; transport; and public utilities. These relate directly to the policies in chapters 8-14 and chapter 16 of the Structure Plan.

### 2.1 Economic Trends, 1996-97

2.1.1 This review of economic trends takes a brief look at the main indicators of social and economic growth during the period 1996-97. An introduction is given of: national economic trends; government infrastructural investment; government revenue and expenditure; capital injections from international sources; and the availability of development finance from both public and private sectors. The final part includes a commentary on recent labour market trends.

#### Economic Growth

2.1.2 During the period 1996/1997 the Maltese economy continued to expand however at a slower rate compared to the previous monitoring period. Annual real growth in Malta's GDP declined from 4.5% to 2.8% between 1996 and 1997, following growth rates of 6.3% in 1995. The decline in the rhythm of normal activity is reflected in leading economic variables of the Maltese economy.

## Financial Resources

The Structure Plan suggests that Government-generated financial resources are likely to experience a modest increase, in real terms, up to 2010. This growth in Government cash would be linked to reduced public sector employment, increasing levels of EU grant and increased tax receipts (17.3, p114).

### **Government recurrent Revenue and Expenditure**

2.1.3 Government revenue at current prices increased from Lm405m to Lm444m from 1996 to 1997, following a drop from Lm438m in 1995<sup>2</sup>. This represents an increase in real terms of 6.15% from 1996 to 1997<sup>3</sup>. The increase is largely accounted for by Income Tax and Social Security Contributions. These, in turn, were due to the combination of an increase in the number of gainfully employed, growth in salaries and wages and increased effectiveness in tax collection, especially to income tax arrears due to the Government by certain public entities, as well as payments of substantial arrears in a larger income base. Other reasons behind the increase stem from income tax, the new Customs and Excise Taxes and VAT.

2.1.4 Non-tax revenues, such as Central Bank profits and repayments of loans, were low compared to 1995 revenues. This is attributed largely to the decline in proceeds from public corporations in the form of profits, loan repayments or interest due to Government. Foreign grants, mainly in connection with the third and fourth Financial Protocols with Italy, yielded Lm20.8 million in 1996. However, in 1997, foreign grants fell to Lm9.9 million with the decline in revenue. Government expenditure, on the other hand, in real terms increased from Lm478.56m in 1995 to Lm525.43m in 1996 and Lm547.55m in 1997. The increase was mainly due to higher outlays in social security benefits, increased debt servicing costs, and higher government spending on health care, justice and local councils.

2.1.5 Public sector employment decreased by about 1% during the period 1996/97. This is in line with Structure Plan expectations.

### **Government Capital Expenditure**

2.1.6 Government's capital spending in real terms has increased slightly over the two year period, however it has yet to reach 1995 levels. Table 1 indicates that total Government planned investment in infrastructure projects increased significantly in 1997 from Lm19.42m in 1996 to Lm32.68m in 1997 (at current prices). Drainage and Roads were the main sectors where investment was directed in 1997. In addition to the Government investment, corporations and authorities also invested a further Lm21.07m in infrastructure (Enemalta Corporation - Lm19.73m, Water Services Corporation Lm1.34m).

While social investment has seen a slight increase over the monitoring period, productive investment has declined from Lm37 million to Lm26 million. Productive investment includes investment in the ship-repair and ship-building sectors as well as investment in the Malta Freeport Corporation.

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<sup>2</sup> Central Bank of Malta, Quarterly Reviews, Government Budgetary Operations Table 5.1, 1995-1998

<sup>3</sup> Taking 1995=100 as the base year.

Table 1 - Capital Investments 1996-1997

	1996	1997
Total Infrastructure	19,418,000	32,677,000
Total Social	17,414,000	20,446,000
Total Productive Investment	36,788,000	25,618,000
<b>Total Capital Investment</b>	<b>73,620,000</b>	<b>78,741,000</b>
In Real Terms (base 1995=100)	72,141,000	74,714,000
1995	76,330,000	

Source: Central Bank Quarterly Reviews 1995-1998 - Estimates 1998

2.1.7 The major infrastructural items in 1996/97 included the development of the sewerage system amounting to Lm11 million, Lm10 million investments in road maintenance and construction and other Government construction projects. Principal items developed in 1996 and 1997 covering the social components of capital expenditure included: Lm15 million (at current prices) for the construction of the new Tal-Qroqq Hospital; Lm5.15 million for St. Luke's Hospital upgrading; Lm245,000 for Sir Paul Boffa Hospital; and Lm480,000 for Mt. Carmel Hospital. Capital expenditure by public authorities and corporations is not included in these figures. In 1996/97, Lm42.6 million was allocated to Enemalta Corporation, Lm20 million to Maltacom, Lm11 million to the Housing Authority, Lm9.8 million to Water Services Corporation, and Lm4.2 million to Malta Maritime Authority.

2.1.8 Despite the rising trend in Government Capital Investment during this monitoring period, government's infrastructural investment was estimated to remain generally constant in 1998, with approved estimates of Lm31 million.

### **EU Support**

2.1.9 Foreign loans contracted for 1996 amounted to Lm3 million. This includes a Lm2.1 million loan under the Third Financial Protocol with the EU related to the sewerage project, Lm979,000 under the same Protocol related to the Air Traffic Services and Lm 179,000 as loans from Italy within same protocol. In 1997, a total of Lm8.12 million was approved, with Lm4.4m designated for the Tal-Qroqq Hospital funded by the Council of Europe - Social Development Fund (COE-SDF). Lm270,000 for the sewerage project (EU-3rd Financial Protocol), Lm850,000 for Air Traffic Services project (EU-3rd Financial Protocol), and Lm2.6m for the Sewerage Project II from the European Investment Bank (E.I.B.).

2.1.10 The Fourth Malta-EC Financial Protocol signed in June 1995, for the period 1995 - 1998, and extended to 1999 provides for a total financial package of ECU 45 million. The grant element (ECU 13 million) of the protocol will be utilised to finance local projects targeting the education, statistics, agriculture and industrial restructuring sectors. Following an agreement signed with the EIB in December 1997, risk capital funds are being administered by the Valletta Investment Bank with the aim of financing equity shares in small and medium-sized enterprises. As to the protocol's EIB loan component, proposals are being considered to have these loans channelled towards the restructuring of industry.

2.1.11 The content of the Fourth Malta-EC Financial Protocol is summarised in Table 2:

Table 2 - Fourth Malta-EC Financial Protocol (In ECU)

(ECU millions :- 1 ECU = Lm0.46)	Loans	Grant Aid	Soft Loans	Risk Funds	Capital	Total
4th Financial Protocol (1995-98)	30.0	13.0	0	2.0		45.0

Source: EU Directorate

2.1.12 Malta currently has access to a number of EU funding programmes in addition to these financial protocols. These include a number of Mediterranean programmes such as : Med Media (Media networks between Mediterranean non-EU-Member countries and EU Countries) ; Med Campus (collaboration involving campuses in the north and south Mediterranean); Med Urbs (networks between Local Authorities in the EC and those of Mediterranean non-Member Countries); and Med Invest (cooperation between Community and Mediterranean Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SME))

2.1.13 Other relevant programmes include: LIFE (Financial Instrument for the Environment); ECIP (European Community Investment Partners); EuroPartenariat (to facilitate cooperation between SME's, the EU and less developed regions); Socrates and Leonardo (education and training programmes); the EU's fourth research 7 development framework programme; and COST (European Cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research).

2.1.14 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Environment suspended Malta's application for EU membership in November 1996. The Government at the time (1996-1998) viewed membership as being incompatible with Malta's social, economic and geo-political conditions, was seeking to achieve the closest possible relationship with the EU within the Euro Mediterranean process. Negotiations with the European Union were underway for the establishment of a Free Trade Area between Malta and the Community, and it was envisaged that a free trade area would have been established within three years following the conclusion of an agreement. Negotiations had been scheduled to start in January 1999. Since the preparation of this report, Malta's application for membership has been re-activated following a change in Government.

### **Private Sector Investment**

**The Structure Plan suggests that private sector development funds will tend to increase through economic growth and rent reform, in order to sustain anticipated growth levels.**

2.1.15 Private sector development funding increased during the monitoring period. It is unlikely that this was brought about through the rent reform. Data available suggests that local lending increased from Lm1,227m to Lm1,329m between 1996 and 1997<sup>4</sup> (at current prices).

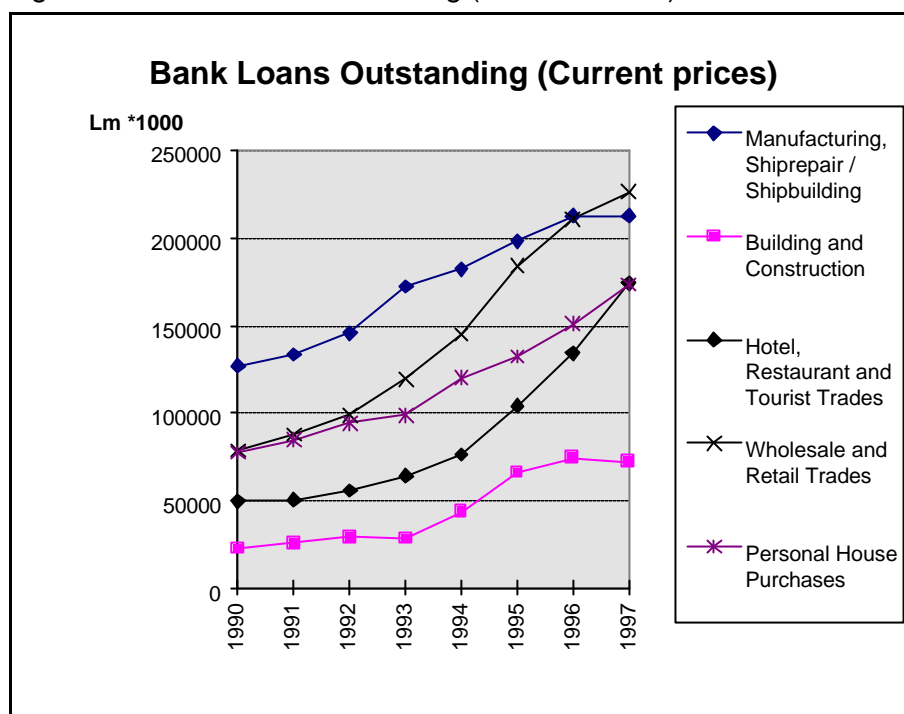
2.1.16 Outstanding bank loans for house purchase have increased from Lm151.17m in 1996 to Lm173.69m in September 1997: an increase of over 14.9% over two years<sup>5</sup>. Loans for other building and construction work decreased from Lm73.6m to Lm71.6m between 1996 and 1997 at current prices. The decrease followed a considerable increase between 1995 and 1996 when the amount of granted loans had increased from Lm65.5m to Lm73.6m in 1996.

<sup>4</sup> Central Bank of Malta Quarterly Review March 98 Pg. 95-97

<sup>5</sup> Central Bank of Malta Quarterly Review, December 1995, p.106



Figure 1 - Bank Loans Outstanding (Current Prices)



Source: Central Bank Quarterly Reviews 1995-1998

2.1.17 Lohombus Bank Ltd. issued an offer for 10 year Bonds in April 1996 amounting to Lm30 million. The purpose of such Bonds is to fund the house loan activities of the Bank and to improve the Bank's funding profile<sup>6</sup>.

2.1.18 Expenditure on fixed capital assets by the Government as well as the private and parastatal sectors amounted to Lm339.9 million in 1996 and Lm248.9 million in (Jan-Sept) 1997<sup>7</sup>.

### **Infrastructure Contributions by Private Developers**

**The Structure Plan also envisages a range of payment mechanisms to ensure that developers contribute, where appropriate, towards the costs of required infrastructure investment related to their proposal. The mechanisms advocated in the Structure Plan include infrastructure charges, impact payments, commuted payments and a land hoarding tax (17.8, p117).**

2.1.19 The Planning Authority continued to collect infrastructure charges on behalf of the Government during the period 1996/97. These funds are collected prior to the processing of development permit applications. The total funds collected during 1995/96 and 1996/97 amounted to Lm1.02 million and Lm1.16 million respectively. In addition, development permit fees were collected by the Planning Authority to cover the administrative cost of processing applications. The fees collected by the Planning Authority in 1995/96 amounted to Lm855,240 (October-September financial year), which increased to Lm 990,975 in 1996/97.

2.1.20 In addition, financial contributions are sought from developers in relation to major projects where these may place a significant additional loading on off-site infrastructure. During the review period, the Manoel Island/Tigne Point Development was the only project where the Government progressed further with the negotiations concerning the consortium's contribution to

<sup>6</sup> Prospectus, Lohombus Bank Limited, 11 April 1996, p.9

<sup>7</sup> Central Bank of Malta Quarterly Review, March 1998, p.119

infrastructural improvements as required in the Development Brief, e.g. the link road between Regional Road and Manoel Island.

2.1.21 The Planning Authority introduced a Commuted Parking Payments Scheme in 1994. These payments are charged to the developer where it is considered feasible and appropriate to provide off-site public parking facilities. The payment relinquishes the developer of the responsibility for the provision of the usual level of on-site provision for an individual development. These funds are expected to be pooled and be made available to the relevant Local Council for the development of new public car parking facilities, as appropriate opportunities arise. Funds collected under this scheme totalled Lm66,494 in 1995/96 and Lm99,576 in 1996/97. (Refer to Table 3 for further information).

2.1.22 The Structure Plan proposes a landhoarding tax on undeveloped, derelict or abandoned sites which are ripe for development and on derelict buildings and building shells (17.8). Following the National Housing and Land Markets Seminar held by the Planning Authority in September 1995, the PA has continued to look into the probability of introducing this tax. The implications of the introduction of a land hoarding tax and possibly a vacant dwellings tax on land and empty property that lies vacant for a specified period, was examined closely in two of the papers published by the PA entitled "Malta Housing Requirements, 1995-2015<sup>8</sup>" and also in its report of the "Effective and Efficient Use of the Housing Stock<sup>9</sup>". A decision to implement this tax has yet to be made by the government.

## Labour Market Trends

**The Structure Plan anticipates an influx of foreign labour before the year 2000 to deal with skill shortages (17.5, p115).**

2.1.23 The Structure Plan envisaged an influx of foreign labour particularly to deal with skill shortages which were expected to emanate from sustained economic growth in the Maltese Islands. This projected influx has been realised by returning migrants as well as naturalised/registered persons with their diverse skills. There has also been a modest increase in the labour force over the period 1996-97.

2.1.24 The labour force increased by slightly more than 1% over the period 1996-97, culminating in a total of 145,654 in September 1997 as shown in Table 3. Unemployment has started increasing over the period under review moving up from 4,951 in September 1995 to 6,901 in September 1997. This corresponds to an increase from 3.8% in 1996 to 4.7% in 1997. Over this period, the proportion of females in the workforce has remained constant at 27%.

2.1.25 As indicated in the previous monitoring period, another factor which contributed to growth in the labour force was immigration and naturalisation/registration, particularly by former emigrants.

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<sup>8</sup> Malta's Future Housing Requirements, 1995-2015, April 1997

<sup>9</sup> Towards a more effective and efficient use of the Housing stock, 1998

**Table 3 - Employment Between 1995-97**

INDICATOR	1995 Sep	1996 Sep	1997 Sep
Labour Supply	141,822	144,016	145,654
Gainfully Occupied	136,871	138,530	138,753
Total Private Sector	81,143	81,890	82,475
Total Public (Inc. Temp.)	55,728	56,640	56,278
Registered Unemployed	4,951	5,486	6,901
Percentage Unemployed	3.5%	3.8%	4.7%
Self-Employed	15,930	15,768	15,472
Private Sector Share	59.3%	59.1%	59.4%
Public Sector Share	36.6%	36.6%	36.1%
Temp Empl. Share	4.1%	4.3%	4.4%
Total Public Share	40.7%	40.9%	40.6%

*Source: Economic Survey January - September 1997 Pg.52*

2.1.26 In an effort to address skill shortages within the Maltese workforce the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) organises a number of training and re-training programmes providing basic and vocational training. Such courses are primarily aimed towards persons seeking employment or those seeking to improve their skills base (including those possessing limited academic qualifications). ETC has also set up job searching facilities for the unemployed and provides a number of services to companies/institutions searching for prospective employees.

## **2.2 Housing**

2.2.1 This section examines some of the key factors which have influenced the housing sector during the period under review. Amongst the areas covered in this section include land availability, property pricing, population change, social housing provision and inter-relationships with the tourist accommodation sector. For the purposes of this report, population projections produced for the first Monitoring Report 1990-95 are assumed to be valid, pending revision of the forecasts to be undertaken in the context of the findings from the 1995 Census.

### **Housing Requirements to 2010**

#### ***Population Growth***

**The Structure Plan includes forecasts of the growth of population, households, and jobs over the 20 year plan period (3.6). The Plan anticipated an increase in the total population living in private households of 11% from 355,000 in 1990 to 394,000 in 2010.**

2.2.2 As indicated in the Monitoring Report 1990-95, the population growth is running ahead of Structure Plan expectations. The forecasts suggested a population of 399,000 living in private households in 2010. This is inclusive of migrants and foreign residents. Table 4 gives a summary of the estimated population change for the period 1990-1995 for the Plan period.

Table 4 - Total Population Data Summary

Year	Population (Year End)	Annual Natural Increase (for specified year)	Annual Migration Balance (for specified year)	Annual Total Change (for specified year)	Annual % Change (for specified year)
1990	355,910	2,623	857	3,480	0.99%
1995	372,135	2,174	839	3,013	0.82%
2000	383,418	1,884	0	1,884	0.49%
2005	391,859	1,552	0	1,552	0.40%
2010	398,502	1,174	0	1,174	0.30%

Source Population Estimates - SPU, PA

### Migration

2.2.3 Net migration (i.e. number of people moving into the country being higher than those moving out) is still a main factor impinging on the population increase in these islands (refer to Tables 5 and 6). The positive average balance of 607 persons in 1996/97 is in line with the assumption made in the 1<sup>st</sup> Monitoring Report that there would be a decline in the net migration balance. In fact, following the upsurge in immigration over the period 1990-1994, with a net annual average of nearly 930 persons arriving in Malta, 1996/97 figures show a continuing decrease in the number of immigrants. Table 5 and Table 6 give a description of these figures.

2.2.4 Emigrants, on the other hand, continued decreasing rapidly with 94 in 1996 and 73 in 1997.

2.2.5 In addition, one needs to point out the increasing number of new citizens<sup>10</sup>. The number has increased substantially over the last few years, even more than accounted for in the assumptions: in 1995, 260 persons changed their citizenship to Maltese and in 1996 this increased to 301, while in 1997 228 persons were registered.

Table 5 - Net migration 1996

Net migration 1996	Positive balance of 606 persons
Emigration	94 persons
In-Migration	399 return migrants 301 registered/naturalised

Source Population Estimates - SPU, PA

Table 6 - Net migration 1997

Net migration 1997	Positive balance of 608 persons
Emigration	73 persons
In-Migration	453 return migrants 228 registered/naturalised

Source Population Estimates - SPU, PA

2.2.6 Future migration trends are uncertain. Since the Structure Plan period covers till 2010, there may be economic or political changes which may directly have a bearing on the net migration balance. The Planning Authority's demographic projection model assumed that the current high level of net immigration will continue in the short-term, tapering to zero over a five year period (1995-2000). Beyond 2000, nil net migration is assumed.

<sup>10</sup> Foreign persons acquiring Maltese citizenship are designated as naturalised and registered.

### *The Elderly*

2.2.7 The 60+ population will reach 80,338 in 2010, an increase of 51% over the period 1990-2010. The population in the 75+ years age group are likely to experience an even more rapid increase of 56% between 1990 and 2010, reaching a total of 23,457. Table 7 gives an indication of the changes in the estimated number of elderly for the period 1990-2010.

Table 7 - Elderly Persons

Elderly Persons (60+ yrs) - Key Figures		
1990 Elderly (60+)	53,256	15% of Total Population
2010 Elderly (60+)	80,338	20% of Total Population
1990-2010 increase (60+)	27,082	51% increase in 60+ persons
1990 Elderly (75+)	15,088	4% of Total Population
2010 Elderly (75+)	23,457	6% of Total Population
1990-2010 increase (75+)	8,369	56% increase in 75+ persons

Source Population Estimates - SPU, PA

### *Working Population*

2.2.8 The Structure Plan assumed that the total population within the 15-59 age groups would increase, mainly through an influx of foreign labour in Malta. The first Monitoring Report confirmed this increase as well as an increase in the level of net in-migration. In fact the population aged between 15-59 is likely to stabilise around the year 2000, then decline after 2005. The total population in these age groups would increase from around 220,000 in 1990 to 240,000 in 2010. Adequate availability of the labour force is an important consideration to sustain a healthy local economy.

### *Stabilisation of Natural Growth*

2.2.9 The Maltese population aged less than 15 years is expected to decrease by 5% in the period to 2010 (from 82,437 in 1990 to 78,424 in 2010). This is likely to imply a continuing long-term decrease in the natural growth rate of the Maltese population, as the size of the population in the reproductive age groups declines. It is likely to have a significant effect on the size of the future labour force available to sustain continued economic growth in these Islands.

### *New Household Formation*

**The Structure Plan estimated that by the year 2010, an additional 22,000 new households would be formed (8.1).**

2.2.10 Structure Plan expectations for the number of new households are also likely to be comfortably exceeded. Our forecasts show that by 2010, (as indicated in Table 8) an estimated 29,000 additional households will need housing units. This figure includes potential migrants as well as foreign residents living in Malta.

Table 8 - Household Data

Household Data - Key Figures	
Households 1990	111,572
Households 2010	140,871
Total Increase 1990-2010	+26%
HH head in the 15-59 age group	+23%
HH head in the 60+ age group	+53%

Source Population Estimates - SPU, PA

Table 9 indicates the population and household changes envisaged between 1985 and 2010 by the Planning Authority. It can be seen that both population and households are set to increase faster than estimated by the Structure Plan, mainly due to longevity, net migration and household size.

Table 9 - Population and Household Changes (1985-2010)

Yr. End	Total Population in Private HH		Households		Mean Household Size	
	Revised forecasts by the PA	SP estimates	Revised forecasts by the PA	SP estimates	Revised forecasts by the PA	SP estimates
1985	340,909	340,559	104,751	104,751	3.25	3.25
1990	356,701	355,266	114,030	112,957	3.13	3.15
1995	372,697		123,607		3.02	
2000	383,822	377,253	132,131	125,705	2.90	3.00
2005	392,144		137,839		2.84	
2010	398,694	393,984	143,329	136,814	2.78	2.88

Source Population Estimates - SPU, PA

### Housing Supply Projections

The Structure Plan assumed that housing would be spread throughout the existing urban areas, the Temporary Provisions Schemes and Primary Development Areas. Assuming a medium density and allowing for a balanced provision of detached, terraced and flatted accommodation, the Structure Plan anticipates development of around 50,000 units in the Temporary Provision Schemes, 8,000 in existing urban areas and 2,000 in primary development areas, particularly Pembroke (8,3).

2.2.11 Originally estimated at 50,000 by the Structure Plan, the dwelling capacity of the Temporary Provision Schemes was revised in the 1990 - 95 Monitoring Report to 60,810 units. The revised estimates of capacity were based on the following central density assumptions :

semi-detached/villa plots developed to provide one dwelling unit each; and 50% of terraced plots developed to provide one dwelling unit; the remainder provide an average of two units per plot.

2.2.12 Of the 60,000 housing units projected in the Structure Plan, 8,000 were expected to be built in existing urban areas, 2,000 in primary development areas and 50,000 within the Temporary Provisions Scheme. As Table 10 shows, between 1992 and 1997, the total number of building permits approved amounted to 19,411 units within the Temporary Building Schemes, of which 117 were in the Pembroke primary development area. It is not known how many units have been approved within the existing urban areas.

### Structure Plan Expectation and Dwelling Approvals

Table 10 - Housing Development within Schemes

Scheme	Units	Approved Applications since 1992-1995	Approved Applications since 1996-1997	Totals
Temporary Provision Schemes (as revised)	50,000	11,700	7,711	19,411
Urban Areas	8,000			
Primary Development Areas	2,000	--	117	117

Source Dwellings Database - SPU, PA

2.2.13 It is not possible to provide data on the number of units that were completed since the approval of the Structure Plan or during the 1996/97

monitoring period. Instead, Table 11 is being used as a surrogate for completions which shows the number of building permits that were approved by the Planning Authority during the two years in question for the erection of dwelling units. Data for the previous monitoring period is added to the table for continuity of reference.

Table 11 - Dwelling Approval by Type 1993 - 1997

Property Type	1993	%	1994	%	1995	%	1996	%	1997	%
Apartments	1192	40	1742	42	2146	47	1862	44	1687	48
Maisonettes	651	22	1219	30	1114	24	1399	33	1091	31
Terraced Houses	1016	34	1014	25	1160	25	748	18	581	17
Semi/Detached 109	4	142	3	195	4	218	5	123	4	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2968</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4117</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5615</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4227</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3482</b>	<b>100</b>

Source Dwellings Database - SPU, PA

Table 11 clearly suggests a reaffirmation of the trend observed in the last monitoring report towards increased preference for apartments/maisonettes and it has been achieved entirely at the expense of terraced houses which appear to be losing in popularity in the Maltese Islands.

### **Population projections and housing provision.**

2.2.14 For the purpose of this exercise the same figures used to estimate the forecast population and housing provision in the 1990-95 Monitoring Report are equally considered to apply to this report. This is because pending the use of the 1995 Census report to update the estimates, these remain the most up to date for this purpose. The report indicated that under conservative assumptions, the projected housing supply will accommodate all the population growth anticipated up to the year 2010 and beyond<sup>11</sup>. In terms of specific estimates, it suggested that whilst current housing land supply can accommodate about 62,220 additional units, demand will probably not exceed 34,700 dwelling units. It is pertinent to refer to the conclusion of the last monitoring report in this regard where it states in Para 2.27 that:

“the continuing long-term decline in Malta’s natural population growth rate, the large and expanding stock of vacant dwellings, and the growing tendency to build at higher densities, current land allocations for housing are likely to suffice for the next thirty year, at least”.

### **Housing Development**

**The development and redevelopment of residential uses in existing built-up areas is encouraged in policy HOU1. Provision of housing within the Temporary Provision Schemes, in accordance with the relevant Local Plans, is proposed in policy HOU4. The retention of housing numbers within Urban Conservation Areas advocated in policy HOU2.**

#### *Rate of Development within the Temporary Provision Schemes*

2.2.15 Table 12 depicts the fact that the housing development rate achieved between 1994 and 1998 for the Maltese islands amounted to 15.65 Ha/yr. At a local plan level, the rates varied, with the South and Central local plan areas being developed at 5.7 and 4.6 Ha/yr respectively. None of the other local plan areas registered a rate above 2 Ha/yr. In fact, the collective rate of

<sup>11</sup> Monitoring Report 1990-1995 Volume II, Planning Authority, March 1997, Pg. 22

development in these areas was 5.3 Ha/yr: not even that of the South. The lowest rate achieved was in the Grand Harbours LPA at 0.2 Ha/yr. In the Grand Harbours Local Plan area, only 6 hectares were zoned for development in 1988, and the development rate is accordingly considered to be rather low.

Table 12 - Housing development rates by Local Plan

Local Plan Area	Housing land developed between 1994-98 (Ha)	% of the Total	Housing Development rate (Ha/yr) (94-98)
Marsaxlokk Bay	2.9757	4.4	0.7
North-west	8.0381	12.1	1.9
Grand Harbours	0.8261	1.2	0.2
North Harbours	4.9788	7.5	1.2
Gozo	5.6902	8.5	1.3
South	24.3531	36.7	5.7
Central	19.662	29.6	4.6
TOTAL	66.52	100	15.65

Source: *Land Availability*

### **Residential Property Prices**

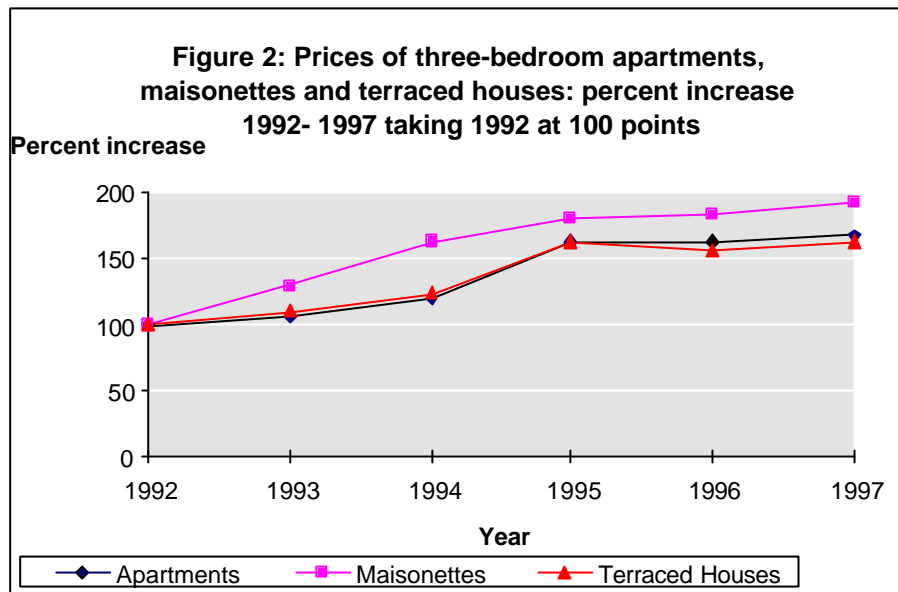
**The Structure Plan seeks to ensure that sufficient land is available and that other policies are directed to ensuring an adequate dwelling supply by size, quality, and location, so that shortages in supply do not contribute unnecessarily to price increases (Structure Plan Explanatory Memorandum, 8.6).**

2.2.16 An in-depth study on the nature of property prices in terms of size, quality and demand still needs to be done. However, a study, termed the Property Price database, was initiated by the Planning Authority as part of the residential property monitoring exercise. Data now covers the period 1990-97 for all achieved sale prices collected (from the Association of Estate Agents) and on the basis of advertised prices. The statistical information is calculated on a fortnightly basis and the analysis is carried out annually.

2.2.17 It suggests that prices for apartments, maisonettes and terraced houses have continued to increase. Figure 2 shows the trend in prices of three-bedroom apartments, terraced houses and maisonettes between 1992 and 1997. While the price of apartments rose by 67% by 1997, the rise in the price of terraced houses followed closely as it increased by 63% over the 5 year period. The highest increase however, affected the price of maisonettes which rose by 92% between 1992 and 1997.

2.2.18 The graph also shows that there is a general flattening out on property prices for all categories especially between 1995-96. The period 1996-97 has seen a slight increase in prices which however still contrasts with the sharp increases between 1992 to 1995. However, reduced provision of social accommodation and in housing subsidies and more effective planning control also influenced house prices.





Source: *Planning Authority/The Sunday Times: passim*

## Pembroke

**The area is to be developed for a range of uses including private and sheltered housing and ancillary social and community facilities (HOU5). A Local Plan is to be prepared for the area as soon as possible (HOU6).**

2.2.17 The Structure Plan proposed four primary Development Areas for non-industrial use, namely Manoel Island, Luqa Airport, Marsa Park (Ta' Ceppuna) and Pembroke). Only in Pembroke has significant progress been made. A Pembroke Action Plan was published in October 1996 where it was proposed to construct social housing to meet demand, particularly from the North Harbour Local Plan area. It has since been decided to build a total of 1,300 social housing units, which will consist of flats and maisonettes. A good proportion of these units has reached advanced planning stages.

## Rent Legislation

**The phased establishment of an equitable rental market is proposed, to stimulate the private market for rented housing. This is to be coupled with financial assistance for home purchase and for those who cannot afford higher rentals (HOU7).**

2.2.18 ACT No. XXXI of 1995 liberalised all rents entered into on or after June 1, 1995. The effect that this measure has had upon the rental market has to date been negative and few, if any, rentals have been given to Maltese citizens since then.

Table 13 show the number of grants and subsidies offered by the Government to promote home owner-occupation: 1996 - 1997

Table 13 - Grant Subsidies (1996-1997)

Grant, subsidy	1996 (LM)	1997 (LM)
Subsidy on housing units	1,542,612	2,353,335
subsidy on improvements to dwellings	320	-
Interest subsidy	154,048	132,174
Grants for purchase of dwellings by sitting tenants	3,100	-
Cash grants on development of plots	387,422	64,377
Interest payable	959,842	798,160
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,047,344</b>	<b>3,348,046</b>

Source: *The Housing Authority Annual Accounts Report, 1996, 1997.*

2.2.19 Schemes that enable tenants to purchase their homes, house hunters to purchase homes for owner-occupation; and home owner-occupiers to rehabilitate their homes have been in existence since 1988 and have been updated and revised from time to time. Table 13 above shows that, while subsidy on housing units increased substantially in 1997, all other financial assistance for the promotion of home owner-occupation has declined, and in two instances, it has declined to zero.

2.2.20 The Department for Social Accommodation has some 5,000 applications for alternative accommodation. Since the repeal of the powers of requisition in March 1995 that Department's stock of alternative accommodation has declined drastically.

## Social Housing

**A new approach to social housing is foreseen in the Structure Plan, progressively phasing out the provision by Government of new social housing units. The aim is to gradually restrict support to genuinely needy households and to blend social households with all others in the private sector. Provision of low-cost housing by the private and voluntary sectors for rent, as well as subsidized sheltered housing, is encouraged (HOU8, HOU9, 8.6-8.8). Meanwhile, any new Government housing is to be located within existing or committed built-up areas (HOU9).**

2.2.21 Provision of low-cost housing by either the private sector or voluntary organisations remains rather insignificant. Some progress has, however, been observed in the provision of residential social housing by the private sector even though Government still leads the way in this field. Table 14 gives a synoptic picture of social housing units allocated for sale/rent by Government in 1996 and 1997. The emphasis is on the production of new units for sale, particularly maisonettes and apartments.

Table 14 - Social housing units allocated in 1996 and 1997

Year	Kind of Unit	Subsidised Rent	Subsidised Sale
1996	Apartments	263	125
1997	Apartments	-	32
1996	Cluster Houses	-	51
1997	Houses	-	1
1996	Maisonettes	-	85
1997	Maisonettes	-	164
Total		263	458

Source: *Housing Authority*

2.2.22 In addition to the above, Table 15 shows that Government has continued with its slum clearance programme during the 1996-1997 period. Unfortunately, however, out of the seven projects selected for rehabilitation and renewal, only in St. Paul's Street, Valletta is rehabilitation being done. It appears that there is still some way to go before the Structure Plan Policies which encourage urban rehabilitation and renewal gain popular acceptance in these Islands.

Table 15 - Location and value of public sector rehabilitation and renewal projects : 1996, 1997

Project	Units	Description	Start	In-hand	Complete	Value (LM)
Msida (158-164, Valley Rd, 64 Conception Str)	24	Reconstruction	Mar'94		Sep'96	201,714 <sup>1</sup>
Tarxien (Republic Square)	24	Reconstruction	Feb'94		Feb'97	258,405 <sup>1</sup>
Valletta (15-23, Old Wells Str)	16	Reconstruction	Mar'94		Apr'97	279,377 <sup>1</sup>
Valletta (190, St. Paul Str)	1	Rehabilitation	Mar'96		Sep'97	19,930 <sup>1</sup>
Cospicua (St. Helen's Gate) Block 2	17	Reconstruction	Apr'96	In-hand		125,209 <sup>2</sup>
Valletta (6, St. Nicholas Str)	8	Reconstruction	Mar'94			NA
Msida (65-70, Conception Str)	12	Reconstruction	Mar'94	In-hand		59,101 <sup>2</sup>
				In-hand		

<sup>1</sup> Final amount

<sup>2</sup> Estimated amount

Source: Department of Housing Construction & Maintenance

## Conversion of Tourist Accommodation

**Conversion of lower standard tourist accommodation into residential units is encouraged (HOU10). This is to include the purchase of property by the private and voluntary sectors for conversion and subsequent sale or rent as sheltered accommodation and for use by subsidised rent tenants.**

2.2.23 There have been no studies to update the findings of the first monitoring report in this area.

## 2.3 Social and Community Facilities

2.3.1 The Structure Plan provides land-use planning policies for a range of social and community facilities. This section reviews the progress in these areas during the period from 1996 to 1997.

### Health

2.3.2 The Structure Plan emphasises the need for expansion and modernisation of the health sector. The first monitoring period (1993-95) witnessed the upgrading of St. Luke's Hospital, and the granting of development permission for San Raffaele (now Tal-Qroqq) Hospital and the construction of two new hospitals within the private sector. After 1995 there was a relative slowdown in the private sector while in the public sector the building of San Raffaele, which was enlarged after a change of government in 1996, was the principal development activity in the health sector. It is still unclear what the role of St. Luke's hospital will be once the new hospital at Tal-Qroqq is operational.

#### **Health Planning**

**The Structure Plan makes provision for the preparation of a 20 year development plan by the Department of Health (SOC1).**

2.3.3 During the last monitoring period, the Department of Health issued a draft Health Development Plan. This aimed to provide a blueprint for health policy development till 2005. This document called 'Health Vision 2000' is essentially an epidemiological study of the Maltese Islands. While the majority of resources has been concentrated during the monitoring period on the

development of the new Tal-Qroqq hospital, future emphasis is expected to be on the provision of improved primary health care.

### **Hospitals**

The Structure Plan identifies a need to upgrade and extend facilities at St. Luke's and other hospitals (9.2, SOC5). It also identifies a need for new hospitals, both public (9.4, SOC4) and private (9.6, SOC6, SOC9). The quality of road access to existing and new hospitals will be improved (9.4, SOC4). Land adjacent to existing hospitals is to be reserved for expansion (9.2, SOC2). The Planning Authority is to assist in the designation of sites for new hospitals; it is acknowledged that these sites may need to be located outside the boundaries of existing urban areas (9.6). An Environmental Impact Assessment will be required for all new hospital proposals (SOC7).

2.3.4 While refurbishment continued at St. Luke's Hospital during the monitoring period, resources have been redirected towards the new public sector hospital at Tal-Qroqq. Particular emphasis is being placed on resolving management and other problems at St. Luke's, before the move to the new hospital Tal-Qroqq takes place. Until the future use of St. Luke's is established, only essential improvements are expected to take place (SOC5) at this hospital.

2.3.5 Plans were made during the monitoring period for a new road network near the new hospital at Tal-Qroqq. As far as the private sector is concerned there is good road access to St. Philip's but it has insufficient parking provision.

2.3.6 There are now plans to merge St. James Clinic in Zabbar with the new St. Philips Hospital.

2.3.7 The policy to safeguard land adjacent to existing hospitals (SOC2) has been used to secure the expansion of the new hospital at Tal-Qroqq. However the location of the two private hospitals at Sliema and Msida militates against further expansion, which may be one of the reasons for the merger noted above. Table 16 provides details of proposed hospital development during the monitoring period.

Table 16 - Hospital development (1996-1997)

Hospital	Type of development	Floorspace approved (m <sup>2</sup> )
St. Luke's Hospital	Refurbishment	4200
Tal-Qroqq Hospital	Extension	13,000

Source: Health Department, SPMD

### **Health Centres**

Land adjacent to existing or proposed health centres will be reserved for expansion and utilised for medical facilities and other community uses (9.3, SOC3). Health centres need to be located and designed with due regard to the characteristics of the catchment area, public transport access, potential for expansion, mobility access and other planning criteria (9.7, SOC8).

2.3.8 Despite the recommendation in SOC3 the location of health centres to date has not necessarily been in areas which provide scope for future expansion. There are no plans to extend health centres. In fact many health centres are under utilised, particularly after 8 pm.

2.3.9 As far as the expansion in numbers of health centres is concerned, there may be a need for a further centre in the Zurrieq area. A new health centre is also being developed in Cospicua. Health centres are not always

located on sites with good public transport, and according to the health characteristics of the area.

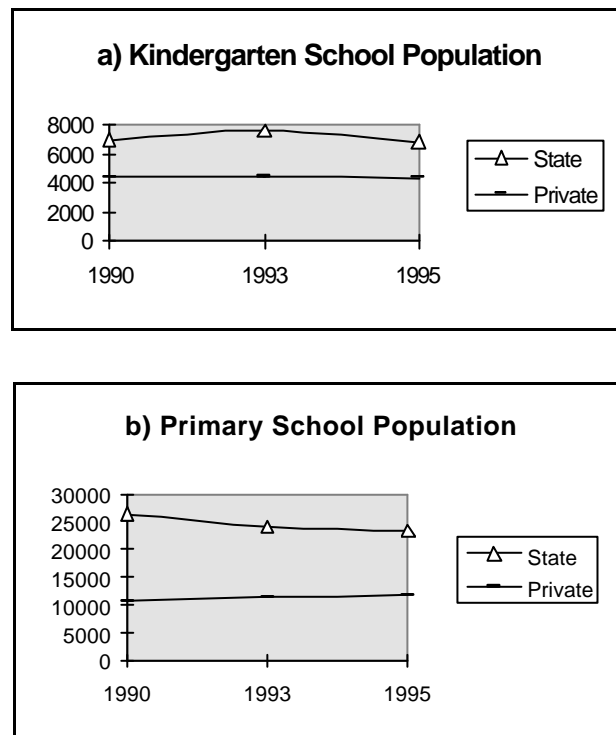
## Education

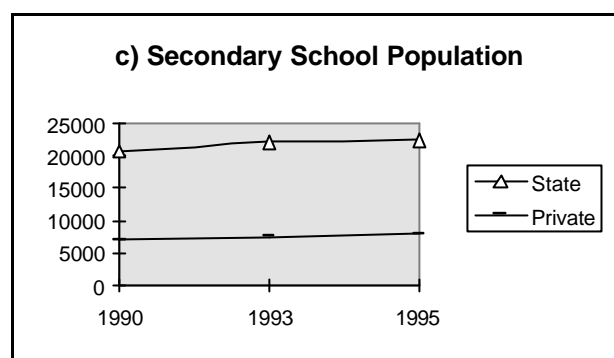
### *Primary and Secondary Education*

2.3.10 The school-age population (from 0-14 years) is expected to decrease gradually throughout the Structure Plan period. However notwithstanding this, the Education Department has planned a number of extensions and upgrading projects of existing schools. This started during the monitoring period 1993-95 and continued throughout this monitoring period (1996-97). The private sector (including both Church and private schools, for the purposes of this analysis) expanded rapidly during the first monitoring period and continued to do so, albeit at a slower rate during this period.

2.3.11 Overall, the state education sector is losing in population. This is indicated by a slight annual decrease in the primary and secondary state school population which is counterbalanced by an overall slight annual increase in the private primary and secondary school population. However on further analysis different demand trends between the pre-school, primary and secondary school population may be drawn as indicated in the following graphs. Figures for 1996 and 1997 are not yet available.

Figure 3 - Changes in school age population (private and public sector) - 1990-1995





*Source: Education Statistics, Education Department*

2.3.12 In general, the population of state schools is two thirds that of the total school age population. The private sector takes up slightly more than one third of the demand in the kindergarten sector and only one quarter of the demand in the secondary sector. Small reductions in school populations, reflecting demographic changes, are evident in the primary and secondary sector, and it is considered that these changes will start to show up in the secondary school populations during the next five years.

#### *New and Expanded Schools*

**The Structure Plan emphasises the need to improve standards of provision, whilst making the best possible use of existing premises (9.12, SOC13, SOC14, SOC15). New schools, including private schools, are to be located on appropriate sites, where demographic projections suggest that such a facility will be required. The Planning Authority will cooperate with the Ministry of Education to safeguard sites for school expansions and new facilities within the Temporary Provision Schemes (9.10, SOC10). Particular consideration will be given to the siting of special schools (SOC16).**

2.3.13 School provision and standards were improved through a number of projects both within the public and private sectors (SOC13). State schools upgraded during this monitoring period include: Mosta Primary School, St. Paul's Bay Primary School, San Gwann Primary School and Lily of the Valley Secondary School at Mosta. Two new private schools, St. Martin's College at Swatar and San Andrea School of the Parents Foundation for Education at Mgarr, were approved. St. Paul's Missionary College and Tal-Virtu', Seminary also obtained permission to upgrade their facilities. The floorspace approved in extensions to existing and for new schools during the monitoring period is given in Table 17.

Table 17 - Floorspace increase in schools 1996-1997

School	State/Private	Floorspace Increase (m <sup>2</sup> )
Lily of the Valley Secondary School	S	137
Mosta Primary School	S	334
St. Paul's Bay Primary School	S	2,013
San Gwann Primary School	S	898
St. Martin's College	P	7,778
San Andrea School	P	10,000
St. Paul's Missionary College	P	326
Tal-Virtu', Seminary	P	628
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>22,114</b>

*Source: SPMD, PA*

2.3.14 A number of small private schools were also granted development permission during 1996-97. These were predominantly kindergartens and private tuition centres.

## ***Tertiary and Vocational Education***

### *Safeguarding of Land for University Expansion*

**Land adjacent to the University is to be reserved in order to provide for services which cannot be located elsewhere (9.10, SOC11).**

2.3.15 During 1996 and 1997 a Master Plan was in the process of being prepared for the University of Malta. This Plan is to take into consideration the need to safeguard land for essential services.

### *New Vocational/Technical College in Valletta*

**The Structure Plan identifies a requirement for a new vocational/training college, particularly covering the fields of technology and management. The Ministry of Education, together with the Planning Authority, is to determine the feasibility of establishing such an institution in Valletta (9.10, SOC12).**

2.3.16 A new vocational/training college covering the fields of technology and management has not yet been set up.

## **Care of the Elderly and Disabled**

### ***Facilities for the Elderly and Disabled***

**The Structure Plan proposes that the Planning Authority cooperate with the Secretariat for the Care of the Elderly and the voluntary sector to identify sites and buildings suitable for conversion to accommodate day care centres, sheltered homes and other facilities (9.14, SOC18). Full support will also be given to initiatives to provide an appropriate range of housing for the elderly and disabled (9.14, SOC20).**

2.3.17 The Planning Authority has continued to give its full support to the provision of services for older people. One residential home was opened by the private sector in Rabat (over 100 beds) and the state sector opened two day centres for pensioners at Qormi (1996) and Sliema (1997). Another government residential home in Cospicua is under construction.

2.3.18 The proposed identification of sites suitable for conversion to accommodate day centres, sheltered homes and other facilities has not yet happened.

2.3.19 The Planning Authority has continued to support applications for government housing, where the ground floor units are allocated (but not specially designed) for people with disabilities. (eg. because of stairs to access the property etc.)

2.3.20 The main thrust in elderly care in the latter part of the monitoring period is no longer to decentralise care to Community Homes but to encourage, whenever possible, the support and care of pensioners in their own homes. It is recognised that adequate support (both financial and physical) will be needed to encourage the young old to care for the old old. Table 18 shows new facilities for pensioners provided in 1996/1997

Table 18 - New facilities for pensioners provided in 1996/1997 were:

Facility	Location
Day Care Centre	Sliema, Qormi
Govt.-residential home	Mtarfa
Private residential Home	Villa Messina, Rabat

*Source: SPU, PA*

2.3.21 While a small community based home in every town and village might seem ideal, this is no longer seen as a feasible option, in financial terms. While government recognises the need for an additional home in the Mqabba/Safi area, current plans are focusing on upgrading or extending existing homes.

2.3.22 This raises the issue of the ideal or maximum size for such facilities. Current practice shows that it is not financially feasible to build homes of 20/30 or even 40 beds. However, smaller homes provide a more personal service and a more pleasant environment.

2.3.23 A unit has been set up within the Ministry for Public works, called the Accessibility Unit which is meant to promote accessibility standards particularly in public buildings. Their first project is to make the Gzira Health Centre accessible.

2.3.24 There is little evidence of coordination and planning between the various groups representing specific community care needs. As far as those with mental illness are concerned, there are plans to rehouse a number of residents from Mount Carmel to ordinary housing. The Health Authority sees the use of already built housing as ideal, and does not plan to build any new group homes or other developments. The voluntary sector has made close contact with a U.K. registered housing association in order to develop more homes along the lines of the Villa Chelsea halfway house as well as more housing for permanent residents. The Eden Foundation has continued to develop and thrive, particularly in its insistence that physically and mentally disabled children should attend mainstream schools, supported by a facilitator provided by the Foundation. The Foundation also wishes to develop housing within which a small group of three or four people can live independently but with group support. The Malta Hospice Movement has opened a daycare centre in Balzan.

2.3.25 The Grand Harbour Local Plan provides a site for a home for the elderly at Tas-Samra, on Triq Zerafa with a frontage on a public garden. An adjacent pedestrian bridge is proposed that will cross Triq Dicembru Tlettax and help to improve access for communities on both sides of the road.

## Community Facilities

### *Provision of community facilities*

**The Structure Plan provides encouragement for the provision of a wide range of community facilities, both in existing housing areas and in new areas (SOC23, SOC25).**

2.3.26 Local Councils have undoubtedly had a role in identifying the need and promoting the necessity for more locally based community facilities.

2.3.27 A small survey carried out by the Planning Authority of the community based services within local council areas indicated that services in many areas have expanded considerably. Some respondents did indicate the need for resources such as a civic centre and sports facilities. Others wanted to develop community based homes, particularly homes for older people in their locality.

2.3.28 Data on floorspace increase within the public sector indicates a continuing provision of community based facilities. These include a centre for the blind in Luqa (525m<sup>2</sup>), an extension to Razzett tal-Hbiberija, a respite hall and centre for the disabled in Ghajnsielem Gozo and a gymnasium in Siggiewi. There were also embellishments of many squares including Qrendi as well as attempts to make them more accessible (Siggiewi). A Civic Centre at B'Kara is also to open shortly.

2.3.29 Modern multiplex cinema facilities have continued to thrive with three more opening in Marsascala, Bugibba and Fgura. The latter is also part of a shopping complex while the first two include catering outlets.

2.3.30 The limitations of trying to introduce social and community facilities within established housing areas was already mentioned in the previous report. Local plans provide an opportunity to attempt to redress this deficiency.



The draft Grand Harbour Local Plan proposes a twofold strategy. Firstly, to ensure that in the allocation of sites for development or redevelopment the need for the provision of such facilities is not overlooked. This may involve the reservation of particular sites for community use. Secondly, the Plan seeks to ensure that existing facilities are used to their maximum potential, and that 'dual' use is encouraged. For example, permission will not normally be given to proposals that will involve a loss in sports facilities.

2.3.31 The Pembroke Action Plan addresses the shortage of community facilities. Residents of this area currently have to travel to adjoining Swieqi, Ibragg and St. Julians in order to access community facilities. The Plan states that sites will be reserved for facilities such as local shops, banks, a health centre as well as football and political clubs.

### ***New libraries***

**The Structure Plan seeks improved provision of library facilities, with proposals for a new central library, as well as for district libraries in Qormi, Rabat and Luqa (SOC21, SOC22).**

2.3.32 The proposal for improvements in library facilities has been implemented by the central library expanding its services and reaching out to younger age groups, to encourage them to use libraries as an essential resource.

2.3.33 Other than the existing network of some 50 local libraries, the proposal for district libraries in Qormi, Rabat and Luqa has not yet been implemented. A small number of local councils, as is indicated by the Planning Authority survey described above, have shown an interest in developing district library facilities.

## **2.4 Commerce and Industry**

2.4.1 The first goal of the Structure Plan is to encourage further social and economic development, ensuring sufficient land is available to accommodate it. The office, retail and industrial sectors account for the majority of jobs in Malta, and Structure Plan policies are directed at the designation, protection and management of employment-generating land.

2.4.2 The first draft of the Commerce and Industry Subject Study was completed in November 1997. It has not yet been presented to the Planning Authority Board. The broad aims of the Study were:

- to undertake a thorough evaluation of patterns of supply and demand in the commercial and industrial sectors;
- to appraise the development process for commercial and industrial property;
- to review strategic development and policy options for the commercial and industrial sectors.

2.4.3 The findings of this study have been used to inform the analysis of current and future trends in the key sectors of commercial and industrial development, for the purposes of this report.

### **Offices**

#### ***Modernising the Office Sector***

**The Structure Plan seeks to address the lack of modern office facilities throughout the Maltese Islands, in both the public and private sector. Particular attention is drawn to the need for improved office standards to attract the international and offshore financial community and to stimulate the**

development of a commercial office market<sup>12</sup>. A new Government Administration Centre is to be developed outside Valletta (COM1), as well as private sector office developments at Pembroke, Luqa Airport and Marsa Park (COM2, COM4).

2.4.4 The pressure for office development has continued to develop during 1996 and 1997. Table 19 highlights the point:

Table 19 - Office approvals:

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Projects Approved	20	40	46	83	69
Floorspace Approved (m <sup>2</sup> )	16515	36591	29058	27871	19715

Source: Strategic Projects Monitoring Database, PA

2.4.5 Although significantly more applications were approved during 1996 and 1997 than in the previous monitoring period, total floorspace approved fell. 1997 showed a moderate downturn in the number of applications approved compared with 1996, coupled with a significant downturn in total approved floorspace. Average annual office floorspace approved decreased by 13% from 2.7 ha per year for the 1993-95 period to 2.4 ha per year in the 1996-97 period. Despite the slowing down in the provision of new office floorspace, the trend in the level of approved floorspace is still way above the projected need for floorspace requirements. The projections of the Commerce and Industry Subject Study, which are based on the floorspace needed to accommodate the projected growth in employment, predicted that likely floorspace requirements to accommodate projected new office jobs was in the region of 0.9 ha to 1.3 ha per year.

2.4.6 Major new office floorspace (in the region of 1000m<sup>2</sup> per project) approved in this monitoring period include: a flats to offices conversion in San Gwann; the Arkadia commercial complex in Republic Street, Victoria (Gozo); offices and showroom at Zebbug; a corporate headquarters and showroom at Birkirkara; and, offices and a showroom at Hamrun. In addition, an outline development permission has been issued for the Malta International Airport's master plan, which incorporates 2 ha of additional office space, among many other uses. The bulk of this proposed office floorspace is programmed to come on board during the period 2005-2015.

2.4.7 In addition to the above, the Planning Authority has made the following commitments towards the provision of large-scale modern office accommodation, during the monitoring period:

- the current development proposals for Manoel Island and Tigne Development Brief provide around 15,000m<sup>2</sup> of high quality office space, 14,000m<sup>2</sup> at Tigne Point and 1,000m<sup>2</sup> at Manoel Island.
- the Maltacom Sites in Paceville Development Brief includes provision for up to 2.05 ha of office floorspace incorporated in a mixed-use development at Paceville in St.Julians;
- the Grand Harbour Local Plan has taken forward Structure Plan proposals on a commercial park at Marsa (COM4). A Marsa Park Opportunity Area of approximately 8.5 ha is designated, of which between 1.5 ha and 3.0 ha are designated for office uses. It is envisaged that between 1000 and 1250 new jobs could be created in the Marsa Park area. Policy GM15 of the local plan also envisages that development proposals would seek to positively enhance and upgrade the amenity of the area through ensuring that the entire site is the subject of a landscaping plan.

<sup>12</sup> Structure Plan Explanatory Memorandum, 1990, 10.16-10.19.

- upgrading of the public office enclave at Floriana is proposed by the draft Grand Harbour Local Plan. The Local Plan recommends that a new development brief is drawn up to upgrade the existing public office space, providing a 'one stop shop' service for the public (GF16);
- during 1996 and 1997 active discussions were taking place regarding development at Pembroke. In the previous monitoring period mention was made of the fact that 7ha were allocated for office and business use within a business park in this area, in accordance with policies COM3 and HOU5. This has been re-evaluated with most of the land now allocated for housing in a mixed use development format. No formal office zone is to be designated, although offices will be permitted in the area.
- discussions were under way during 1997, regarding Millennium development projects on the Opera House site in Valletta and on an open site in Victoria, Gozo which entailed the provision of a significant amount of floorspace.

### **Office Development through Conversion and Infill**

The Structure Plan makes provision for office development on infill sites (10.5). Conversion of existing residential and other uses in built-up areas to small office use is encouraged, as a contribution to the provision of additional office floorspace (COM5). However, the Structure Plan seeks to constrain growth in private sector office provision within Valletta/Floriana, until suitable transport access, vehicle parking and pedestrian circulation have been secured to accommodate employment growth in the capital (COM2, 10.3). This is an interim position: it is seen as important that the Valletta transport problem is satisfactorily solved, so that the capital city can also function as an efficient office centre for both public and private sector offices<sup>13</sup>.

2.4.8 The draft Commerce and Industry Subject Study reports that much of the private office development taking place is within relatively small projects and is widely distributed across the Maltese Islands. This is consistent with the profile of office-based businesses in Malta: the private market services sector is dominated by micro and small enterprises, requiring small-scale office premises. Although there is no data available concerning the number of office developments which have occurred on infill sites, this is unlikely to be significant in relation to the total of small office approvals.

2.4.9 Only 8% of approved office floorspace during 1996 and 1997 is converted, compared with 7% in 1993-1995, and the remaining 92% of office development is new floorspace. Table 20 describes the office floorspace approved by the Local Plan Area.

Table 20 - Provision of new office floorspace (including conversions) by local plan area (1996-1997)

Local Plan Area	1996 (m <sup>2</sup> )	1997 (m <sup>2</sup> )	Total Floorspace Increase (m <sup>2</sup> )	% Share of Total Increase in Floorspace
Central	6701	12243	18944	37
North Harbours	4613	5472	10085	20
South	4776	4846	9622	19
North West	6654	319	6973	14
Gozo	2444	223	2667	5
Grand Harbours	1960	441	2401	5
Marsaxlokk	726	0	726	1
TOTALS	27874	23544	51418	100

Source: Strategic Projects Monitoring Database, PA

<sup>13</sup> Structure Plan Explanatory Memorandum, 1990, 10.17.

This relates positively to the strategy of encouraging jobs in the outer residential areas since the higher proportional increase in office development was registered for such areas.

2.4.10 Total office floorspace approved in Valletta amounted to only 800m<sup>2</sup> in 1996 and nil in 1997, in accordance with the provisions in COM2. The wider Grand Harbour local plan area attracted only 5% of total office floorspace approval during the monitoring period compared to 37% in the Central region. The draft Grand Harbour Local Plan takes forward the proposals of COM1 and COM2 in GV24, stating that further increases in both private and public sector office space in Valletta and Floriana will not be permitted. However, it is not a blanket restriction since the policy does allow for certain exceptions which form an integral part of policy GV24.

2.4.11 The total amount of new office floorspace generated through conversions during 1996 and 1997 was 4006 m<sup>2</sup>. The most frequent type of office conversions were from dwellings to offices (55%) and the largest converted office projects were in Ta' Xbiex (19% of approved floorspace), Zebbug (12%), Sliema (11%), and, Birkirkara (10%).

2.4.12 Table 21 gives a description of office floorspace generated through conversions (1996-1997):

Table 21 - Office floorspace generated through conversions (1996-1997):

Previous Use	Conversions (m <sup>2</sup> )	% Conversions
Dwelling	2215	55
Warehousing	992	25
Retail	406	10
Manufacturing	223	6
Parking	98	2
Agricultural	72	2
Total	4006	100

Source: Strategic Projects Monitoring Database, PA

2.4.13 Valletta remains Malta's prime location for private sector office space: 20-25% of advertised commercial property in 1996 was in Valletta.<sup>14</sup> The preference for Valletta is clearly marked in a slightly higher than average price for commercial property in the capital city: Lm61,800 in 1996 compared to the national average of Lm51,000. This average reflects high prices paid for a few prestigious locations: over half the properties advertised were for less than Lm25,000. The draft Commerce and Industry Subject Study suggests the need to allow replacement and expansion of the stock of office accommodation in Valletta, within a designated town centre boundary, while resisting further growth of office accommodation within the residential areas of Floriana.

## Shopping

### *Modernising the Retail Sector*

**In the retail sector, the Structure Plan provides for rapid modernisation through the development of large indoor shopping complexes. Sites for new superstores, with customer floorspace in excess of 2,500 square metres, are allocated at Luqa Airport Business Park and Pembroke (COM3, COM6). A shopping mall of unspecified size is proposed for Marsa (COM4). Part of Xewkija industrial estate is designated for retail showrooms (IND3). The development of larger showrooms and warehouses (over 500 sq. m) is restricted to sites in or adjacent to storage warehouse areas (IND13).**

<sup>14</sup> Commercial Property Database, Planning Authority, 1996.

2.4.14 Retail floorspace approved in this monitoring period has increased sharply during 1996 (51841 m<sup>2</sup>) and 1997 (49302 m<sup>2</sup>) as described in Table 22. Average annual floorspace approved was 50,000 m<sup>2</sup> during the period from 1996 to 1997, compared to an average of 24,000 m<sup>2</sup> during the period from 1993 to 1995. This floorspace is fulfilling the need for upgraded retail facilities identified in the Structure Plan. On the other hand, the approval of such a large amount of floorspace may have consequences in terms of business closure and loss of retail floorspace for existing retail outlets in town centres. The draft Commerce and Industry Subject Study's projected annual retail floorspace requirements, based on employment growth projections, is between 12,300m<sup>2</sup> and 18,700m<sup>2</sup> per annum.

Table 22 - Retail approvals (1993-1997)

Retail approvals	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Projects Approved	68	71	73	215	225
Floorspace Approved (m <sup>2</sup> )	21433	30642	20477	51841	49302

Source: SPMD, PA

2.4.15 Although the overall scale of development in the pipeline is very large, and increasing rapidly, few individual projects are of a dominant size: only two approvals for car showrooms at Mriehel exceed 3000m<sup>2</sup>, while the Gallarija Shopping Centre in Fgura covers 3000m<sup>2</sup>. This data underlines information from the 1995 employment data<sup>15</sup> which indicates that of the 8180 employers in the retail sector in 1995, 97% employed less than ten people, while the average number of employees per business in the retail sector was 1.9.

2.4.16 Allocations and commitments for retailing have increased in the monitoring period, providing for a total of between 10 and 15 hectares in additional retail floorspace. Large proposals are:

- the Maltacom Sites in Paceville Development Brief which was approved by the Planning Authority Board in January 1998, proposes up to 48,000m<sup>2</sup> of commercial floorspace, although this could include other facilities such as restaurants and offices;
- the Valletta Cruise Terminal Development Brief, within which 4800m<sup>2</sup> are allocated for a Duty Free Complex, while 6000 m<sup>2</sup> are included for leisure/retail uses;
- the Valletta Millennium Project Development Brief (April 1998), which allocates 20,000m<sup>2</sup> for commercial uses (including retail), with 2000 m<sup>2</sup> for cultural uses and 25,000m<sup>2</sup> for parking;
- the Fort Ricasoli Development Brief (March 1997), which offers the opportunity for 6000m<sup>2</sup> of retail/commercial/office floorspace in a principally cultural and touristic development involving a large measure of restoration work;
- the Gozo Millennium Project Site Development Brief (April 1998), which includes a 700m<sup>2</sup> open market
- the Marsa Park - the draft Grand Harbour Local Plan allocates up to 7500m<sup>2</sup> for retailing in this area, most of which could be used for retail warehouse type developments on condition that it does not threaten the neighbouring town centres.
- in addition, the current proposals for the Manoel Island and Tigne Point Development, a major proposal for tourist, residential, yachting and commercial uses, include a total of approximately 23,000m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace with 17,000m<sup>2</sup> in Tigne and 5,000m<sup>2</sup> in Manoel Island. During

<sup>15</sup> provided by the Employment Training Corporation.

the monitoring period, discussions on this project have recommenced with negotiations progressing between the Government and the consortium. Design proposals have equally progressed and a phasing plan has also been submitted by the consortium.

#### *Superstores*

2.4.18 The previous monitoring report noted a reluctance to implement Structure Plan policy on large superstores. No superstores are planned for Pembroke (see section 2.2.17) and the Luqa Airport Business Park is not likely to materialise. The Maltacom Sites in Paceville Development Brief, does however allocate an area of approximately 4.8 ha to retail uses. In addition, a Malta International Airport Master Plan, which now has outline development approval, envisages the development of a 2.2 ha regional shopping centre, to compete with Sliema and Valletta.

2.4.19 The reluctance to implement Structure Plan policy on superstores is in line with current international thinking on the role of large out-of-town retail developments vis a vis the health of traditional town centres. Out-of-town developments tend to draw shoppers away from town-centres and encourage long-distance car-borne shopping trips, which increase pollution and are energy-inefficient.

#### *Retail Showrooms*

2.4.20 Since 1993 only one large showroom development was approved at Xewkija, along with a small number of applications for smaller showrooms, service industry sites, warehousing, garages and housing. Mriehel is now witnessing the development of a number of large showrooms. However, despite the provisions of IND13, large showrooms continue to be approved in various parts of the Islands, not just in or adjacent to storage and warehouse areas such as Mriehel and Xewkija. A desk study carried out as part of the Commerce and Industry Subject Study indicated that in early 1997, the main locations for showrooms were: Birkirkara (38); Harmrun (29); Msida (28); Qormi (27); Victoria (25); Gzira (22) and Mosta (20).

2.4.21 Retail warehouse development has not arrived on any scale within the Maltese Islands. The large Maltese showroom, although performing a similar function to the retail warehouse, differs in that it is more space efficient and visually more attractive. Nevertheless, the draft Commerce and Industry Subject Study comments that there is often a marked contrast between the high quality internal environment of most showrooms and the poorly finished parking and services areas which support them. Some showrooms create serious neighbourhood impacts such as the parking of service vehicles including containers and trucks in busy routes on residential streets.

2.4.23 The main issues dominating the shopping sector are therefore the over provision of retail floorspace with its potential effect on existing retail outlets and town centres, the need for revising Structure Plan policy on superstores in the light of sustainable development policy and to control the further development of out-of-town shopping complexes such as that at the Malta International Airport, and the need to revise the Plan's proposals on retail warehousing in view of the local experience with showrooms.

#### ***Upgrading Shopping Centres***

**Local Plans are to include upgrading proposals for existing centres, particularly through: improved control over shopfronts and adverts; traffic calming and pedestrianisation measures; and detailed consideration of parking provision and access and design requirements (COM7). More generally, favourable consideration is to be given to retail/residential conversions (COM8).**

2.4.26 In the draft Grand Harbour Local Plan, measures to enhance town centres have been proposed (see also section 4.1.14 on upgrading projects in

town centres). The Plan seeks to strengthen Valletta's role as a shopping centre. GV17 promotes good shopfront design in the main shopping area. GV19 promotes the retention of retailing in the defined main shopping area as the predominant use at ground floor level, not allowing development that will result in the loss of more than 20% of retail uses by length of facade, in each city block. GV16 promotes the strict control of advertisements, particularly stating that illuminated box signs and neon lights will not normally be permitted. Street markets (GV20), pedestrian areas (GV08), sitting out areas (GV21), residents' and general car parking (GV11 and GV12), will be promoted.

2.4.27 Town centre improvements are also promoted for Floriana, Marsa, Senglea, Cospicua, Vittoriosa, and Kalkara in accordance with the Structure Plan.

2.4.28 The Strategic Projects Monitoring Database (SPMD) indicates that there were no retail to dwelling conversion in Urban Conservation Areas during 1996 and 1997, and that most conversions were from dwellings and to a lesser extent garages, to offices and shops. Data for all urban areas is not available. In addition, SPMD indicates that 10% of all office conversions were from retail outlets to offices (see also section 4.1.30 on urban conservation).

## Industry

### *Land Allocations for Manufacturing Industry*

The Structure Plan anticipates a requirement for additional land for industrial development. New allocations for manufacturing industry are therefore included, through extension of the existing industrial estates at San Gwann and Hal Far (IND1). At Mriehel, the service industry designation is changed to manufacturing (IND2). New industrial estates are also proposed for Xewkija and/or Ghajnsielem in Gozo (IND3).

2.4.29 The pressure to secure approvals to projects for the provision of industrial floorspace has continued unabated during 1996 and 1997. It is still well in excess of the annual development requirement of 43,000 m<sup>2</sup> identified in the draft Commerce and Industry Subject Study, as shown in Table 23.

Table 23 - Manufacturing Projects (1993-1997)

Manufacturing	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Projects Approved	13	24	29	59	59
Floorspace Approved (m <sup>2</sup> )	22698	39688	65757	48955	73317

Source: SPMD, PA

2.4.30 The main manufacturing projects approved in 1996 and 1997 include: 115 small and medium-sized enterprise (SME)<sup>16</sup> units at Hal Far; 6 factory units at Xewkija on two storeys; 26 factories for small industries, also at Xewkija; ten terraced factories at Kordin; a 200m<sup>2</sup> paint factory at Kordin; 8 industrial workshops at Mriehel; a 2600m<sup>2</sup> lift factory at Luqa Industrial Estate and industrial workshops at Tal-Handaq.

### *MDC Industrial Estates*

2.4.31 Table 24 outlines the available land in MDC industrial estates as at November 1997, some of which have been granted planning permission:

<sup>16</sup> MDC defines such industries on a range of criteria including the number of employees, turnover, total investment, etc.

Table 24 - Available land in MDC industrial estates - November 1997

	Plot Size	Units
Hal Far: workshop industry employing 5+.	144 square metres	115
Hal Far: light engineering, printing, plastics and electronics.	1000 square metres	38
Hal Far: small workshops	Max 100 square metres	220-250
Hal Far: large site for future requirements	14.5 hectares	To be decided
Hal Far: new site for Brand-stätter	5.6 hectares	To be decided
Hal Far: sites for heavy industry	8.2 hectares	To be decided
Hal Far: potential sites for obnoxious industry	8.4 hectares	To be decided
Kordin: new units (earmarked)	250 square metres	8
Kordin: new units planned	250 square metres	8
Kordin: Business Incubation Centre	Small starter units	30
San Gwann: westward expansion (earmarked)	approx. 4 hectares	2
Xewkija: partial westward expansion (approved)	0.6 hectares	6
Xewkija: plots for small industries	site area: 1.4 hectares	26
Luqa: plots for small and medium sized enterprises	Small units	To be decided
Kirkop: SGS Thompson and associated industries	To be decided	To be decided

Source: Commerce and Industry Subject Study, PA

2.4.32 Efforts have been made by the MDC to maximise development potential within their existing estates.

2.4.33 A number of allocations of new industrial land have been made outside the estate boundaries, principally in land outside the development zone. During the previous monitoring period, the 4 ha extension to the San Gwann estate was agreed. Extensions to industrial estates over the monitoring period included 6ha site west of the Xewkija Industrial Estate, in line with IND3.

2.4.34 Discussions on the re-zoning of industrial areas at Hal Far to accommodate other uses like small industries are currently under way between the MDC and the Planning Authority's Local Plans Unit, in line with IND1. Discussions are also under way over allocations for more industrial land in Gozo.

#### *Industrial Land outside the MDC estates*

2.4.35 Some 30ha of industrial land (out of a total of 47 ha) which lie outside the established government industrial estates but were allocated within the 1988 Temporary Provisions Schemes for this use, remained vacant as of Summer 1997. As was reported in the previous monitoring report substantial potential for accommodating industrial development lies in the recycling and intensification of land in the existing industrial areas.

2.4.36 Currently, sites in private ownership which are zoned for industry are rarely used for this purpose, largely because MDC offers subsidised rates for industrial floorspace which is difficult for the private sector to match. Consequently, land zoned for industrial purposes (particularly at Mriehel) is often utilised for other commercial purposes, mainly showrooms, warehousing or offices. This is not completely against Structure Plan policy (IND3, IND12 and IND13), but it does put pressure on other sites for industrial development. During the monitoring period eight major developments including showrooms were approved at Mriehel. It is important for the



Structure Plan Review to examine alternative mechanisms to encourage and bring forward increased use of privately owned land for industrial purposes.

2.4.37 An additional problem is the environmental quality of privately-owned industrial zones, such as Tal-Handaq at Qormi which is particularly poor. There is a requirement for coordinated action by local and national government, in partnership with industry, to achieve environmental and infrastructural improvements (see section 4.8.13 for further details).

Industrial commitments and allocations in the Grand Harbour Local Plan (GHLP) centre around the upgrading of the approximately 130 ha of industrial land at Marsa, Kordin and Ricasoli (GD03), and the relocation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) out of the historic cities (GB14, GG22) and into specific areas zoned in the existing industrial estates (GD01, GD02, GI02, GK21). Encouragement is also provided for better utilisation of industrial areas (GD04, GI01, GI03, GK20). Some 20 ha are identified as derelict land in the Plan area, and policy is directed towards the reuse and recycling of this land (GI07). At Marsa, approximately 20 ha are designated as zones of mixed use, including light industry (GM15,19, 20, 21). Port related industrial uses are encouraged at the waterfronts of the Commercial, Industrial and Dock area (Zone A) of the Harbour (GM17, GM18, GI03).

#### *Requirement for Industrial Land*

2.4.38 The previous monitoring report concluded that, with the allocations made by the Structure Plan, there was no immediate absolute shortage of allocated industrial land at a national scale, but that growth rates were high and that available land was too concentrated at Hal Far.

2.4.39 The Commerce and Industry Subject Study also concludes that the overall supply of available industrial land on existing industrial estates, including the planned expansions, can comfortably accommodate the anticipated net growth in industrial employment. The Study explains that the emphasis in this sector is more likely to be based on qualitative improvements of business premises, on relocations and on efficiency improvements, rather than additions to the net amount of industrial land.

2.4.40 However the study advises that the match of available land to potential requirements should be carefully monitored, particularly in the light of requirements for the relocation of existing industries. Depending on the incentives provided and the resulting take-up rates there may be a need to identify additional Government land within the existing and committed urban areas for the relocation of additional small manufacturing and service businesses.

#### ***Small-Scale Service Industry (Garage Industry)***

**The Structure Plan recognises the strong demand for appropriate premises for small service industry uses and advocates the designation of sites, in addition to those already allocated in the Temporary Provision Schemes (IND6). Use of abandoned quarries is proposed for industrial sites which are inappropriate in urban locations (IND9).**

2.4.41 During the monitoring period, there has been a strong emphasis placed on the encouragement of SMEs. MDC have identified sites in Malta and Gozo for SME workshops within existing industrial estates. Serviced plots are provided to tenants at low rents. During 1996, the Planning Authority assisted Government in the provision of 1000 plots for SMEs, mainly at Hal Far, Luqa and Kordin. MDC is continuing to search for additional sites both in Gozo and Malta.

2.4.42 At Kordin MDC are experimenting with a Business Incubation Centre, making 26 units available in a 6000 m<sup>2</sup> site, which will also accept pure office tenants (eg. accountants). Financial assistance is also available for SMEs,

through the Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprise (IPSE), as well as subsidized rents. Minimum required investment to qualify for subsidised loans is now Lm21,000 from Lm100,000, while a credit guarantee facility has been introduced for small enterprises.

2.4.43 During the monitoring period, the following sites have been identified for use by SMEs:

- 26 factories were approved at Xewkija (Gozo) on land zoned for industrial uses in the Temporary Provisions Schemes;
- a 4.5 ha site at Kordin, accommodating 200-320 units;
- a 2.3 ha site at Ricasoli, allocated for small industrial workshops, for 110-118 units;
- some 20 ha at Marsa, in zones of mixed use at Marsa Park, north of Marsa Park and at Albert Town (GM15, GM19, GM20, GM21);
- a site adjoining the Mellieha bypass, currently containing two quarries, which is under consideration for a number of uses including up to 2.7 ha of space for workshops and industrial garages;
- a potential site in Gzira, close to the drainage pumping station.

2.4.44 The Water Services Corporation has expressed the view that the Structure Plan proposal (IND9) to relocate industrial units in inappropriate urban locations to abandoned quarries would have significant negative effect on the ground water quality. For this reason, this proposal has not been implemented in more than a few isolated cases, and local plans are not seeking to encourage such relocations.

### ***Development of Ports***

**The Structure Plan suggests that no new industrial uses are to be permitted in the vicinity of Grand Harbour, pending completion of a Subject Plan dealing with potential for relocation to the Marsaxlokk Bay area (IND5). The Structure Plan also proposes that facilities for the oil and gas industry are to be established in the Marsaxlokk Bay area, in conjunction with wider studies of long-term requirements for all industrial activities related to deep water port uses (IND14-15).**

2.4.45 As indicated in the previous monitoring report, the Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan concluded that an environmental threshold had been reached in the Plan area for which further industrial development would be unacceptable.

2.4.46 The draft Grand Harbour Local Plan carries these provisions forward by designating the inner waterfront area of the Grand Harbour (7.2km in length) for commercial, industrial and dock uses. The rest of the Grand Harbour is designated for passenger and related services, leisure and tourism (2.5km) on the Valletta/Floriana side, and residential, leisure and tourism uses on the Cottonera side.

2.4.47 In view of recent land-based investigations into the possibility of extraction of oil at Gozo, it may be necessary for the Structure Plan Review to consider more deeply the land requirements of the oil and gas industry.

2.4.48 The draft GHLP includes proposals for the long-term relocation of the Ricasoli Tank Cleaning Installation, but no more suitable site could be identified for the operation (GK22).

2.4.49 The Commerce and Industry Subject study considers that land provision at the ports is adequate for short and medium term requirements, although the considerable activity and expansion expected both at the Grand Harbour and at the Freeport will necessitate the monitoring of implications for neighbouring land uses. Increase in activity at the Grand Harbour is expected to be due to: growth in the cruise passenger traffic; provision of large-scale

duty-free facilities (possibly within Pinto Stores) and car transshipment activities.

## Warehousing

**Rehabilitation of existing warehouse premises is encouraged, in appropriate cases (IND11). The Structure Plan advocates provision for the development of new warehousing on industrial estates, where it can be shown that development or redevelopment in traditional areas is impracticable (IND12).**

2.4.50 Floorspace approved for warehousing has remained at a high level during the last two years although the total floorspace approved during 1997 was somewhat lower than in 1996, as shown in Table 25.

Table 25 - Warehousing Projects (1993-1997)

Warehousing	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Projects Approved	34	44	53	146	144
Floorspace Approved (m <sup>2</sup> )	22104	30352	37314	56551	34697

Source: SPMD, PA

2.4.51 Large warehousing projects include: a 3300 m<sup>2</sup> fuel storage facility at Kordin; 3 large warehouses/retail outlets at Mriehel, one of which is a DIY centre; a container storage facility in a disused quarry at Qormi; and, 2 large warehouses at Paola and Zebbug. Warehousing space is most often included with other commercial developments such as industry and retail outlets.

2.4.52 IND12 is being implemented mainly at Mriehel where developments such as the DIY retail/warehousing project was approved.

### **Development of the Distribution Sector**

2.4.53 The Structure Plan does not provide specific policy guidance relating to warehouse distribution, despite the fact that modernisation will also affect this sector. The draft Commerce and Industry Subject Study reports that local distribution and storage networks are extensive but largely informal. It is likely that as the sector modernises, requirements will become more sophisticated. Some specific land allocations are likely to be necessary, in appropriate locations, to allow for the development of modern national distribution facilities.

2.4.54 Despite the difficulty of quantifying requirements in this sector, the draft Subject Study recommends that the immediate need is to define an appropriate general location for large distribution facilities and to make provision for two or three individual sites of up to 2.5 ha in size. Such provision should facilitate the relocation of inappropriate uses from residential areas and may provide some additional sites for the location of appropriate industrial uses within existing urban areas. The draft Commerce and Industry Subject Study recommends the creation of a new Industrial Zone at Zebbug.

### **Open storage for containers and heavy equipment**

2.4.55 The Planning Authority has received requests for sites for the storage of containers and heavy equipment. A site at Hal Far is already in use for container storage (between 3 and 4 ha), and the GHLP suggests (GI06 that in association with the Malta Development Corporation), the need for the development of a secure lorry/container park within or in the vicinity of Kordin for this purpose.

## 2.5 Agriculture, Horticulture and Fisheries

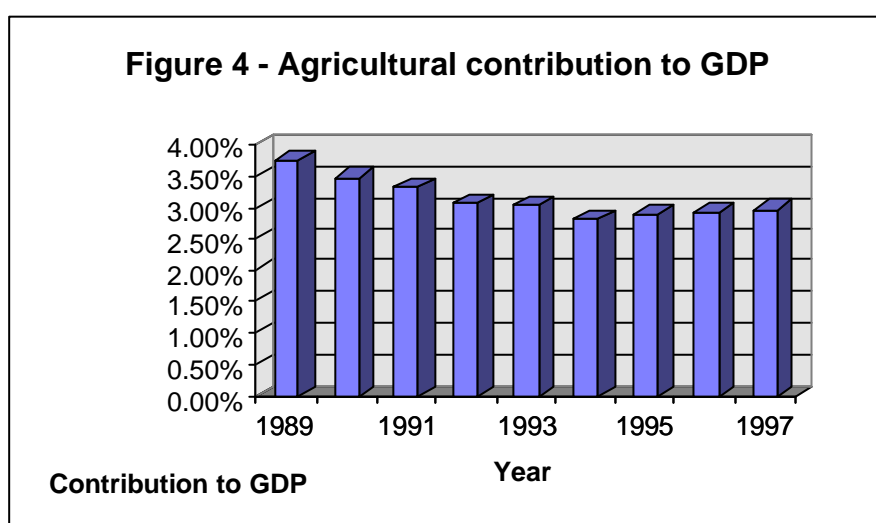
2.5.1 The agricultural sector is a small but important one for Malta due to its dual role as food provider and protector of the countryside.

## Encouragement to Agriculture, Horticulture and Fisheries

The Plan seeks to encourage major improvements in Agriculture, Horticulture and Fisheries, in order to assist the agricultural economy, to improve production quality, to ensure food security and to protect the countryside for future generations (AHF1). It discourages further subdivisions of agricultural holdings (AHF6).

2.5.2 The relevant policies of the Structure Plan have succeeded in restricting the large-scale loss of agricultural land to areas within the development zone. No new data is available on the extent of land still under active cultivation, although the trend identified during the last period of a slowing down in the loss of agricultural land, is likely to have continued due to the constraining of urban growth to the zoned development areas (see Chapter 3).

2.5.3 Challenges faced by the sector include: fragmentation; scarcity of water resources and an ageing labour force. The problems are interrelated, and in an attempt to assist the sector, Government is encouraging farmers to improve their production techniques, and is providing financial and technical assistance programmes. For example, self-employed full-time farmers, herders and fishermen are eligible to have half of their social security contributions refunded by Government. During 1996 50 farmers benefited from subsidised loans for investment such as greenhouses, drip irrigation equipment and field machinery. Extension service officers provide ongoing technical and professional advice to farmers and herdsmen. The fall in the relative contribution of agriculture to GDP, noted in the previous monitoring period has been stemmed: Figure 4 shows that there has been a slight increase in the contribution of the sector since 1994.



Source: Economic Survey 1997

2.5.4 Agricultural production has increased during the monitoring period, despite the fact that a substantial amount of agricultural land has been lost to the industry. The main increases were recorded in vegetable production, particularly water melons and strawberries, due to more and better irrigation. Table 26 provides an index of production for Malta, compared with indices for a number of other countries. 1989-91 is taken as a base year.

Table 26 - Index of agricultural production for Malta and other European countries (1994-1997)

Country	1994	1995	1996	1997
Malta	117.2	119.2	129.6	135.5
Cyprus	100.8	112.5	110.2	108.4
Germany	87.5	88.7	90.7	90.7
Italy	100.7	99.2	101.9	96.2
France	97.8	100.7	105.8	103.5
Netherlands	103.8	102.6	107.9	107.7

1989-91 = 100

Source: *Economic Survey 1997*

2.5.5 Production has also increased in the Fisheries sector as reflected in Table 27, largely due to increased in production from Aquaculture.

Table 27 - Fisheries production (1993-1997)

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Production (kg)	682,220	1,531,468	1,950,252	1,950,704	2,464,090
Production (Lm)	1,068,826	2,098,061	2,388,117	2,990,546	3,533,846

Source: *Fisheries Department of Fisheries and Agriculture*

2.5.6 At the same time agricultural imports increased from Lm 87 million to Lm 93 million during the two-year monitoring period, although not as fast as during the first monitoring period. Table 28 shows imports of major agricultural commodities for the years from 1994 to 1997.

Table 28 - Trends in imports of major agricultural commodities (1994-1997) (Lm millions)

Commodity	1994	1995	1996	1997
Live animals	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.5
Meat and edible offals	5.6	8.5	7.7	7.4
Fish	2.3	2.6	3.2	2.9
Dairy produce	8.3	10.2	10.9	12.20
Edible fruits and nuts	6.0	7.6	8.1	8.4
Cereals	6.8	9.5	12.8	10.7
Preparations of meat, fish	5.2	7.4	7.1	7.4
Sugar and confectionery	4.8	5.3	4.5	5.2
Cereal preparations	4.6	7.4	8.0	9.4
Veg. and Fruit Prep.	3.3	4.4	4.5	5.0
Miscellaneous edible preparations	5.5	8.0	6.9	8.6
Beverages, spirits and vinegar	6.7	7.3	6.8	8.0
Feeds	4.8	5.0	6.3	7.5
Total	64.4	83.9	87.3	93.2

Source: *Economic Survey 1997*

2.5.7 Government investment in the sector has increased during the monitoring period from approximately Lm800,000 per annum to a total of Lm2.7 million during the last two years. It has made a significant contribution to the rise in productivity in the sector, as reflected in the Table 29. Most investment has gone into the upgrading of the Abattoir, where improvements have been made to the emergency slaughterhouse, and new diagnostic laboratories have been installed. Another major investment has been in the Chadwick Lakes rehabilitation project, and a micropropagation centre, for which funds through the 4th Italian Protocol have been applied.

Table 29 - Government investment in agriculture (1996-1997)

Details of expenditure	1996	1997
Information Technology - Ministry	0	120000
Marketing facilities	85676	158000
Veterinary services	196000	422000
Research and Development Centre, Ghammieri	199998	45000
Pomology	61062	99000
Fisheries and Aquaculture	46999	77000
Assistance to farmers and fishermen - Subvention	119999	84000
Development of land and water resources	87951	530000
Construction of Chinese garden	18835	150000
Expenditure for Gozo	134887	70000
Grand Total - Agriculture and Fisheries	Lm 951,407	Lm1,755,000

Source: Estimates, 1998

### **Fisheries and Aquaculture**

2.5.8 Due to depletion of natural fish stocks, local catches are decreasing. Total catches decreased from 925,760kg in 1995 to 887,013kg in 1997 (based on landings). Table 30 indicates that fish imports increased from Lm2.3 million in 1994 to Lm2.9 million in 1997, as shown below. During 1996 more fish was imported due to a 28% decrease in fish landings from traditional fishing.

Table 30 - Fish imports (1994-1997)

Year	1994	1995	1996	1997
Fish imports (Lm millions)	2.3	2.6	3.2	2.9

Source: Economic Survey 1997

2.5.9 Fish exports also increased during the monitoring period. Sea bass and sea bream are the main export fish and the principal types of fish produced in aquaculture units. Table 31 clearly shows that Malta's fish exports are heavily dependent on the aquaculture industry.

Table 31 - Fish exports (1995-1997)

Type of fish	1995	1996	1997
	Lm 000	Lm 000	Lm 000
Sea-bream	1021.3	1468.7	1954.2
Sea-bass	135.1	117.3	30.0
Tuna	390.6	303.9	356.7
Swordfish	14.9	14.3	16.8
Dorado	3.0	0.0	0.1
Other	0.0	0.0	3.4
Total	1564.9	1904.2	2361.2

Source: Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

2.5.10 By the end of 1997 the number of local commercial fish farms had reached seven, with a new marine fish hatchery and an additional land-based fattening unit beginning operation during this year.

### **Other measures to encourage agriculture**

#### *Irrigation water supply*

#### **Develop a national system of irrigation water supply (AHF2).**

2.5.11 The principal source of irrigation water, other than ground water pumps in some parts of these islands, is treated sewage effluent. Although the Sant' Antnin Sewage Treatment Plant was re-opened under new management during 1997, technical problems did not allow the plant to begin distributing

irrigation water by the end of 1997. However production capacity was increased from 7000 cubic metres to 17,000 cubic metres by the end of 1997.

#### *Land availability measures*

**The Structure Plan provides for land to be made available on long leases to secure investment in agriculture, including organic farming. It encourages the introduction of measures to encourage the formation of larger farms (AHF13).**

2.5.12 The most serious constraint facing the agriculture industry is land fragmentation. The Department of Agriculture is currently conducting a structural survey with a view to implementing a land consolidation project, aiming to make land holdings more viable. The principal issue here is inheritance laws (part of the Agricultural Leases Act, 1967) with regard to tenancy which allow farmers to subdivide all their property equally between each of their offspring. As the sector modernises, even operations such as livestock farms are suffering the fate of agricultural holdings, and are being divided up between siblings. A change of mentality is being promoted by the Department and farmers are being encouraged to leave their farms to the full-timer/s among their children.

2.5.13 During the monitoring period, the Ministry of Agriculture has supported initiatives in organic farming. A research project has commenced on the production of free-range eggs, integrated pest management, and the preservation of the Maltese breed of goat.

2.5.14 During 1997, a total of 6456 cubic metres of soil and 1009 tonnes of compost were distributed to farmers, compared with 4979 cubic metres of soil and 720 tonnes of compost in 1996.

#### *Rural roads*

**Measures to promote efficiency in the agricultural and fisheries sector will include: establishing access rights for agricultural vehicles; and improving roads and tracks in the countryside, without causing visual intrusion (AHF13).**

2.5.15 One of the main issues here is land fragmentation. As land becomes more fragmented, existing pathways need to be widened into access roads. A farmer who owns many fields in different locations will have to widen roads in order to allow farm vehicles carrying machinery through.

2.5.16 Maintenance and upgrading of rural roads is being undertaken by farmers, with concrete supplied by the Department of Agriculture. During 1996, 91 access roads were levelled and concreted. Since works only involve the maintenance of existing roads, no permit is required. The corollary to this is that for the provision of new roads, permits are required. However, it would be undesirable for a proliferation of tracks to continue unchecked because of the adverse consequences they may have on the countryside. It is important to monitor the trend in this regard as these may raise issues of planning concerns in the future.

## **Agriculture and Fisheries Development Projects**

### **Government**

#### *Developments in Agriculture and Horticulture*

**The Structure Plan promotes the development of packing and grading stations, import/export stations at the Harbours and Luqa, and quarantine stations at suitable entry points to the Islands (AHF10, AHF11, AHF12).**

2.5.17 No large permits for packing and grading stations were approved in the monitoring period. The agriculture department has pointed to the need for increased refrigeration facilities in support of the industry.

2.5.18 Malta's main agricultural depot is at Ta' Qali. It is now considered that promoting import/export stations at the harbour and at Luqa is no longer the priority of the Agriculture and Fisheries Department. Two quarantine stations, at the Grand Harbour and at Luqa, are in existence, although the Luqa station is in need of development.

*Developments in the Fisheries sector*

**The Structure Plan provides for a small fisheries centre in the north and a deep sea port at Marsaxlokk (AHF14). The Plan also calls for the identification of appropriate coastal sites for boat storage (AHF13).**

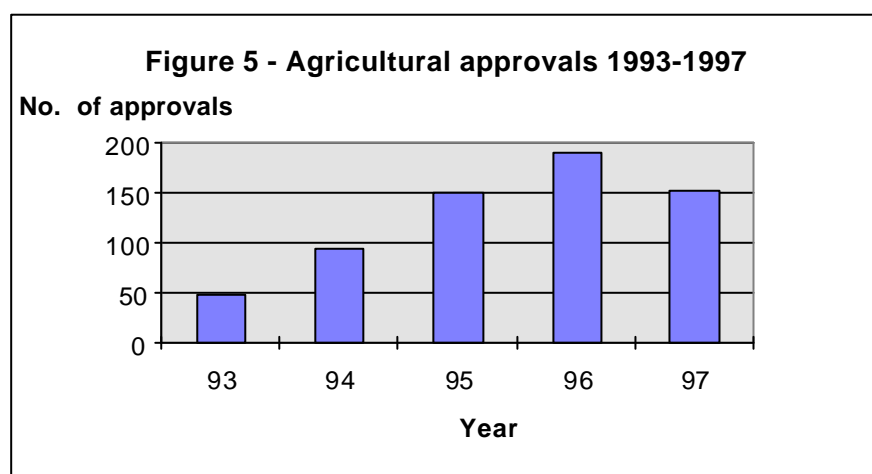
2.5.19 The Agriculture and Fisheries Department considers that although the small fisheries centre in the north and the deep sea fisheries centre at Marsaxlokk have not been implemented, the policies are still relevant. The same is true for the identification of appropriate coastal sites for boat storage.

**Private sector**

*Development essential to the needs of agriculture*

**The Structure Plan permits development in the countryside which is essential to the needs of agriculture (AHF5). Such development must blend into the landscape. A number of conditions are attached to AHF5 to protect the rural environment: where feasible, least good agricultural land will be used; locations must be acceptable in terms of noise, smell and effluent; greenhouses will be promoted but will be hidden from longer distance views; farm gate retail will be accommodated; and the sensitive conversion of disused rural buildings will be permitted (AHF5).**

2.5.20 Table 32 presents agricultural approvals for the period 1996 and 1997, compared with those for 1993 to 1995. The analysis does not include minor works such as alterations to farm houses, and boundary walls unless they specify that they involve the building or restoration of rubble walls. All agricultural permissions are included, both if they are in the countryside or if they are within the development boundary. Approvals are used as a surrogate for completion, as this data is unavailable<sup>17</sup>. The data for 1993-1995 has been refined, and is presented below.



Source: DCIS, PA

2.5.21 Figure 5 above shows that the trend for approvals established in the first structure plan monitoring period (93-95) continued into 1996, and then reversed in 1997. The particularly sharp decrease in approvals registered in 1997 over 1996 could be related to better enforcement of the Planning Authority's rural conservation policies as well as to the number of applications

<sup>17</sup> Note that this assumption has been made throughout the monitoring exercise due to this data limitation.



refused by the PA. Table 32 indicates that the overall pattern of the last two years is reflected for almost all types of agricultural development.

2.5.22 As in the previous monitoring period, the vast majority of agricultural approvals for 1996 and 1997 (138) are for new farm stores. The next most numerous type of investment is in farm houses (46) and then reservoirs (37) and animal husbandry units (37).

Table 32 - Agricultural approvals by development type (1993-1997)

Development Type		Decision year					TOT
Code	Description	93	94	95	96	97	
ACC	Access Roads	1	0	0	1	2	4
BEE	Apiary	0	0	0	1	0	1
AHA	Aquaculture - Hatcheries	0	0	1	0	1	2
ALF	Aquaculture - Land Based Farms	1	0	1	0	2	4
BIR	Bird Room	0	1	0	0	1	2
BH	Boat House	0	1	0	2	2	5
DEM	Demolition of rubble walls	0	0	1	0	0	1
FB	Farm Building	6	6	10	14	9	44
FH	Farm House	5	6	11	25	21	68
FS	Farm Store	16	42	56	78	60	252
FIS	Fisheries	0	1	0	1	0	2
GRH	Greenhouses	2	10	10	18	16	56
HUCT	Husbandry - cattle	3	1	2	2	0	8
HUC	Husbandry - chickens	4	3	14	5	6	32
HUPI	Husbandry - pigs	2	3	6	10	3	24
HUR	Husbandry - rabbits	2	0	4	3	1	10
HUS	Husbandry - sheep	0	0	1	1	1	3
STA	Husbandry - stables	3	2	8	2	2	17
HUTK	Husbandry - turkey	0	0	1	1	0	2
LAR	Land reclamation	1	0	0	1	2	4
MSH	Mushroom farm	0	0	0	1	1	2
PUMP	Pump room	0	3	2	1	4	10
RES	Reservoir	2	15	18	21	16	72
RUB	Rubble wall	0	0	4	1	4	9
Total		48	94	150	189	153	634

Source: DCIS, PA

#### *Livestock units*

**The Structure Plan encourages development essential to the needs of agriculture but stipulates that locations must be acceptable in terms of noise, smell and effluent (AHF5).**

2.5.23 The most popular form of husbandry in this period was chicken farms (32) and pig farms (24). An Agriculture Department quota on the number of chicken farms on the Islands is expected to have been responsible for the drop to only 6 chicken farm approvals in 1997, compared to 14 approvals in 1995. The number of pig farms granted approval also decreased dramatically in 1997 from 10 to 3 approvals.

### *Greenhouses*

**The Structure Plan provides for the development of greenhouses and similar protected cropping structures but states that they will be hidden from longer distance views (AHF5).**

2.5.24 Investment in greenhouses continued with only a very slight drop from 18 to 16 approvals between 1996 and 1997, compared to only 2 approvals in 1993. Table 32 indicates that the rush of stables developments in the earlier years of the decade has now slowed.

2.5.25 Greenhouse applications tend to be for more than one unit, so although there were 34 greenhouses approved in 1996 and 1997, the total number of new units to be developed would be more like 100.

2.5.26 In terms of other types of agricultural development, a slight rise in the number of rubble wall applications could indicate increased awareness of their value, possibly derived from Structure Plan policies such as RCO4 and RCO25. Three approvals were given for new access roads.

### *Aquaculture*

**The Structure Plan encourages marine-based aquaculture, ensuring suitable safeguards in permit conditions (AHF15). Large land-based units are to be limited to industrial estates and former quarries whilst smaller units must conform with AHF5 (AHF16).**

2.5.28 During the monitoring period, approvals were given for one marine hatchery and two land-based farms both of which are situated on the coast (see discussion in section 4.5 Coastal and marine conservation). No large land-based farms were approved in the monitoring period.

## **2.6 Minerals**

2.6.1 The essence of the Structure Plan's policy on minerals may be conveyed by two key broad objectives:

- To meet demand for minerals locally by fully exploiting existing quarries and ensuring that minerals deposits are not sterilised.
- To extend controls on siting, and requirements for the operation and restoration of quarries.

2.6.2 The first set of objectives is addressed by policies relating to the development of a minerals strategy, whilst the second set of objectives is covered by policies regarding the setting up of a minerals board, as well as others relating to development control, restoration and afteruse.

2.6.3 Some progress was achieved on both fronts during the monitoring period 1996 - 1997. The following sections outline in more detail what has been undertaken and what remains to be achieved in future.

### **Planning for the Minerals Sector**

**The Planning Authority will establish a Minerals Board which will provide information on:**

- the potential demand for minerals resources, having regard to regional and national utilisation and possible exports;
- the quantity, quality and distribution of exploitable mineral deposits; and,
- the ability of existing quarries to provide stone, aggregates and marble as required;

**The Minerals Board will also make recommendations to the Planning Authority on industry standards. (MIN3)**

2.6.4 The Minerals Board, established during the previous monitoring period, met five times during the period currently under review and continued to make

technical recommendations to the Planning Authority on applications and reports, as well as various issues arising related to quarries.

2.6.5 Information on the quantity, quality and distribution of exploitable mineral deposits, became available through the Minerals Resources Assessment, (commissioned from Wardell Armstrong by the Planning Authority in 1994). However, no further progress was registered during the monitoring period with regard to the gathering of information on potential national, regional and export demand for mineral resources. Likewise, information on the future potential of existing quarries to provide stone, aggregates and marble as required, has not been compiled by the Minerals Board.

## Minerals Production

2.6.6 The quarrying industry constitutes an important input to the construction industry, which employed 6191 persons in 1997 (almost 16% of total employment). Of these, some 800 are estimated to be employed directly in quarrying.

2.6.7 It is important to note that there is reason to doubt the reliability of production statistics as collected by the Central Office of Statistics, owing to the under-representation of quarry output. (Only approximately one-third of all quarries are captured by the data).

### Softstone

2.6.8 Softstone production continues to be based in central and eastern Malta, with a small number of quarries in Gozo. Table 33 indicates that in 1997 there were a total of 60 quarries, with an overall surface area of some 1.25 Km<sup>2</sup>. The revision registered from the previous monitoring report (where 81 licensed quarries were reported), was mainly due to more accurate figures established after a comprehensive exercise carried out by the Minerals and Waste Team of the Planning Authority.

Table 33 - Status of existing Softstone Quarries in Malta and Gozo, 1997

Status of existing Softstone in Malta and Gozo, 1997	Licensed and Active Quarries		Unlicensed or Suspended Quarries	
	Malta	Gozo	Malta	Gozo
Softstone	51	9	7	/

Source: EMU, PA

2.6.9 With regard to production figures, data for the output of Softstone quarries is not available for this monitoring period. Figures pertaining to previous years indicate that although softstone production tends to fluctuate, it has generally not kept up with the increasing trend in hardstone production in recent years.

### Hardstone

2.6.10 At the end of 1997, there were 30 licensed and active hardstone quarries in Malta and Gozo with an overall surface area of some 1.39Km<sup>2</sup>.

Table 34 - Status of existing Hardstone Quarries in Malta and Gozo, 1997

Status of existing Hardstone in Malta and Gozo, 1997	Licensed and Active Quarries		Unlicensed or Suspended Quarries	
	Malta	Gozo	Malta	Gozo
Hardstone	26	4	3	1

Source: EMU, PA

2.6.11 Reliable estimates of current production of Hardstone are not available. However, judged on the basis of the number of applications for hardstone quarries which have increased over the period under review, it is the Planning Authority's view that the production levels have probably remained static.

## Developing a Minerals Strategy

The Planning Authority will undertake a strategic evaluation of stone, aggregate and marble resources in the Islands, assessing the distribution, quantity and quality of the resources, including the existing licensed reserves and operating quarries (MIN2). Proven and potentially workable mineral resources will be safeguarded from development which would lead to their sterilisation (MIN1). The Planning Authority will seek to provide for the release of land for minerals extraction in order to maintain a reserve of 20 years' extraction, over the islands as a whole (MIN4). The Maltese Islands need to be effectively self sufficient in Minerals Resources, except specialised products such as cement (section 12.8). The Planning Authority will prepare a Minerals Subject Plan (MIN7).

2.6.12 The Minerals Resources Assessment (MRA), commissioned in 1994, was completed in May 1996, and it identified search areas for future extraction based on desk studies, field work and, laboratory work. As a result of the MRA, sites were classified as Level 1 and Level 2. Level 1 areas are those priority areas considered of strategic importance, which should be preserved for development and protected from other conflicting land uses. This level was applied to 9 areas: 6 in Malta and 3 in Gozo. Level 2 areas are those areas where land should be protected from development pending further evaluation and confirmation of viability. This level was applied to 14 areas, 11 in Malta and 3 in Gozo.

2.6.13 An assessment of the quantity and quality of *existing* licensed reserves is now required. This is an important pre-requisite to any minerals strategy. Preliminary work has been undertaken in this regard, namely an exercise which sought to provide a comprehensive list of licensed quarries in Malta and Gozo. It is anticipated that the next step, namely the estimation of reserves within these licensed quarries, will be undertaken as part of the Minerals Subject Plan.

2.6.14 The need to safeguard workable resources from over-exploitation has also been considered during this monitoring period. Areas identified as Level 1 and Level 2 priorities by the Minerals Resources Assessment are being plotted as constraints in the Planning Authority's land-use database, thus facilitating the processing of applications. Furthermore, applications requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment, as well as site-selection exercises for certain major projects are assessed against the likelihood of sterilizing good mineral reserves.

2.6.15 No further work has been carried out to identify new sites for minerals extraction to maintain a reserve of 20 years. The number of quarries currently in operation and the area released, together with new permits granted in the period of review provide some indication of planned land available for minerals extraction. A part of this land area has been exhausted over the years whereas a large part is still being actively quarried and a small part is still intact. It is anticipated that the Planning Authority will be in a position to ascertain the number of years to exhaustion, once the quantity of existing licensed reserves has been determined. Table 35 shows the total number and Area covered by Licensed Quarries in 1997.

Table 35 - Total number and Area covered by Licensed Quarries in 1997

Type	No. of licensed quarries	Total Area m <sup>2</sup>
Softstone	60	1,248,190m <sup>2</sup>
Hardstone	30	1,391,062m <sup>2</sup>

Source: EMU, PA

2.6.16 Work on the preparation of a Minerals Subject Plan has progressed with the preparation of terms of reference and the issue of a call inviting consultants to assist in the preparation of the plan. A firm of minerals consultants has been chosen which is currently awaiting formal approval.

## Development Control in the Minerals Sector

2.6.17 The 1992 Development Planning Act, together with the Structure Plan, aims to strengthen environmental controls over the industry. Under the Structure Plan's interim policies for the minerals sector, existing quarries are required to make an application to the Planning Authority in accordance with the Development Planning Act of 1992 and with Structure Plan policies **MIN8**, **MIN9**, **MIN10** and **MIN11**. The new development control system for the minerals industry offers a number of potential improvements:

- Planning Authority permits are site and area specific (previously, licenses were tied to an owner);
- an Environmental Impact Assessment is required for quarry developments; and
- provision is made for landscaping and restoration of disused quarry sites, to be tied to bank guarantees

### Permits Issued

**Applications for the continued workings of areas covered by an existing permit and the merging of adjacent workings will normally be given preference over the development of new mineral workings, conditional on satisfactory environmental safeguards and reclamation proposals (MIN6, MIN17).**

2.6.18 During 1996, 2 quarry extensions, and 2 new quarries were granted permission (in Malta), whilst during 1997, 2 new quarries (one in Malta and one in Gozo) were granted permission, together with an extension in Gozo as shown in Table 36. All applications which were granted permission during the period 1996-1997, were subject to conditions on methods of working, and landscaping. Progressive landscaping was also introduced in a number of cases.

Table 36 - Applications granted for new quarries or quarry extensions

	Malta		Gozo	
	Softstone	Hardstone	Softstone	Hardstone
1996	1 Qrendi	2 Naxxar 1 Mgarr	-	-
1997	-	1 Naxxar	1 San.Lawrenz (G)	-

Source: EMU, PA

2.6.19 Table 37 shows the number of applications *received* (excluding those withdrawn) during the period included:

Table 37 - Applications received for new quarries or quarry extensions

	Malta		Gozo	
	Softstone	Hardstone	Softstone	Hardstone
1996	1 Siggiewi	-	1 San Lawrenz	
1997	2 Siggiewi	1 Naxxar +1 1 Mgarr 1 Zurrieq 1 San Gwann 1 Zejtun		

### **Restoration and afteruse**

Proposals for mineral extraction will not be determined until proposals for methods of working, landscaping and reclamation have been prepared. Progressive landscaping and reclamation will be preferred. The Planning Authority will require a bank bond to ensure that permit conditions are adhered to, and wherever practical impose conditions requiring the phased extraction and reclamation of a site (MIN12). Developments which reuse quarried areas will be given favourable consideration, subject to satisfactory environmental impacts including the protection of ground water. Priority will be given to other uses which are difficult to locate elsewhere because of their visual or other undesirable impacts (MIN13).

2.6.20 Following the difficulties encountered in the previous monitoring period on the principle of introducing bank bonds to secure restoration of disused quarries, the Planning Authority continued to hold meetings with quarry owners and representatives, and issued Draft terms of reference in June 1996 for a report on the design and implementation of a guarantee scheme. This study was to form part of a report which the Ministry for the Environment had requested through private consultants.

2.6.21 A number of applications were received for the reuse of quarried areas. Of these 2 were granted permission in 1996, whilst one was refused permission (Garages). Table 38 shows that in 1997, a total of 6 quarries were granted permission for development/rehabilitation, whilst 2 were refused (Garages and Dwellings, and Dumping).

Table 38 - Applications granted for development in quarries

Year	No.	Description	Location
1996	1	Quarry Related Development	Nadur (G)
	1	Development in Disused Quarries	Qormi
1997	2	Quarry Related Developments	Mqabba, Gharb (G)
	3	Developments in Disused Quarries	Mosta, Mqabba, Qormi
	1	Rehabilitation of Quarry	Kercem

Source: EMU, PA

2.6.23 A further 19 applications for the use of disused quarries for the recycling and dumping of inert waste were endorsed by the Planning Authority. These applications were forwarded with no objection to the Environment Protection Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Environment for the granting of licenses for Recycling and Dumping of Inert Waste.

### **Positive action to restore disused quarries**

The Planning Authority will establish an inventory of disused quarries, including data on potential afteruse and sources of inert fill material (MIN14). The Planning Authority will prepare a programme for the restoration of disused quarries, allocating priorities and identifying resources and initiatives from the public and private sectors. The Planning Authority will initiate and promote the acquisition, reclamation and afteruse of existing worked out quarries by Government (MIN15).

2.6.24 Data collection on disused quarries is underway. A pilot exercise was carried out in 1997 by the Planning Directorate for the Island of Gozo, identifying and evaluating disused quarries. This exercise resulted in the identification of 12 sites, having a total volume of some 1.2 million m<sup>3</sup> which has the potential for the dumping of inert waste. The granting of licenses for Recycling and Dumping of Inert Waste through the Environment Protection Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Environment, has also resulted in the identification of some disused soft stone quarries for the

purpose of dumping of inert waste (along with some 17 active hard stone quarries for recycling). A comprehensive exercise of identification of disused quarries in Malta is planned to be undertaken by the Planning Authority in 1999. Once this is complete, this will facilitate the acquisition, reclamation and after use of existing worked out quarries. In the interim, the Planning Authority has continued to be involved in discussions with government bodies, as well as private sector individuals to encourage reclamation and reuse of such quarries.

## 2.7 Tourism and Recreation

2.7.1 The tourism sector has continued to be one of the most important economic activities on the Islands, with a number of investments taking off, involving upgrading and extensions to existing tourist accommodation, new tourist accommodation developments, attractions and infrastructural improvements in tourist localities. Tourist arrivals in 1996 decreased by 5% over the 1995 figure and accounted for an annual arrivals of 1,053,788<sup>18</sup>. This downward trend was reversed in 1997 when annual tourist arrivals increased by 5% over the previous year to 1,111,161<sup>19</sup>. Earnings from tourism in 1997 stood at Lm 249.8 million<sup>20</sup>. This represents an increase of 9% over the 1996 figure. Per capita earnings from tourism increased from Lm 217.2 in 1996 to Lm 224.8 in 1997<sup>21</sup>. Government's commitment to improving the tourism product was also manifested in various infrastructure improvements which were undertaken in 1997, particularly in the Bugibba/Qawra area in St. Paul's Bay which included improvement of promenades, re-organizing the sites for the placing of kiosks, road surfacing, provision of car parks and the improvement to the entry junction into Bugibba/Qawra.

2.7.2 During this period a number of hotels were completed, namely the Corinthia San Gorg, the Westin Dragonara, and the Bay Point Radisson, whilst others are still under construction. These added some 1600 beds to the 5-star bed stock, which amounts to an increase of 126% over the 1995 figure from 1274 in 1995 to 2878 in 1997<sup>22</sup>. The number of 5-star hotels has now increased from 5 to 8. Although private sector investment in the development of tourist facilities was primarily concentrated on the development of accommodation establishments, nonetheless, some investment has also been directed towards the development of visitor attractions and facilities e.g. conversion of building in Mtarfa into exploratorium and conversion of a cafeteria into cultural heritage centre.

2.7.3 Recreational developments have increased over the period 1996 - 1997 particularly as a result of the development of public gardens, playgrounds and sports facilities. These were mainly developed by Government for local councils. The private sector has also developed various entertainment facilities, particularly cinema complexes and catering establishments.

### Tourist Accommodation

2.7.4 The Structure Plan's tourism policies largely relate to accommodation. The Plan's overall strategy is to concentrate new tourism accommodation

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<sup>18</sup> Tourism Statistics 97, National Tourism Organisation

<sup>19</sup> (ibid)

<sup>20</sup> (ibid)

<sup>21</sup> (ibid)

<sup>22</sup> (ibid)

within existing built-up areas, wherever possible through the conversion of suitable properties and the development of infill sites, or within the Temporary Provision Schemes and primary development areas. Favoured areas for further development are the established tourist locations in the north and south of mainland Malta and the inner harbour area.

### **Meeting Tourism Accommodation Demands**

**The main Structure Plan objectives for the tourism sector are to contain development within already committed areas, to encourage the upgrade of existing properties and to attract a higher spending tourist rather than a major increase in tourist numbers. Taking into account the tourist arrivals forecast in the Maltese Islands Tourism Development Plan, it was estimated that, by the end of the Plan period (i.e. 1990-2010), some 4,000 net additional tourist beds will be required.**

2.7.5 The changes in the supply of tourist accommodation beds in the various categories of accommodation in the Maltese Islands during the period 1996-1997 is indicated in Table 39. The figures refer to what has been approved by the Hotels and Catering Establishments Board (HCEB) during the years 1996 - 1997 (beds that were licensed during this period). These beds mainly relate to projects which have been approved by the PA before 1996. Nonetheless, the increase in bed supply was reflected in the years 1996 - 1997. Table 39 indicates that during this period a total of 1,335 additional beds were put onto the market, with the greatest percentage increase being in the five star category. A number of three-star beds were removed from the market as a result of the reduction in the number of 3-star hotels from 58 units to 47 units and the reduction of complexes, tourist villages and aparthotels decreased the bed stock in these categories by 841 beds. The number of beds in self-catering/holiday flats sector also decreased by 540.

Table 39 - Change in bed supply during 1996-1997

Accommodation type	No. of establishments	No. of beds as at 1/1/96	No. of establishments	No. of beds as at 31/12/97	Increase/Decrease
Five star	5	1274	8	2878	1604 (126%)
Four star	31	9688	30	10685	997 (10%)
Three star	58	8464	47	8288	-176 (-2%)
Two star	29	2017	28	2406	389 (19%)
One star	11	372	7	343	-29 (-7%)
Tourist villages/ complexes/aparthotels	58	13924	54	13083	-841 (-6%)
Guesthouses/ hostels	68	1569	68	1500	-69 (-4%)
Holiday flats	1980	8040	1862	7500	-540 (-6%)
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>45348</b>		<b>46683</b>	<b>1335 (3%)</b>

Source: HCEB/NTOM

2.7.6 Over the period 1996-1997 the Planning Authority approved the following new tourism accommodation projects:

- A 4-star hotel of 75 rooms (150 beds) in St. Paul's Bay;
- A 4-star hotel of 120 rooms (240 beds) in Gzira replacing a number of holiday flats having 140 beds;
- A guest house for diving clientele in Xlendi of 36 beds.

2.7.7 Therefore, a net total increase of 286 new beds were approved during this period.



2.7.8 The following extensions to existing accommodation developments were approved during the monitoring period:

- A 3-star hotel in Sliema - 30 bed extension;
- An extension of 204 beds to a first class tourist village in St. Paul's Bay;
- Redevelopment of a previously 1 star hotel in Mdina to a 30 bed hotel;
- An extension of 40 beds to a 3 star hotel in Sliema;
- An extension of 20 beds to a 4 star hotel in Xaghra, Gozo;
- Redevelopment of a 2 star hotel in St. Paul's Bay including an increase of 7 rooms to 30 rooms and upgrading of facilities;
- Extension to an aparthotel (no increase in beds) in St. Paul's Bay;
- An addition of a presidential suite (4 beds) and other facilities to existing 4-star hotel in St. Julians;
- An extension of 18 beds to a third class holiday complex in St. Paul's Bay;
- An extension to facilities, no increase in beds, to hotel currently under construction in St. Paul's Bay;
- Reactivation of a 10-bed guesthouse in Xaghra, Gozo.

2.7.9 A total of 370 additional beds were, therefore, approved in the form of extensions to existing premises.

2.7.10 In addition to the above, the following conversions from residential or holiday flats to hotel establishments have been approved:

- Change from residential to hotel rooms as extension to existing hotel in Sliema with the addition of 24 beds.
- Change of use from holiday flats to hotel accommodation retaining the existing 36 beds, in M'Scala.

2.7.11 The above conversions will add 24 beds to the existing bed stock.

2.7.12 It should be apparent from the above that tourism development approved during the monitoring period has been in line with Structure Plan policy since development was limited, mostly, to the committed tourist areas and encouraged an upgrading of the existing tourist accommodation development. However, the Structure Plan had envisaged that 4000 net additional tourist beds would be required during the plan period (i.e. 1990-2010). In the first monitoring report it was stated that this target was already exceeded by 1995. With the approval of an additional 680 tourism beds during the 1996-1997 monitoring period, the trend towards over-provision has continued, running contrary to the provisions of section 13.5 of the Plan. The Ministry of Tourism on the other hand has stated that in terms of quality there is no over provision of beds since a substantial number (a figure of 15,000 was mentioned) were not up to the required standard. HCEB policy placed a restriction on the provision of new tourist accommodation beds between 1993 - 1996. This restriction was removed in early 1997 and the HCEB is once again considering new developments in the tourist accommodation sector. Nevertheless, the number of new projects approved has shown a decrease during this monitoring period, when compared to the previous three years. During the period 1993 - 1995, nine new tourist accommodation projects were approved against three during the period 1996 - 1997. This, however, does not mean that applications for such a development were not being filed. There are still applications under review and others which have been refused, primarily because they did not comply either to Structure Plan policies or were deemed by the HCEB to be not in line with their policies. Six projects in 1996 and five projects in 1997 were refused primarily on grounds of exceeding height

limitations for the area, being outside the development zone boundary or because they were in areas of ecological importance. Table 40 compares projects refused or approved for the years 1996 and 1997.

Locality	Approved in 1996	Refused in 1996	Approved in 1997	Refused in 1997
Sliema	2		1	
St. Julian's	1			
St. Paul's Bay	3	3	3	2
Marsascala		1	1	
Gzira			1	
Xlendi		1	1	1
Mdina			1	
Xaghra	1	1	1	
Mellieha				1
Kappara				1
TOTAL	7	6	9	5

Source: *Strategic Planning Unit, PA*

2.7.13 Tourism projects developed in 1996 added 15,939m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace, whilst 46,856m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace was added in 1997. The total floorspace approved in the previous three years (1993-1995) was of 15,808m<sup>2</sup> in 1993, 18,941m<sup>2</sup> in 1994 and 410,235m<sup>2</sup> in 1995. The latter figure includes the entire Hilton development site, so it does not really give an accurate indication of the tourism floorspace for that year.

### **Locating Tourism Accommodation Developments**

**The Structure Plan strategy is to locate tourist accommodation within existing built up areas, by extension and conversion of suitable buildings and the development of infill sites, or in areas to be developed; namely the Temporary Provision Schemes and the primary development areas. The aim is to limit the sprawl of tourism development outside committed built up areas. Policy TOU4 identifies the following localities for further tourism development: Sliema; Mellieha; St. Paul's Bay/Bugibba; St. Julian's/Paceville; Marsascala; Marsaxlokk and Birzebbuga; and Marsalforn, Xlendi and Mgarr in Gozo.**

2.7.14 With the exception of the approval in Gzira (for 240 beds), all new tourism accommodation developments were approved in areas indicated in policy TOU4. However, the Gzira project redeveloped and upgraded a building which was previously used as holiday apartments consisting of 140 beds.

Table 41 - Number of beds approved in the various localities and net additions to bedstock during 1996 and 1997

Locality	New projects	Extensions/ Conversions	No of beds approved	Net additions to total bedstock
Sliema		3	94	94
St. Julians		1	4	4
St. Paul's Bay	1	3	432	386
Marsascalea		1	36	
Gzira	1		240	100
Xlendi	1		36	36
Mdina		1	30	30
Xaghra		2	30	30
TOTAL	3	11	902	680

Source: *Strategic Planning Unit, PA*

2.7.15 In general the extensions were approved in localities allocated for tourism development as identified in policy TOU4, with the exception of the extensions in Xaghra and the redevelopment at Mdina. The latter development entailed the refurbishment of what was previously a hotel and is in line with Structure Plan policy TOU9 which encourages conversion and rehabilitation of existing buildings in Urban Conservation Areas (UCAs). The Xaghra approvals consisted of an extension to an existing hotel whilst the other was for the reactivation of a previous guesthouse.

2.7.16 All new projects which were granted approval were within scheme boundaries. However, the extension to the Cornucopia hotel at Xaghra was partly outside development zone. Most of the extensions included improvement of facilities, particularly parking facilities and recreational facilities. Most of the approved developments did not take up any new vacant land but made use of existing properties.

2.7.17 The provision of tourist accommodation has also been indicated as an acceptable use in two of the Development Briefs prepared during the monitoring period. The Fort Ricasoli Development Brief, which was approved in 1997, indicated that the development of the Fort, at Kalkara, into a theme park could have an element of tourist accommodation. The Cottonera Waterfront Development Brief also allowed for the possibility of a limited level of tourist accommodation as part of the overall project. However, the areas covered by these development briefs lie primarily within the existing built up areas, with the exception of Fort Ricasoli. However, with regard to the permitted uses in Fort Ricasoli, as stated in the Development Brief, the tourist accommodation element will allow for the re-use of vacant derelict buildings.

### ***Tourism Accommodation Development in UCAs***

The Structure Plan seeks to encourage higher spending tourists to visit the Islands (para 13.2). In this respect, the potential of Urban Conservation Areas is recognised in attracting those tourists seeking a high quality urban environment (para. 13.8). Such developments would be encouraged in the form of projects involving the conversion, extension and refurbishment of existing buildings and facilities, as long as such development does not infringe policies UCO6, UCO7 and UCO8 (TOU9).

2.7.18 The refurbishment of the Xara Palace at Mdina and the extension of 40 beds to a 3-star hotel in Sliema were the only developments of this nature.

The former project has upgraded a previously run down hotel and renovated the premises into a quality property offering high standard accommodation facilities within a historical environment.

2.7.19 As stated above, the Cottonera Waterfront Development Brief allocated areas for the provision of tourist accommodation facilities within Urban Conservation Areas. Very little opportunities have been taken up to provide tourist accommodation within Urban Conservation Areas. The reasons for this can only be speculated and may relate to constraints imposed on developments within UCAs. Although one must not jeopardise the character of such areas, rehabilitation in these areas can only be encouraged by providing appropriate incentives by government, particularly in the form of fiscal and monetary incentives.

### ***Preparation of Development Briefs***

**The Structure Plan identifies the need to produce a number of Development Briefs for specific localities.**

2.7.20 During the 1996-97 two year period, the Planning Authority prepared and approved various Briefs which allocated land for tourism and recreational use. These include the following:

- Fort St. Elmo, which was identified for commercial and leisure uses;
- Fort Ricasoli which was to house a theme park;
- The Cottonera Waterfront which would include a mixed development of commercial, leisure, tourism and marine related facilities namely a yacht marina;
- A site at Zonqor Point for the development of a Marine Aquarium;
- Various sites indicated as having the potential for yacht marinas namely Dockyard Creek and Xemxija;
- Ta' Qali Action Plan and Pembroke Action Strategy.

2.7.21 The Fort St. Elmo Development brief allocates 30744m<sup>2</sup> for touristic/recreational related uses. The Cottonera Waterfront Development Brief allocates approximately 37,000m<sup>2</sup> of the site area for recreational and tourism related uses. This excludes the marine side of the project which is to be developed into a yacht marina. Fort Ricasoli Development Brief will be totally dedicated for tourism and recreational uses allocating a total area of 150,000m<sup>2</sup>. The Development Brief for the Marine Aquarium at Zonqor Point allocated around 25,000m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace for the attraction and ancillary facilities including research facilities. The Pembroke Action Plan also provides for a number of additional recreation areas and a number of cycle ways/footpaths.

### ***Manoel Island and Tigne Point and Ta' Cenc development projects***

2.7.22 Manoel Island/Marsamxett Harbour shall be an International Yachting Centre and the development will include a number of facilities as well as the refurbishment of Fort Manoel. Ta' Cenc will be further studied as Malta's first national park together with a multi ownership tourism hotel development.

2.7.23 During the monitoring period some progress has been made on these two projects. With regard to the Manoel Island/Tigne Point development, negotiations resumed between Government and the consortium and development proposals and designs were discussed with the Planning Authority. A public exhibition was also organised by the consortium.

2.7.24 With regard to the Ta' Cenc project, the Planning Authority had assessed the first draft of the Heritage Park Management Plan submitted by the developer's consultants and comments on the plan were passed on to the consultants for inclusion. A second draft had not been submitted during the monitoring report.

### ***Subject Studies for Golf Courses, Yachting and Diving***

**The Structure Plan identifies the need to produce a number of Subject studies for particular topic areas, namely Golf Courses (TOU12), Yachting (TOU13) and Diving (TOU14).**

2.7.25 The Yachting Development Subject Study which was commissioned in conjunction with the Malta Maritime Authority was completed and approved in 1997. A summary document was also produced for public consultation which was held in July 1997. Only one submission was received from the Birgu Local Council and the document was subsequently approved. The development of the Cottonera Waterfront project is a result of the recommendations made in this subject study.

2.7.26 With regard to the Golf Subject Study, the First Stage report was completed in 1997. However, in view of the Government's decision to consider golf course development projects, a policy paper was produced by the Planning Authority in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment Protection Department. This policy paper was the basis for the call for registrations of interest from prospective developers with regard to golf course development. These registrations of interest were assessed by the Golf Course Development Steering Committee and a report was presented to the Ministers of Tourism and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Environment, in the outgoing Administration, for onward submission to Cabinet. No official decision has been received as yet.

2.7.27 The Diving Subject Study has not yet been carried out and it is currently envisaged that this sector may be covered in conjunction with other subject studies, namely Tourism and Recreation and the Coastal Zone Management Plan Subject Studies.

## **Heritage and The Countryside**

### ***Identifying Heritage Trails, Country Parkways and Footpaths***

**The identification of heritage trails and country parkways is stressed in the Structure Plan as a means to enhance the heritage product (both historical and natural) of the Maltese Islands for recreational and tourism purposes (TOU11, REC13 and REC14).**

2.7.28 Further work has been carried out with regard to the identification of heritage trails, etc. as part of the preparation of the Draft North West and Grand Harbour Local Plans (see also section 4.3.2 on rural conservation). However, there was no implementation of any of the trails proposed in the Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan which was approved in the previous monitoring period.

2.7.29 The Grand Harbour Local Plan, which has subsequently been approved by the Planning Authority in 1998 and has been forwarded to Government, proposes the following routes and trails:

- A comprehensive network of pedestrian routes and heritage trails will be developed in Valletta linking shopping areas, places of historical interest, viewpoints and other facilities;

- In Floriana a heritage trail will be established, following the main lines of fortifications and other important buildings;
- In Kordin, a route for pedestrians, based on public access footpaths and viewpoints, will be identified and safeguarded;
- In Cospicua, the introduction of an historic trail around and within the bastions to link points of tourism interest will be encouraged, and a promenade walk along the waterfront periphery of Cospicua will be introduced;
- In Vittoriosa, the introduction of an historic trail around and within the bastions to link points of tourism interest will be encouraged, and a promenade walk along the waterfront periphery of Vittoriosa will be introduced;
- A public footpath around the shoreline and including Rinella Bay, Fort Ricasoli and Wied Ghammieq in Kalkara will be laid out.

### **Management Schemes**

**The Structure Plan urges Government to prepare and implement management schemes for publicly owned open spaces and water areas (REC3).**

2.7.30 The only Management Scheme prepared and implemented was the one for the Ghajn Tuffieha area and this was done by the Gaia Foundation. More information on the nature and extent of this project is given in 4.3.23. The preparation of a management plan for the Ta' Cenc Heritage Park by the developer's consultants has reached an advanced stage and still needs to be finalised to incorporate comments given by the Planning Authority. However, since work commenced on the preparation of the Heritage Park Management Plan, the developer has changed and the plan has not been finalised as yet.. This plan covers a total of 156 hectares (1,560,000m<sup>2</sup>). Another management plan still in preparation is the one for Dwejra in Gozo, commissioned by the Planning Authority (see also discussions under section 4.3.2 on rural conservation).

2.7.31 In addition to the above, three areas have been designated by the National Country Parks' Steering Committee as country parks. These areas are in Burmarrad, Delimara and Ta' Qali. The Burmarrad Country Park proposal, which covers a total area of 269 ha, has a water theme, and works have to date concentrated on the Kennedy Grove area. The Country Park site has already been scheduled with areas designated as Level 1 to Level 4<sup>23</sup> Areas of Ecological Importance (AEIs). Other areas have been scheduled as Grade 1<sup>24</sup> buildings, due to their architectural, historical or cultural importance. By the end of 1997, discussions between the Planning Authority and the Ministry of Public Works and Construction had reached an advanced stage and it culminated in the preparation of a Terms of Reference for a project description statement. The second country park at Delimara will cover a total area of 152Ha and work progressed during 1997 towards a pilot project which envisaged the preparation of a management plan by the Planning Authority for the disturbed site recently vacated by the Deutsche Welle transmitting station.

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<sup>23</sup> Areas of Ecological Important (AEIs) and Sites of Scientific Importance (SSIs) designated as **Level 1** include important habitat types present only in small areas and/or sites with unique species or features. **Level 2** areas include important habitat types present in relatively large areas and/or sites with rare species or features. **Level 3** areas include areas (buffer zones) where control is necessary to preserve habitats/species/features in adjacent sites and **Level 4** areas include habitats and/or features of general interest.

<sup>24</sup> Grade 1 buildings are of outstanding architectural or historical interest and should be preserved in their entirety.

However, because of budgetary constraints work on the management plan was discontinued.

2.7.32 In May 1997 the Ta' Qali Action Plan was approved. This includes detailed plans for the National Recreation Centre at Ta' Qali in accordance with Structure Plan policy REC7. The Centre is to include: an open theatre; formal and informal gardens and woods; the National Football Ground; an Aviation and other museums; animal sanctuaries; and, facilities for community organisations.

2.7.33 The Ministry for Agriculture has also started work on the embellishment of the Chadwick Lakes - Wied il-Qlejgha valley. The works envisaged will cover an area of around 40,000 m<sup>2</sup>. Assistance was provided by the Italian Military Mission in Malta. The main thrust of the project was to clean and rehabilitate the valley while extending its water catchment area. No management plan has yet been drafted for the site.

## Recreation

2.7.34 Recreational activity includes all sporting activities, both land and sea based, as well as a range of informal leisure activities such as country walks, picnics, and other entertainment. The Structure Plan emphasises the need to provide adequate recreational facilities in a coordinated manner, reconciling the various competing interests, with the participation of both private and public sectors.

### *Provision of Recreational facilities*

**The Structure Plan encourages private sector investment in the provision of recreation facilities (REC2).**

2.7.35 Table 42 indicates, the recreation projects approved by the Planning Authority during the monitoring period in terms of the number and amount of floorspace in the various types of recreational projects.

Table 42 - Recreation projects approved between 1996-1997 (in m <sup>2</sup> )				
Type of Recreational Development	Projects	1996	1997	Total in m <sup>2</sup>
Development of attractions	3	3282	1543	4,825
Development of catering facilities	105	4489	4375	8,864
Improvements to recreational infrastructure	13	5084	983	6,067
Development of public gardens/playgrounds	18	63122	9162	72284
Entertainment/cultural facilities	5	10779	11564	22,343
Sports facilities	22	17210	4276	21,486

Source: *Strategic Planning Unit, PA*

2.7.36 A total of over 63,585m<sup>2</sup> floorspace received approval for various recreational uses (sports facilities, attractions, catering facilities, entertainment/cultural facilities and recreation infrastructure) and an additional 72,284 m<sup>2</sup> floorspace as playgrounds and public gardens. Most of these areas are expected to be developed by the public sector. Private sector investment was related to the provision of catering and entertainment facilities which consisted primarily in the development of restaurants, bars and cinemas. A former military building in Mtarfa, Rabat was converted into a children's exploratorium housing a number of facilities namely an Activities Hall,

Exhibition Hall, Theatre and a Cafeteria. The works also provided for facilities for the disabled. Table 43 gives a breakdown of the recreational development projects approved by the Planning Authority by locality.

Table 43 - Recreation projects approved between 1996-1997 by locality							
Locality	attractions	catering facilities	recreational infrastructure	public gardens & playground	entertainment cultural facilities	sports facilities	Totals
Valletta	2	5			1	2	10
St. Paul's Bay		14	1		1	1	17
Qormi		3				2	5
M'Xlokk		4	1			1	6
Gozo		18	2	3		2	25
Senglea		2	1	1			4
Zurrieq		1					1
St. Julian's		9					9
Mosta		1				1	2
Sta. Venera		2				1	3
Zabbar		4		1			5
Rabat	1	7	1			2	11
Zejtun		6					6
Paola		4				1	5
San Gwann		4		1			5
Gzira		1					1
B'Bugia		2					2
Zebbug		2	1				3
M'Scala		2	2				4
Hamrun		5			1		6
Naxxar		3		2		1	6
Pieta		1					1
Tarxien		1					1
Mqabba		1					1
Msida		1				1	2
Ghaxaq		1					1
Safi		1					1
B'Kara		1	1				2
Fgura				1	1		2
Cospicua			1		1	1	3
Mellieha			1	1		1	3
Sta. Lucija				2			2
Mgarr				1			1
Floriana				1		1	2
Ibragg				1			1
Siggiewi				1		2	3
Sliema			1			1	2
Marsa						1	1
Gudja				1			1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>166</b>

Source: Strategic Planning Unit, PA



## Sports

### *Providing Sports facilities*

The Structure Plan stressed the need to provide international standard sports facilities, partly because of the forthcoming Small Nations Games in Malta in 1993. Ta' Qali, Marsa Park, Pembroke, Marsascalea and Victoria (Gozo) are identified for the provision of international standard sports facilities (REC5, REC7). Sports facilities at district level will also be identified in the local plans.

2.7.37 The Draft Ta' Qali Action plan provides for the provision of new and maintenance of the existing sports and recreational facilities at Ta' Qali. The provision of sports facilities, during the monitoring period, were mainly related to small improvements to existing premises and consisted of gymnasiums, a leisure centre, swimming pools and upgrading to existing facilities particularly football pitches. In addition to these, one development by a philanthropic organisation (Razzett tal-Hbiberija) was approved for the construction of improved facilities for the disabled. The improvements at the Razzett tal-Hbiberija included an indoor pool, a multi-purpose hall, a basketball court and a playground.

2.7.38 The Draft North West Local Plan and the Grand Harbour Local Plan identified areas for the provision of new or upgrading of existing sports facilities. These include:

- The sports facilities in the Xaghra area in Floriana will be improved.
- Equestrian related sports will be supported in the area close to the Horse Racing Track at Marsa.
- At Kordin an area between the Malta Drydocks and Kordin industrial area has been designated for the provision of sports facilities.
- In Senglea a former cinema has been designated for use as a sports facility whilst other areas within Senglea have been identified for sports and recreation provision.
- The area between the Margherita and Cottonera lines and San Klement Bastions in the Cospicua area has been allocated for sports and recreation provision.
- The development of a yacht marina along the Cottonera Waterfront.

## Coastal Areas

### *Camping sites in coastal areas*

The Structure Plan designates sites at White Rocks and Marfa for overnight accommodation in the form of caravans and tents (REC11).

2.7.39 In view of the increasing demand for camping facilities (5% of respondents in the Tourism and Recreation Community Survey indicated that they own a tent and 13% indicated that they make use of a tent, boathouse or caravan during their holiday) and to provide current users with appropriate facilities the Planning Authority has formulated a policy paper with regard to the development of camping and caravan sites. This policy paper provides guidelines for interested developers to present their proposals to Government following a call for registrations of interest. Following the call for registrations of interest, in 1998, a site has been designated for such purposes at Mellieha and a development application has been submitted and is under consideration.

## 2.8

## Transport

2.8.1 The Structure Plan presents a general transport strategy with five main elements (14.1):

- improved coordination of land use and transport;
- improvement of roads and the development of a road hierarchy;
- effective management of the road system and the traffic using it;
- improvement of public transport; and
- legal and educational measures to improve road transport.

This section reviews progress in these areas over the period 1996-97.

### Coordination of Transport Planning

**The Structure Plan calls for the establishment of a Transport Coordinating Committee, responsible for the integration of land-use and transport planning, roads planning and design, public transport and traffic regulations (TRA1).**

2.8.2 Although the Transport Coordinating Committee has not been set up, discussions are in progress which will lead to the eventual setting-up of a Transport Authority which will incorporate the current organisations involved in transport mainly: Public Transport Authority, Traffic Control Board, Roads Department, Licensing and Testing Department as well as other entities. The Planning Authority is represented on the board which is formulating the detailed proposals. It is envisaged that the Transport Authority (once up and running) will be in a better position to assist in securing a better integration between land use and transport planning.

### *Development and Maintenance of a Hierarchical Network of Roads*

**The Structure Plan (RDS1-RDS11) aims to ensure that the existing road network is gradually upgraded to form a hierarchy of improved roads comprising:**

1. Arterial roads;
2. Distributor roads;
3. Local access roads; and
4. Access only and pedestrian streets.

**The Plan lists new links and major improvements required on the arterial network, as well as a programme for junction improvements. The policies regarding upgrading projects are classified as; High (0-5 years), Medium (5-10 years) or Low (10-20 years) priority (RDS 4). The projects outlined in the High Priority section, due for completion by 1997 include:**

- a) Marsa to Msida link (Tal-Qroqq to Aldo Moro Road);
- b) Regional Road to St. Andrews upgrade (Entrance to Paceville, Swieqi, Pembroke, and St. George's Bay); and
- c) South East Sector upgrading of arterial and distributor networks.

2.8.3 High Priority projects should have been finished by 1997. However, works are still in progress on some of them and thus the aims of the Structure Plan have not yet been reached. Added to this is the fact that some Medium and Low priority projects were given precedence. The position with regard to the High Priority projects listed under a) to c) above is as follows:

Project a) Work to construct the Tal-Qroqq section which overlaps with medium priority projects, has been completed. The Marsa to Msida link (Tal-Qroqq to Aldo Moro Road) still needs to be developed to include a new junction. This will include the realignment of the bridge across Valley Road in Msida, the upgrading of Cross Roads junction in Marsa and other upgrading works to two junctions in between.

Project b) A tunnel which has been planned for Pembroke and which includes realignment of the arterial road has been suspended pending studies by Government on Pembroke, which are still in progress.

Project c) Other projects which have been carried out regarding the upgrading of the arterial and distribution network, include works in the south east. Works near the Addolorata Cemetery have been concluded. This involved the installation of traffic control measures (traffic lights), removal of a roundabout and road upgrading. This work has been carried out pending funds for the complete restructuring of the roads in the vicinity.

2.8.4 Other capital projects which have been initiated or completed by the Roads Department during the period under review but do not fall under the priority listed above, include:

Access roads re new development at Pembroke.<sup>25</sup>

Rehabilitation of St. Joseph High Road, Sta. Venera<sup>26</sup>

Proposed traffic improvements and installation of traffic lights at Tal-Barrani road intersection with Gudja road; Tarxien road and to Bulebel Industrial Estate.<sup>27</sup>

Temporary junction at the Regional Road/Paceville junction section, which is linked to the Hilton and Dragonara developments. <sup>28</sup>

Source: DCIS, PA

2.8.5 Additional road improvement projects which are in the pipeline include:

- Outline permit for a flyover at the Old Gas Tank area, San Gwann which is expected to provide an improved link between Regional Road and Manoel Island link road.
- Grade separated junction at the Regional Road/Paceville junction section, which is linked to the Hilton and Dragonara developments

#### ***Design and construction of new and improved roads***

**The Structure Plan calls for agreed standards for road design and construction which are consistent with appropriate best practice in Europe (RDS3).**

2.8.6 No established standards for road design have been introduced in the period under review. The Roads Department is currently being assisted by a group of German consultants to progress work on the formulation of these standards.

#### ***Compensation and remedial measures***

**The Structure Plan proposes payment of compensation to property owners affected by road network improvements and calls for remedial measures where property suffers from associated noise, visual intrusion, severance, and atmospheric pollution (RDS6).**

2.8.7 The implementation of remedial measures is still problematic. As yet no one has made any claim to this effect.

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<sup>25</sup> Project initiated.

<sup>26</sup> Project initiated.

<sup>27</sup> Completed project.

<sup>28</sup> Completed project.

### ***Infrastructure Contributions by Private Developers***

**The Structure Plan introduced the requirement for developers to fund the necessary remedial highway works to accommodate approved projects (TRA3).**

2.8.8 In line with this policy, impact payments are collected where major projects are likely to place a significant additional loading on off-site infrastructure. During the review period, the developers for the Manoel Island project agreed to contribute towards the cost of upgrading the arterial road junction in the vicinity. They are expected to construct the Kappara (Gas Tanks) Junction and link Road to Manoel Island.

### ***Road Maintenance***

2.8.9 Reference was made in the last Monitoring Report to the fact that Government spending on roads is now concentrated on the upgrading of the major arteries whilst local councils are being provided with funds to improve the other types of roads (primarily local and rural roads). Capital expenditure by the Government on roads in 1996 was Lm6 million and Lm5 million in 1997 respectively<sup>29</sup>. Local Council expenditure on road maintenance (mainly resurfacing) in 1996/97 amounted to Lm1.4 million under the category of special funding<sup>30</sup>.

2.8.10 Other relevant policies have once again achieved little or no results, to date. As regards the establishment of common service ducts (RDS10), nothing has been achieved. In the case of Valletta, services were not passed in ducts but have been buried. This situation runs contrary to RDS10 and in effect will lead to the breaking up of the new paving in Valletta.

## **Traffic and Environmental Management**

2.8.11 The Structure Plan identifies a need for improved management of the road network, to complement road construction and improvement projects. An appropriate balance is required between the needs of traffic, pedestrians and the environment (14.10).

### ***Pedestrian Priority and Traffic Calming Projects***

**The Structure Plan provides for the introduction of traffic calming measures and limited access/pedestrianised streets, as well as pedestrian priority and access only restrictions in Urban Conservation Areas, shopping areas, and other areas suffering from the environmental impact of traffic (TEM9, RDS7, 14.8).**

2.8.12 Some local councils have continued to introduce initiatives during the year regarding pedestrian priority and traffic calming schemes. However, they are falling behind in providing minimum footway widths. The absence of the provision of this facility goes against the Traffic Calming Guidelines issued by the Planning Authority.

### ***Pedestrian Priority***

2.8.13 A number of pedestrian priority areas are now planned (or implemented) as described below.

- Parts of Bugibba have been designated as a pedestrian priority area. This was introduced as part of the works carried out in 1997 by the Bugibba Action Committee. The central piazza was given a pedestrian priority status and plans are being initiated to extend the area to other streets.
- As part of Local Plan preparation, other pedestrian priority areas are being considered for several other areas. The NHLP proposes to introduce pedestrian areas in Sliema and in St. Julians.

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<sup>29</sup> Estimates 1998, Ministry of Finance and Commerce, Malta.

<sup>30</sup> Hlasijiet ghal Htigijiet Speċjali tal-Lokalitajiet 1996/97, Rapport tal-Kumitat, Local Councils Department.

- The Draft Grand Harbour Local Plan<sup>31</sup> outlines pedestrian priority areas with the inclusion of Time Pedestrian Zones where vehicles would be allowed in the areas during certain hours. For example vehicles would not be allowed entry in the central part of Valletta during certain defined hours.
- The Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan proposed a pedestrian priority area at the Piazza in front of the Parish Church and the lower part of Triq iz-Zejtun (up to Triq San Guzepp) to be effective only on Sundays (MM10). The Marsaxlokk local council has started implementing this aspect of the Plan and is currently reducing road width and increasing pedestrian footway width.

2.8.14 Other initiatives by local councils to develop small-scale pedestrianisation zones are being steered with the approval and cooperation of the Planning Authority. For example proposals for pedestrianisation by the Zebbug, Siggiewi and Mellieha councils have been positively received both by council members and residents, however the councils need funds for their implementation.

2.8.15 Local Councils are still identifying areas which need improved pedestrian facilities. Requests are presented to the Traffic Control Board for consideration while the Planning Authority's expert advice is sought in the preparation of the traffic management schemes for the areas.

### **Traffic Calming Schemes**

**The design of traffic management measures will conform to agreed standards for road design and construction (TEM1).**

2.8.16 During the period 1996-97 nothing new happened in this area. The Planning Authority is currently updating the traffic calming guidelines published in April 1995. Feedback from local councils has shown that they are willing to work according to these guidelines.

### **Congestion at Junctions**

**At junctions where congestion occurs now or is expected to occur in the future, layouts will be reviewed, clear priorities will be established, and traffic signals or other junction improvements will be introduced (TEM2).**

2.8.17 Little has been done on new improvements to junctions during the period under review. In the case of the junction near the Addolorata Cemetery, the installation of traffic lights has eased the congestion problem there, however, it is deemed to be a temporary measure. One has to note that congestion at Kappara Regional Road roundabout during peak hours also has been temporarily eased by allowing traffic to pass straight through the roundabout.

### **Footways & Crossing Facilities**

**In conjunction with TEM9 and RDS7, the Structure Plan outlined the need for the improvement of footways and their maintenance (RDS9). It also stated that designs will be adopted for the provision of different types of pedestrian crossings and that appropriate types will be provided (TEM5).**

2.8.18 Though local councils are responsible for the maintenance of footways, little action appears to have been taken during the period both in terms of quality and number of pavements improved.

2.8.19 Some improvements, however have been made during the monitoring period with regards to design of zebra-crossings and pelican crossings. The Traffic Control Board is stressing the fact that no new zebra-crossing should be installed before councils upgrade all their existing zebra-crossings.

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<sup>31</sup> Draft Grand Harbour Local Plan, Public Consultation Draft - June 1997, Policies GV08, GV09, GV10.

### ***Accident locations***

**Accident locations will be identified and accident remedial measures will be developed and implemented (TEM6).**

2.8.20 Accident statistics are still deficient. However, police reports are now being digitally stored. A new software system which is planned for the future is expected to improve the system further. Development of the software will be the responsibility of the new Transport Authority.

### ***Parking Provision***

**The Structure Plan calls for comprehensive studies of parking supply and demand and proposes a parking policy embodying a proper mix of on and off street, public and private parking space (TEM3).**

2.8.21 During 1996-97 no new studies on parking supply and demand have been commissioned.

2.8.22 Considerable progress has been made however, in enforcement of parking regulations, as an effective traffic management strategy. Parking restrictions are being enforced through a variety of measures. The main deterrent is the parking ticket, particularly since the associated fine has been increased. As far as other measures are concerned, effective methods such as wheel clamping, towing etc. have been implemented and there appears to be an increased awareness for the need to observe traffic rules.

### ***Parking Standards***

**The Structure Plan Explanatory Memorandum establishes interim parking standards for new developments, to be applied in the context of the Structure Plan's broader vehicle parking principles (TRA4).**

2.8.23 Many project designs are still not adhering to recognized design standards in their layout of parking areas. Some layouts provided very little parking space or in inadequately sized spaces, which did not allow for a reasonable level of circulation.

2.8.24 The Transport Planning Unit is reviewing parking standards for local-level facilities in residential areas. To this effect an amendment to TRA4 was introduced in December 1997 by the Planning Authority regarding "Local Uses". These uses are not required to provide parking or pay for it. Thus a development (for example a grocer or a pharmacy) which is intended to serve local users' needs is not required to provide parking.

### ***Speed Limits***

**Speed limits will be reviewed, rationalized, and clearly signed (TEM8).**

2.8.25 Signing has been implemented by the Traffic Control Board through the services of a Cooperative specialised in the area. However, as far as speed limits are concerned, the accurate designation of limits still needs improvement. An example of incorrect limit is found at the new Tal-Qroqq tunnel where the limit of 40km/hr is too slow for the area and may need changing.

### ***Commuted Parking Payments***

**The Structure Plan introduced the concept of commuted payments to provide off-site facilities which would normally be provided on site. This approach is intended to achieve public provision of shared facilities where on-site provision is considered inappropriate; for example, within urban conservation areas (17.8, p117).**

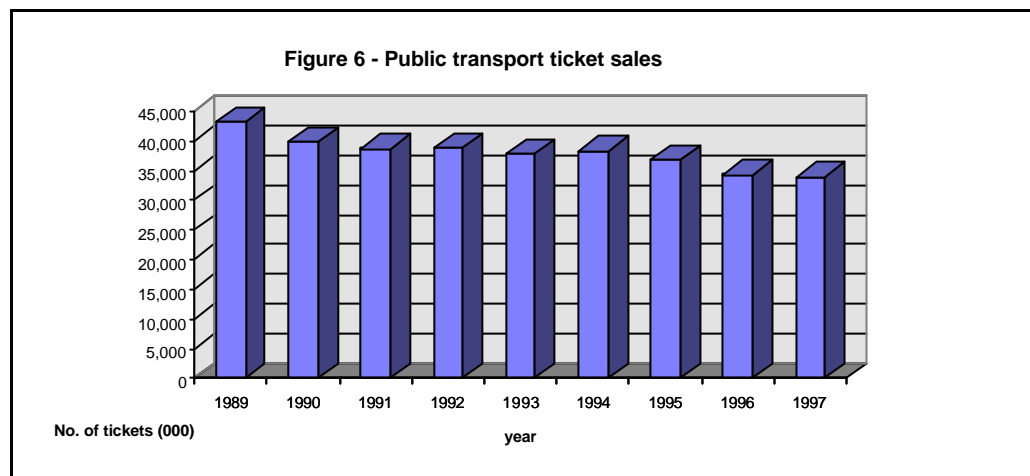
2.8.26 The Commuted Parking Payment Scheme, which was launched in 1994 to address this policy, has been slightly amended. While the Planning Authority still charges developers at a rate of Lm900 per space, in cases where the development proposed is for 'local use', the charge is not

applicable. By 31 December 1997, Lm264,600 had been collected under this scheme. These funds will be made available to local councils for the development of new parking facilities, as appropriate opportunities arise.

## Public Transport

2.8.27 The Structure Plan outlines a number of approaches to the improvement of public transport. The Plan envisages that public transport will continue to be provided primarily by bus and minibus, but anticipates that there is likely to be a role for new ferry services to provide improved access to Valletta, and that there may be a case for light rail or tram rapid transit systems with underground sections (14.16).

2.8.28 It should be noted that the number of public transport ticket sales, excluding private operators, has been decreasing steadily between the year 1989 and 1997, except for 1992 and 1994 when there was a slight increase.



Amongst the reasons given by the Public Transport Authority for this decrease include the introduction of direct services, which have cut down on the number of multiple trips, and the introduction of special tickets which can cover any amount of trips. In the last few years Government has promoted public transport, and a considerable amount of money has been spent on upgrading public transport vehicles, both by government and bus owners. Despite continued decreases in ticket sales, earnings arising from this source have increased from Lm3.3 million in 1992 to Lm4.1 million in 1997<sup>32</sup>.

### ***Bus Industry Regulation and Ownership***

**The Public Transport Authority (PTA) and operators will draw up plans to rationalize the ownership and regulation of the bus industry, so that the whole operation is run on commercial and competitive lines in a way which generates sufficient revenue to renew assets (buses) (PTR1).**

2.8.29 No progress has been made towards reaching an agreement on the need to secure rationalization of the ownership of the industry between the Public Transport Authority and the Public Transport Association, Since the Structure Plan's strategy for public transport hinges on this change it is not surprising that improvements to public transport have not progressed in the desired direction..

<sup>32</sup> Sustainability Indicator A11

### ***Purchase Of New Buses***

The PTA will ensure that new buses purchased are appropriate to the urban and rural operations required of all buses, to the special climatic conditions of Malta, to the higher quality of urban environment being sought, to the narrow and congested streets on which they will have to operate. New buses should be easily accessible to the old, young, and infirm, including wheelchair users (PTR2).

2.8.30 Although the agreement between the Public Transport Authority and the Public Transport Association stipulated that the replacement of the bus fleet would occur within five years, little progress has been registered.

2.8.31 New models were introduced as an experiment but the changes were not implemented for the whole fleet. One example of the new models introduced was a low-floor model.

### ***High Speed Public Transport System***

A detailed study will be undertaken into a high speed public transport system to serve the Valletta/Floriana peninsula, including crossings of Marsamxett Harbour and Grand Harbour. Possibilities to be considered include bus ferries, fixed track systems, and underground/underharbour sections. The study will also consider funding options, the phased upgrading and augmentation of an initial system, and integration of the system into the overall road and bus network (PTR4).

2.8.32 This study was not undertaken in the monitoring period.

### ***Bus Priority Lanes***

Bus priority lanes and other priority measures will be introduced at all locations where they are feasible, and where the time and cost savings to the bus operators and passengers exceed the equivalent delays to other road traffic (TEM7).

2.8.33 Following the implementation of this Policy in Floriana and Msida no new lanes were introduced, however enforcement on the use of the bus priority lanes has been vastly improved with the introduction of Towing and Clamping regulations from August 1997.

### ***Fare Collection and Ticketing Systems***

The Structure Plan urges a review of fare collection and ticketing systems, in order to speed up boarding times and increase revenues (PTR6).

2.8.34 No progress appears to have been made during the monitoring period regarding the agreement reached between the Public Transport Authority and the Public Transport Association on plans to introduce improved ticketing systems.

### ***Provision of Transport Interchanges***

The Structure Plan proposes transport interchanges between different modes of transport:- car, bus, mini bus, taxi, passenger ferry, vehicle ferry, aircraft, rapid transit system, foot (PTR5). It also proposes a new, smaller scale, more efficient, and less environmentally intrusive bus terminus to serve Valletta (PTR7).

2.8.35 No progress has been registered in respect of policy PTR5.

2.8.36 The Valletta and Floriana Transport Study provided an in-depth evaluation of requirements for a new bus terminus in Valletta. There is still a pending development permit application for a new bus terminus which is currently being reviewed.



### ***Public transport provision for new developments***

**All major new developments will be laid out in a way which enables them to be easily and effectively served by bus without undue obstructions to access or operations (PTR8).**

2.8.37 This policy which had been applied in the preparation of the development briefs for Tigne' Point and Manoel Island, as well as for Pembroke has proved effective and no major problems were encountered in getting the principle endorsed by the developers concerning the role public transport should play in the future development of these areas with regards to the provision of public transport links for major developments.

### ***Bus stops and shelters***

**Waiting conditions and shelters at bus stops will be improved, with easily understandable and reliable passenger information. The bus shelters and publicity will be designed to enhance the general image and use of public transport (PTR9).**

2.8.38 Following the introduction of new bus shelters in the period 1990-1995, a new model has been installed in 1996/97 in Paola (near the Addolorata Cemetery and Malta Shipbuilding plant). Maintenance is still lacking in respect of the existing bus shelters.

### ***Bus Depots and Workshops***

**Subject to the outcome of the review of ownership structure and the purchase policy adopted for bus replacement, the PTA will establish an appropriate number of bus depots and workshops providing adequate parking, cleaning, maintenance, and overhaul facilities so that the quality of the fleet can be improved and maintained (PTR11).**

2.8.39 Nothing has been done in this area. Meanwhile, buses are still being parked overnight in private garages, or very often out in the street.

### ***Special Bus Types***

**Bus operators will be encouraged to experiment with special types of services for tourists, such as open top buses and road trains (PTR12).**

2.8.40 Low-floor buses have been introduced during the monitoring period. Currently discussions are being held between the Public Transport Authority and the Unscheduled Bus Service operators to arrive at an agreement aimed at liberalising the mini-bus sector.

### ***Taxi Services***

**The PTA will review the fare structure, operation, and regulation of taxi services (PTR13).**

2.8.41 The Public Transport Authority has introduced a regulated system for taxis leaving the Malta International Airport. Passengers can buy a ticket from the airport rather than having to deal directly with the taxi drivers themselves.

### ***Car Sharing Scheme***

**The extension and rationalization of non scheduled modes of public transport, such as minibuses and other forms of communal transport, will be sought. The Planning Authority will, through the appropriate agencies, seek to establish an islands-wide car sharing scheme (PTR14) .**

2.8.42 No progress has been registered on organized car sharing schemes.

## **Legal and educational measures**

**The Structure Plan includes a number of suggested legal and educational measures to reduce road accidents (LEM1-LEM6).**

2.8.43 Road accidents are still high in Malta. The role of the media was especially crucial during 1997 when every road death was registered on the National TV station as a warning in the snippets "Tkunx Numru".

### ***Highway Code***

**The Highway Code will be revised and reissued making explicit matters such as lane discipline, overtaking and priority rules at roundabouts (LEM1).**

2.8.44 No new revisions to the Highway Code have been published.

2.8.45 Mandatory seat belt use was extended to all cars during the first quarter of 1997. Enforcement has been improved and fines are steep, contributing to greater deterrence.

### ***Drinking and Driving Laws***

**The introduction and enforcement of tougher drink/driving laws will be pursued (LEM2).**

2.8.46 Breathalyzer tests were not introduced during the monitoring period under study. However, they were introduced on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1998. A drinking/driving law was also introduced on the same day. Enforcement will be crucial and the law allows the levy of additional hefty fines and prison sentences as part of sentencing procedures for defaulters. Several media stations transmit educational promotions against drinking and driving.

### ***Traffic Wardens***

**A specialist team of traffic police or wardens will be formed, capable of dealing swiftly and effectively with accidents and responsible for the smooth flow of traffic. There will be greater enforcement generally of traffic laws and regulations, including those dealing with vehicle parking (LEM3).**

2.8.47 From April 1996, local councils were empowered to employ their own wardens who, amongst other duties, can act as traffic wardens, this has not been a successful venture, mainly due to financial restrictions. No one was employed as a traffic warden in 1996-97.

### ***Use of Media***

**Greater use will be made of the media for the presentation of a series of short commercials explaining priority rules at roundabouts, parking controls, and other aspects of good driver behavior (LEM4).**

2.8.48 This theme has been adopted, both on radio and TV. Animation and graphic art has been used less extensively to convey the same message than the previous monitoring period. More needs to be done, especially on promoting good behaviour at traffic lights, speed limits and roundabouts.

### ***Driving Tests***

**A more rigorous driving test will be introduced and periodic retesting considered (LEM5).**

2.8.49 A rigorous driving test has yet to be introduced in Malta. Tighter regulations governing the recruitment of driving instructors are even more important now that no qualified instructors are available in Malta. There is still the need for appropriate qualification tests and courses.

### ***Road Worthiness***

**A certificate of road worthiness will be required for all cars of more than three years of age. The certificate will be issued annually after a road worthiness test at the expense of the vehicle owner (LEM6).**

2.8.50 This has not yet been introduced but the Motor Vehicle Test (MVT) is envisaged to be introduced during 1999. The test was expected to be introduced in early 1993 but has been postponed repeatedly.

### ***Inter Island Sea Transport***

**Ferry services between Gozo and the Inner Harbour will be made more frequent, with the introduction of fast services. Studies will be undertaken into the advantages and disadvantages of allowing competitive ferry services between mainland Malta and Gozo (IIT1).**

2.8.51 This policy was never pursued.

### ***Ferry Terminal Facilities***

**Suitable ferry terminal facilities for passengers and freight will be provided in the Inner Harbour area (IIT2).**

2.8.52 No progress has been registered regarding the implementation of this policy. On the contrary plans to upgrade Cirkewwa are expected to weaken this policy.

### ***Cirkewwa Ferry Terminal Facilities***

**Ferry terminal facilities providing bad weather alternatives to Cirkewwa will be fully established.**

2.8.53 A project by the Malta Maritime Authority on an extended breakwater and other works in Cirkewwa has been designed and dredging work has recently started. The whole project is scheduled for completion in 2000, when it would provide a broad weather alternative facility to the current situation.

## **Aviation**

### ***Master Plan***

**The Department of Civil Aviation will produce a comprehensive plan illustrating the proposed use of land sufficient for all forecasted needs in the long term, including consideration of Luqa Airport as a transit (hub) airport for international flights and other commercial and leisure aviation (AVN2).**

2.8.54 The concept of Malta International Airport (MIA) as a transit airport has been further developed. The upward trend in commercial aircraft movements observed at MIA over the 1990-1995 period slowed down in 1996 to 27,733 commercial aircraft movements from a peak of 29,054 in 1995. However in 1997 an increase was again registered with 28,968 movements. As regards passenger movements, a decrease was registered in 1996 with 2,443,502 passengers as against 2,541,230 in 1995 whereas another increase in 1997 was registered at 2,617,688. The growth trends in air traffic to the MIA appear to be in line with the expectations of the Structure Plan.

2.8.55 Infrastructural changes at MIA included internal developments within the airport complex particularly improved catering and banking facilities, while other developments within the airport perimeter included a onestop shopping-complex and eatery.

2.8.56 The Gozo-Malta air services have been improved during the monitoring period. The Gozo Heliport was officially inaugurated during 1996.

## ***Public Safety Zone***

The Department of Civil Aviation will establish:

1. Public Safety Zones for both ends of airport runways;
2. A general safeguarding zone including absolute building height restrictions aimed at preventing development outside the airport boundary which could be hazardous to airport and aircraft operations;
3. A map illustrating forecast noise contours in order that the Planning Authority can evolve policies for the control of development within affected areas; and
4. Aircraft flight paths which minimise noise nuisance (AVN3).

2.8.57 This policy has still not been implemented. The Civil Aviation Department, however, vets all applications likely to affect aeronautical activities.

### ***Malta/Gozo Air Service***

The Structure Plan calls for a study to evaluate the case for a domestic air service between Malta and Gozo, perhaps using amphibious aircraft (AVN4).

2.8.58 A study to evaluate the case for a domestic air service between Malta and Gozo has not yet been undertaken. Pending the completion of such a study, an improvement in the heliport compound in Gozo was completed during the monitoring period with the addition of a runway. As regards other modes of transport, no amphibious aircraft has yet been introduced.

## **2.9 Public Utilities**

### **Services Planning**

2.9.1 The Structure Plan provides the various public utilities with a common, comprehensive and long-term context within which to plan and operate. The Plan envisages that utility agencies will prepare development plans, and operate within this strategic framework, to coordinate their activities (16.1). The Structure Plan defined public utilities as those organisations responsible for Water, Sewerage, Solid Waste, Electricity, Telecommunications and Posts.

#### ***Coordination of services planning***

Formation of an Interdepartmental Working Group is proposed, to implement the production of 20 year development plans for each of the public utility providers within the context of the Structure Plan. These Plans should: develop programmes for undergrounding services networks; ensure safeguards for protected areas; and plan for disasters and contingencies (PUT1, PUT2, PUT4, PUT9, PUT22, PUT24, PUT27).

2.9.2 The original Inter-Departmental Planning Committee was supposed to organise the setting up of the Interdepartmental Working Group but no progress has been made in this regard.

2.9.3 Most of the public utilities have already initiated various studies and planning exercises in line with the relevant policies of the Structure Plan. Enemalta has established a planning unit and completed an energy plan in 1994 which covers the period up to 2010. The plan has remained unaltered since then although some improvements have been made as described in the Electricity section. The Water Services Corporation is currently working on a Master Plan. The Malta Telecommunications Master Plan, prepared in 1988, is still being adhered to. This Plan was drafted according to the guidelines outlined by the International Telecommunications Union.

### **Resource management and conservation**

**A major strategy of public utilities planning will be the efficient management and conservation of resources (PUT3).**

2.9.4 Following the conclusion of the Malta Council for Science and Technology's (MCST) third biennial conference, 'An Energy Plan for the Year 2000'<sup>33</sup>, an energy network has been set up. The Energy Network's workgroup is comprised of members of the Institute for Energy Technology, Malta Drydocks, Water Services Corporation, Physics department - University of Malta, Mechanical Engineering Department, Enemalta, Public Transport Authority and the Planning Authority. The network's aim is the drawing up of an energy policy for Malta.

### **Information systems for utilities planning**

**The Structure Plan notes that the present system of recording network alignments on survey sheets is both time consuming and inaccurate. The policy is for all service providers using land based maps to integrate into the recently developed Geographic Information System (GIS) (PUT6).**

2.9.5 The introduction of GIS in public utilities is an ongoing process and data within every utility needs to correspond with that generated by other utility providers, in effect producing an integrated information system for the whole of the Maltese Islands. Although some utility organisations have started developing GIS systems, the process needs to be intensified in order to meet the goal of unitary integration within a few years. Lack of co-ordination between the different utility providers is hampering the development of a united front for utilities management, and in turn affecting the integration of vital information systems into the GIS.

2.9.6 The Planning Authority Constraints mapping project is aimed at plotting all sites reserved for utility developments onto the corporate GIS. The mapping process is nearly fully developed. New insertions are made on an irregular basis.

### **Capital investment in infrastructure, 1996-1997**

2.9.7 Capital Investment in infrastructure during 1997 has been broadly at the same level as in 1995 at around Lm38 million in 1995. During this period investment in water infrastructure has increased, whilst investment in energy reflected an identical trend (which increased from over Lm18 million in 1996 to Lm26 million in 1997 as indicated in Table 44). The main reason for a substantial increase in the government infrastructure investment could be attributed primarily to the increased investment in the energy sector during 1997.

Table 44 - Capital investment in infrastructure, 1990-1997

Investment (Lm)	1990	1995	1996	1997
Sewers	1,097,884	7,740,000	5,852,461	6,050,000
WSC	6,973,733	8,375,000	3,513,761	5,681,806
Energy	25,092,283	22,761,000	18,475,555	26,374,000
Total	33,163,900	38,876,000	27,841,777	38,105,806

Source: Estimates 1997-1998<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Presentation at An Energy Plan for the Year 2000, Third Biennial Conference, Malta Council for Science and Technology, 4-5 June 1996

<sup>34</sup> Estimates 1998, Ministry of Finance

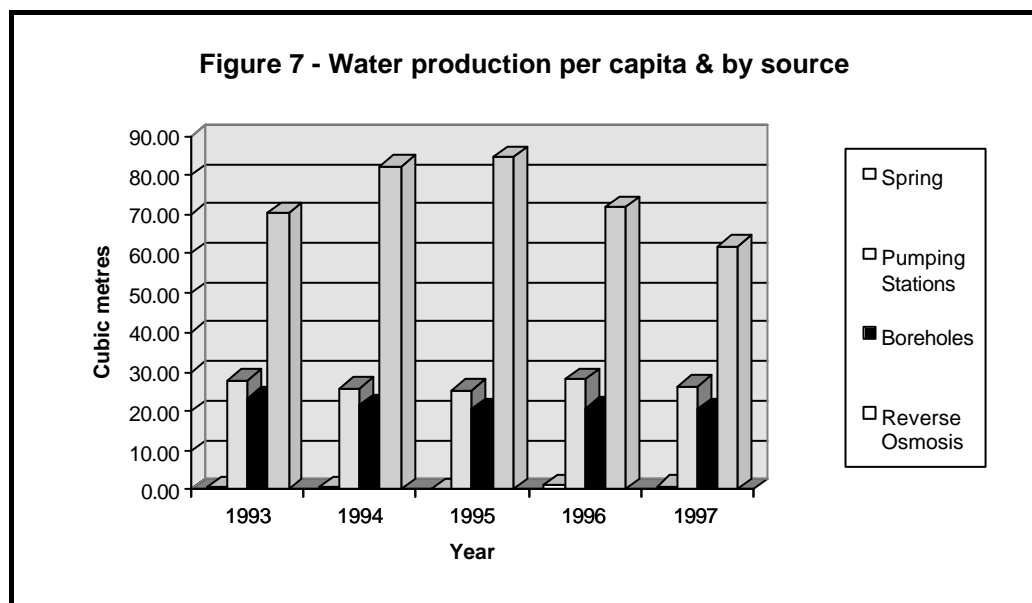
## Water

The Structure Plan estimates that, although some replacement of facilities may be required, no major land areas would be needed for new potable water supplies before the year 2010 (16.2). The Plan's emphasis is on limiting the visual impact of new facilities such as reservoirs (PUT7) and conservation of potable water resources through the efficient use and reuse of water, employing measures such as: controlled aquifer recharge from surface water runoff; use of treated sewage effluent (TSE) for appropriate industrial, irrigation, and other uses; and management of road stormwater runoff (PUT8).

2.9.8 The Water Services Corporation have completed a number of major projects over the period 1996-1997, which reflect an emphasis on the upgrading of the distribution network. For example, 50km of trunk and distribution mains were laid in 1996. Other commissioned projects include: second class (recycled) water distribution systems; purchase of equipment, including booster systems and tools. In addition, other planned projects for 1997 included, laying of trunk mains, ground water collection, transfer mains, booster stations, systems maintenance and improvements to reservoirs, and acquisition of land for a new reservoir in Xwieki.

2.9.9 Work on the initial phase of the Storm Water Runoff Master Plan started in January 1997 by the Drainage Department and the Water Services Corporation. The Roads Department is also a partner in the current formulation of this Plan. By the end of 1997 work had also started on the preparation of the Main Water Catchment Areas Plan of Malta and Gozo. The Plan will evaluate the possibility of re-use or disposal of the water collected in these catchment areas. A cost-benefit analysis of the Plan's proposals is also to be carried out. The Plan has not yet been published.

2.9.10 Construction works at a new reverse osmosis plant (Ras iz-Zonqor was previously earmarked as a potential location), which was programmed for 1996 have still to commence. With the decline in the demand for water since 1995, it is not clear whether the plant is still required. Figure 7 indicates water production per capita, by source between 1993 and 1997. Significant trends can be deciphered from this figure especially in the production of water by reverse osmosis plants.



Source: Water Services Corporation Annual Reports 1993, 1994-1995 and 1996-1997, and The Institute of Water Technology.

## Sewerage

**The Structure Plan envisages major improvements to the sewerage network, requiring heavy capital investment (16.6).**

2.9.11 Implementation of the Sewerage Master Plan for Malta and Gozo began during 1995 and future projects will fall within the Plan's framework. The target is that all sewage must receive secondary treatment by the year 2000.

### ***Development of sewage treatment infrastructure***

**The Structure Plan envisaged a need for three new sewage treatment and re-use plants. The relevant Local Plans are to designate appropriate sites at Anchor Bay, Wied Ghammieq near Ricasoli and Mgarr ix-Xini in Gozo. The relevant Local Plans will also identify sites for new sewerage installations at Wied il-Kbir near Qormi and Bahar ic-Caghaq Bay. Local Plans for areas to be developed may have to include additional sewage installation sites (16.5, PUT11, PUT12). Proposals for sewage treatment and disposal will be the subject of environmental impact analysis (PUT10).**

2.9.12 As far as the Local Plans are concerned, the Grand Harbour Local Plan has identified an appropriate site for new sewerage infrastructure following identification for the need by the Sewage Master Plan.

2.9.13 Work remains at the planning stages for the systematic upgrading of sewage treatment facilities, as outlined in the Structure Plan. Works on Ras il-Hobz outfall were resumed in 1997 with the construction of an offshore platform.

2.9.14 The existing sewage treatment plant at Sant Antnin in Marsascala has been upgraded which has enabled it to increase its output from 7,000 cubic meters per day in 1996 to 17,000 cubic meters per day in 1997. This upgrading is intended to produce an increased supply of treated effluent for agriculture and industrial purposes. Work has also been completed on the construction on a rising main from Dingli Pumping Station to Rabat as part of the upgrading of the sewerage system between Attard and Bahrija.

2.9.15 Activity in the sewerage sector is summarised in Table 45:

Table 45 - Activity in the sewerage sector

1996	26 pumping stations were upgraded, mainly involving replacement of pumps, pipework systems, electrical control panels and the installation of stand-by generating sets and laying of new pressure mains. As part of the sewerage Master Plan the Marsascala and Pwales Pumping stations were rebuilt while new pumps and related equipment were installed at the Gzira Pumping Station.
1997	10 pumping stations were upgraded, mainly involving replacement of pumps, pipework systems, electrical control panels and the installation of stand-by generating sets and laying of new pressure mains. A relief main together with an emergency outflow and additional retention was built at the Sliema Strand.

Source: DCIS, PA

## Solid Waste

The Structure Plan expressed concern that generation and disposal of waste methods were outdated and enforcement ineffective. Illegal dumping is a matter of major concern. A complete change of policies, procedures, and attitudes is required (16.7). The waste generation aspects of all new developments are to be carefully evaluated (PUT13, PUT14). Development of strategically located centres for: refuse deposit; transfer and treatment plant; controlled landfill and the management of hazardous waste are proposed (PUT15, PUT16, PUT17, PUT18, PUT19). The Plan calls for the preparation of a Waste Management Subject Plan, as a matter of priority (PUT20). The ultimate disposal of municipal, commercial and industrial/inert waste will normally be by controlled landfill (PUT17). Government will actively investigate the most appropriate facilities for the treatment and safe disposal of hazardous wastes (PUT18).

2.9.16 A Waste Management Policy has been prepared by the Environment Protection Department (EPD) and the Consultative and Advisory Board on the Environment. The document is currently awaiting Cabinet endorsement. The next step would be the preparation of a Waste Management Strategy document.

2.9.17 The EPD recommends that every projected development would be evaluated for its impact on waste production and the Department would, therefore, expect the developers to submit proposals for the disposal of waste to comply with the requirements of the Environment Protection Department. The emphasis should be on waste minimisation, reuse and recovery in that order of priority, rather than on disposal as in PUT17. The perception of waste management among the public in general continues to be that of cleanliness and litter control. The main reason for this is that there is no direct charge for waste management. In the meantime, priority waste streams needing urgent action have been identified by the EPD as health-care, ports and slaughterhouse wastes.

2.9.18 As yet there is no incentive to minimise, reuse or recover waste, or even to separate waste.

2.9.19 Flyash is no longer generated at power stations.

2.9.20 The Wied Fulija landfill has been closed down. Table 46 indicates the sites and facilities currently provided for waste disposal and management:

Table 46 - Landfills and waste treatment sites

	Site	Area	Total
<b>Landfills</b>			
Maghtab	Naxxar	744100 sq m	
Il-Qortin	Xaghra (G)	43760 sq m	787860 sq m
<b>Waste Treatment</b>			
Sant Antnin	Marsascala	65600 sq m	65600 sq m

Source: EMU, PA

2.9.21 A site selection exercise for a new sanitary landfill was carried out in 1997, which exercise needs to be supported by further studies. A waste separation plant was also approved at Xaghra Gozo during 1997.

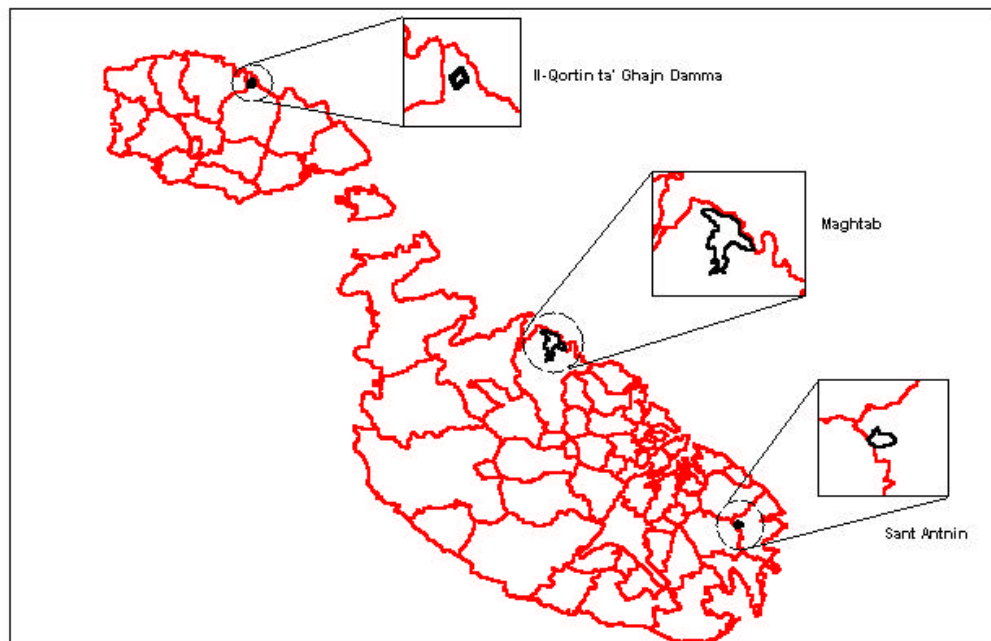
2.9.22 The management of construction and demolition waste is now of major concern. Minimisation and reuse of such waste should be given priority. The environmental impact of quarrying, including waste management and



resource depletion, as well as disposal in the marine environment should be studied, according to the EPD.

2.9.23 Terms of reference for a Waste Management Subject Plan have been produced and the Plan is currently being coordinated by the Planning Authority and prepared by consultants. The project is being jointly funded by the Health Department, Works Division, Agriculture Department, Transport Ministry, Malta International Airport and the Malta Maritime Authority. The projected completion date is planned for mid-1999.

**Map 1 - Waste management facilities at Il-Qortin ta' Ghajn Damma (Gozo), Maghtab and Marsascala**



Source: EMU, PA

## Electricity

The Structure Plan underlines the need for a 20-year development plan for electricity generation and distribution. A need for expanded generating capacity was anticipated, but the future of the Marsa plant was unknown at the time the Plan was prepared. Studies on the siting of the new 132 kV distribution line from Delimara Power Station, via Marsa, are proposed. The Plan also calls for the installation of underground electricity distribution systems (PUT21, PUT22, PUT23).

2.9.24 Enemalta has continued to make advances in the establishment of an effective planning function. Its Engineering Planning Department, which was established in 1994, had as its main task the preparation of an energy plan (1994-2010), in line with **PUT22**. This was commissioned as described in the first Monitoring Report. Since then, the plan has remained essentially the same. However, an update to the electricity section has now been prepared, in the light of new data.

2.9.25 The update exercise suggests that the peak electricity demand has levelled off due to a run of mild winters and the new electricity tariff structure. In fact the maximum electrical demand achieved was 321 MW in winter

1994/1995 and this has dropped to 300MW as peak demand in winter 1997/98. It is still considered that the peak demand drop is atypical, although the effect of the new tariff structure is still unknown. The peak demand is expected to be around 500 MW in the year 2010, with a projected generating capacity of 620 MW.

2.9.26 The status of the Marsa Power Station, which was still undecided in 1994, has been somewhat clarified due to replacements of several of the items of machinery installed in this station. As yet, there are no plans for the complete closure of the Marsa Power Station although it is envisaged that the output from this station will be reduced once the new Combined Cycle Gas Turbine plant at Delimara starts operation.

2.9.27 The development of transmission and distribution systems is conditioned by related developments in generation sources. At present Enemalta is still evaluating the various options available and it is uncertain where and when the next phase of generation increase will take place. For this reason long term transmission development plans will be concluded following the outcome on generation decisions.

2.9.28 In the meantime however, following the commissioning of the 110 MW plant at Delimara during late 1998, the Mosta 132kV Distribution Centre project will have to follow, allowing for better distribution of the product and to have the infrastructure available for immediate provision should the demand start increasing again. Given, however, the fact that no increase in peak load was registered for the last three consecutive winters the projected commission date for this distribution centre will be decided on the basis of the peak load trends.

2.9.29 Also, irrespective of whether the next generation increase phase will take place at Delimara or at Marsa, it is necessary to extend further 132kV circuits from Delimara Power Station as described above. The roads leading to Delimara are not suitable to take further 132kV cable circuits and for this reason, plans are being concluded to excavate a tunnel from Marsa to Delimara. It is expected to publish the necessary call for tenders shortly. In the meantime a tunnel has been excavated between Marsa and Mosta where the necessary 132kV cable circuits have been laid in anticipation of the commissioning of Mosta distribution centre.

2.9.30 Enemalta also installed various 33kV and 11kV underground circuits to enhance the distribution system which has enabled them to decommission several 33kV and 11kV overhead lines. Of particular relevance in this respect are the 33kV overhead lines between Mosta distribution centre and Tal-Qlejja and the two 11kV circuits between Mellieha and Mtarfa. This is a welcome change and augers well for the improvement of Malta's environment.

2.9.31 Projects in progress during 1996/97 included the construction of the Phase 2B plant at Delimara Power Station as well as the laying of the Marsa/Mosta 132kV cables and the civil works of the Mosta 132kV Distribution Centre. The distribution centres at Comino and Tal-Qroqq Hospital are now in service.

2.9.32 Additional projects in hand include an additional fuel tank at Delimara and the upgrading of No 2 chimney at Marsa.

2.9.33 As regards alternative energy, The Malta Institute of Energy Technology working under the auspices of the University of Malta, has been set up in order to study the use of energy from renewable sources.

## Telecommunications

**As with other utility organizations, the Structure Plan required Telemalta to prepare a 20 year development plan to meet new telecommunications requirements (PUT24).**

2.9.34 The telecommunications sector in Malta remains a leader in terms of achievement in the utilities sector. Maltacom (originally Telemalta) implemented the recommendations set out in the Malta Telecommunications Master Plan.

2.9.35 An optic fibre submarine cable between Malta and Sicily, has been laid and is now fully operational. The telephone network is still expanding rapidly and it includes the installation of a new international gateway during the monitoring period.

2.9.36 Upgrading of a maritime coastal station to digital technology has taken place during this period.

## New Communication Services

**The Structure Plan envisaged (16.12) that in the future households will have more telecommunications equipment including phone, videophone, access to selected databases such as travel, hobbies, and catalogue shopping, access to video information, central automatic control of equipment such as air-conditioning and lights, satellite communications, and cable TV. The need was envisaged for a study of how future houses should be networked and how this might influence building practice.**

2.9.37 Developments in communications as envisaged in the Structure Plan have continued to take place. Cable TV is continuing its expansion to previously designated remote areas. Satellite TV installations has continued the trend observed during the 1991-95 period. One major communications factor was the introduction of the Internet which has expanded rapidly. Diverse companies are advertising their services on the Internet and the introduction of Cable-Internet is under discussion

## Underground telecommunications cabling

**The Structure Plan stipulates that all new telecommunications systems should be laid underground. A programme of progressive undergrounding is proposed for existing overhead cables and apparatus in built-up areas (PUT25).**

2.9.38 The situation as regards to undergrounding of existing overhead cables has not improved, and most cabling works are still carried out above ground.

## Posts

**The Structure Plan advocates strategic planning and modernisation of postal services, taking account of the increasing threat from improved telecommunications (PUT27). A suitable location is to be identified for a new central mailroom/sorting**

**office; this should not be on the Valletta/Floriana peninsula, for traffic reasons (PUT28).**

2.9.39 The project for a new Central Mailroom at Valletta Road, Qormi was stopped in 1996 and another site for the same purpose was identified at 305, Qormi Road, Marsa. The site identified happened to be Government owned premises (which were used by the Treasury Central Supplies) and was considered to be ideal by the government for the activities of the Central Mail Room. During 1997, the premises were refurbished and the Administration of Posta Ltd. was transferred there.

2.9.40 On the 4<sup>th</sup> July 1997, Posta Ltd. was abolished and Postal services were assigned to the Acting Postmaster General. During this period the Parcel Post Office and the Central Mail Room were also transferred from Valletta to the new premises at Marsa.

### 3. Constraining Urban Growth

**The second goal of the Structure Plan promotes the efficient use of land and buildings by channelling development into existing and committed urban areas (3.5).**

3.0.1 The Structure Plan includes a range of policies targeted at conserving undeveloped land and revitalising existing built-up areas. The policies include the enforcement of measures to resist further development of virgin land, the encouragement of initiatives to revitalise existing built-up areas and the promotion of efficient use of land and buildings.

3.0.2 This chapter covers the analysis of rates of development within existing settlements as well as an appraisal of projects permitted outside development zone (ODZ) for the period 1996 to 1997 (3.1). Section 3.2 outlines initiatives to revitalise existing urban areas, including initiatives in Urban Conservation Areas, while Section 3.3 covers recycling of developed land.

#### 3.1 Channelling Development into Urban Areas

3.1.1 The Structure Plan seeks to encourage and channel development within existing urban areas: to maintain and enhance the environment of Malta's urban fabric and to keep at bay development in virgin land.

##### *New Development within Urban Areas*

**The Structure Plan encourages development, including rehabilitation and redevelopment, within existing built-up areas (SET1, 6.2).**

3.1.2 This section presents the findings of development trends within built-up areas for the period 1996 to 1997 and sets it against the findings of the previous Monitoring Report 1993-1995. The definition of 'existing urban areas' includes only the built-up areas present in 1988 but excludes land zoned for development in the 1988 Temporary Provisions Schemes (TPS). The definition of Urban Areas includes 'infill' sites within existing urban areas which were not zoned for housing in 1988.

3.1.3 Dwelling development within urban areas is encouraged on previously utilised land ( 'existing urban areas') or on virgin land (zoned in the TPS). Dwelling development occurring on previously utilised land usually involves the demolition of a building or additions to a dwelling.

3.1.4 The analysis of development trends in this section is based on a series of analyses using the Planning Authority's Geographic Information System (GIS) and the Development Control Information Systems (DCIS). Application records for dwelling approvals given in 1996 and 1997 from the Dwellings Database are linked to digital land parcel boundaries. This resulted in a map layer showing dwelling approvals. Further analysis using the GIS then compared dwelling approvals with another map layer identifying the zoning under the Temporary Provision Schemes.

3.1.5 The findings can be classified as:

- i dwellings within the development zone;
- ii dwellings outside the development zone.

##### *New Dwellings within Urban Areas*

3.1.6 During the period from 1996 to 1997, 6330 new dwellings within urban areas were approved, compared to 11,770 between 1993 and 1995. This indicates an increasing trend.

3.1.7 2420 dwellings were approved in existing urban areas, which comprise 38% of all dwellings approved. The remaining 3910 dwellings approvals in this period were located within the 1988 Temporary Schemes. This suggests that many more new dwellings are being created within existing urban areas than

was anticipated by the Structure Plan. The Plan estimated that of the 60,000 dwellings required by the year 2010 (section 2.2), just 8,000 (13%) would be provided within existing urban areas.

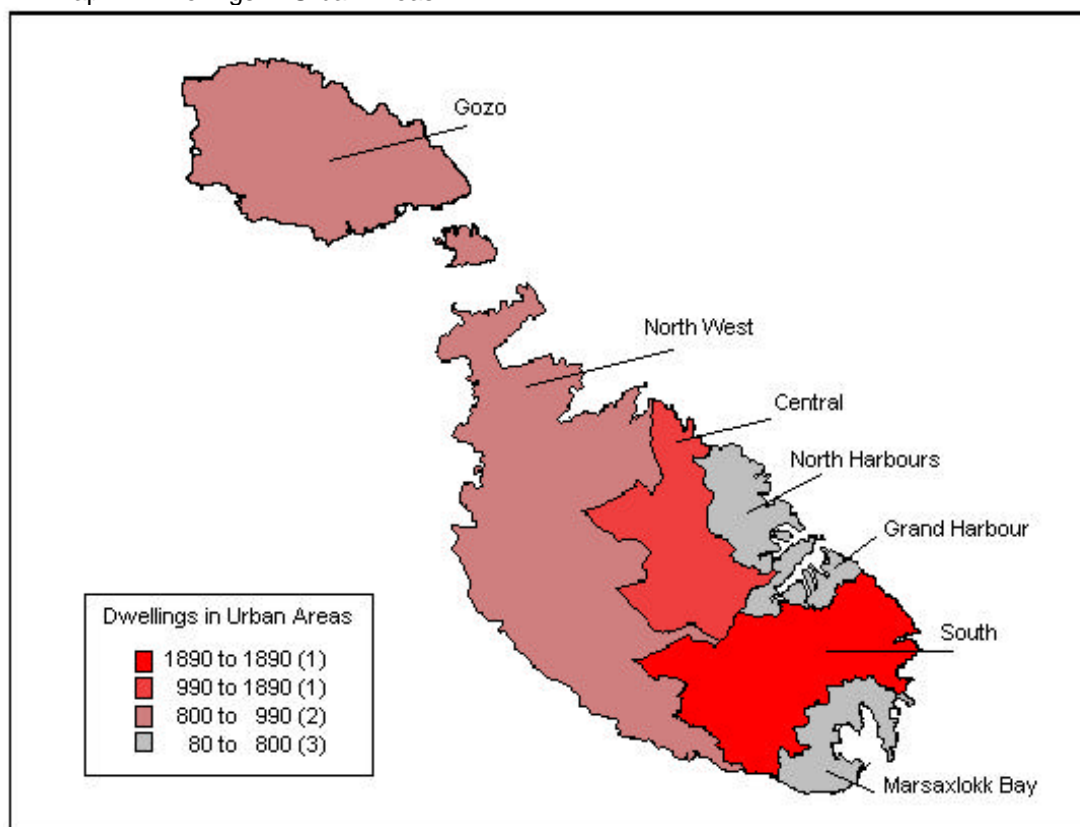
3.1.8 The total amount of dwellings approved built within the limits to development is distributed between the Local Plan areas as shown in Table 47 and Map 2:

**Table 47 - Dwellings approved built within the limits to development**

Local Plan Area	Dwellings approved within the development zone (1996-1997)		Total
	Existing Urban Land	within TPS	
Marsaxlokk Bay	82	95	177
North West	405	548	753
Grand Harbour	72	14	86
North Harbours	438	359	797
Gozo	432	558	990
South	504	1379	1883
Central	487	957	1444
<b>Total</b>	<b>2420</b>	<b>3910</b>	<b>6330</b>

*Source: Dwellings database, Land Availability database, PA*

**Map 2 - Dwellings in Urban Areas**



*Source: Dwellings database, Land Availability database, PA*

3.1.9 The major proportion of housing development approved within the development zone lie in the South (1883) and Central (1444) Local Plan Areas. On the other hand, little development was approved in Marsaxlokk (177) and Grand Harbours with 86 developments.

3.1.10 Between 1996 and 1997 38% of all housing development within Scheme was developed in existing urban areas, proportionately less than the development carried out between 1993 and 1995, which was 46%.

Table 48 - Dwelling units approved within existing urban areas

Dwelling units approved within existing urban areas	Dwelling Units	%
	1996-97	1996-97
Dwellings on existing built land	2420	38
Dwellings within TPS	3910	62
Total	6330	100

*Source: Dwellings Database, Land Availability, PA*

## Development within the Temporary Provision Schemes, 1996-97

3.1.12 The Structure Plan had estimated that 60,000 new dwellings units would be required until 2010, of which 50,000 would be located within the TPS. As explained in the previous monitoring report, these figures grossly overestimate actual demand. Dwelling development within the Temporary Provision Schemes has continued to take place at a relatively fast rate. Data sources used for this analysis include 1988 1:2500 base maps, 1994 aerial photography, and field surveys carried out during the first half of 1998, to update the Land Availability Database.

### ***New Housing Development within Schemes***

**The Structure Plan confirmed the location of the Temporary Provision Schemes and identified these areas as the primary location for new housing development (6.6, SET8). However, the Plan urges the review of the Scheme layouts, to improve provision for social and community facilities (6.7, SET7, SET9). The Plan envisages that over 80% of housing requirements to the year 2010 will be accommodated within the Temporary Provision Schemes (8.3).**

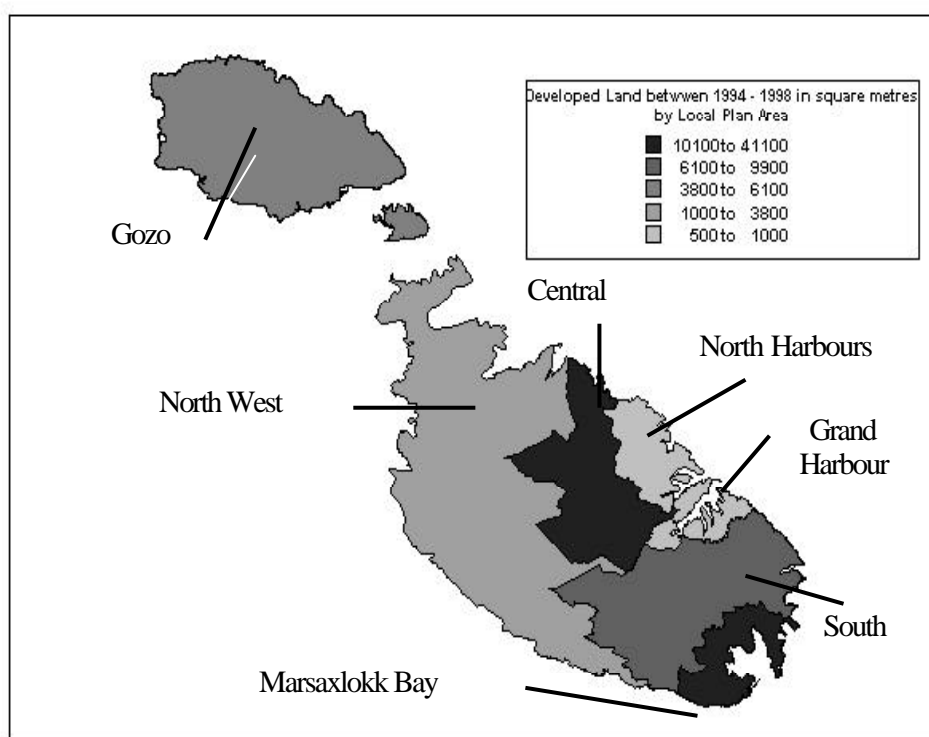
3.1.13 In 1988, 798 hectares of land was available for development within the TPS. In early 1994, 245 hectares or 31% of this had been developed. By mid-1998 another 66.5 hectares (8%) had been developed. Developed land within the TPS now stands at 39% of total. Available land for development within the TPS is therefore 487 hectares. This indicates a decreasing rate as only approximately one fourth the area developed between 1988 and 1994 was developed between 1994 and 1998.

Table 49 - Area of new urban development within scheme

Local Plan Area	Land Developed between 1994-98 (ha)	Housing Development rate (ha/yr) (94-98)	Total land schemed in 1988 (ha)	Area Vacant 1998 (ha)	% vacant of total schemed in 1988 as at 1998	Amount of additional land developed (expressed in % terms) between 1994-1998 in the T.P.S.
Marsaxlokk Bay	2.97	0.7	22.32	10.24	46%	13%
North-west	8.03	1.9	107.73	73.67	68%	7%
Grand Harbours	0.82	0.2	5.95	3.16	53%	14%
North Harbours	4.97	1.2	102.61	60.58	59%	5%
Gozo	5.69	1.3	135.81	99.44	73%	4%
South	24.35	5.7	237.23	141.08	59%	11%
Central	19.66	4.6	186.64	98.69	53%	10%
TOTAL	66.52	15.65	798.31	486.89	61%	8%

Source: Land Availability Database, PA

Map 3 - Developed land between 1994-1998 by Local Plan Areas



Source: Land Availability Database, PA

3.1.14 The major part of land zoned in 1988 as part of the TPS was located in the South, Central and Gozo Local Plan areas. A significant part of housing development that occurred between 1994 and 1998 also took place in the areas covered by the South and Central Local Plans.

3.1.15 This indicates a dispersed pattern of dwelling development which goes against the Structure Plan goal of concentrating new residential development close to the Island's main employment centres. The Grand Harbour Region



which hosts 41% of Malta's employed is receiving a minimal part of Malta's housing development whilst in the outer regions dwelling development is occurring at much higher levels.

3.1.16 A Structure Plan goal is to locate residential development next to the main employment centres. The previous monitoring report examined the issue of population and employment balance in the context of Census regions which revealed a significant mismatch between the two. In the absence of new data being available, it has been considered appropriate to re-examine the issue in the context of Local Plan Areas which, however, presents a somewhat different picture.

Table 50 - Employment by Local Plan Area

Local Plan Area	Employed (%)	Population Living (%)
Marsaxlokk Bay	2	3
North-West	6	9
Grand Harbours	41	8
North Harbours	16	16
Gozo	4	8
South	17	29
Central	15	27

*Source: Employment and Workplace Database, Preliminary Census Report (1995).*

3.1.17 Table 50 reiterates the fact that concentration of jobs remains in the Grand Harbour Area which contains 41% employment whilst only 8% of the population of the Islands live there. The table, however, suggests that in most of the other Local Plan Areas, the general mismatch continues but it is not as serious as highlighted in the previous report. The entire issue of jobs/housing balance needs to be revisited in the context of the Review of the Structure Plan.

## Development in Non Urban Areas

**The Structure Plan prohibits any form of urbanisation outside existing built-up areas, the Temporary Provisions Schemes and the designated Primary Development Areas (6.9).**

3.1.15 Despite the Structure Plan's emphasis on the need to largely restrict development to designated areas, breaches continue to occur. The development has occurred despite the attempt by the Planning Authority to clarify policy regarding development outside built-up areas outlined in a policy paper (formerly known as PLP20) published in 1995. The paper indicated that existing and committed built up areas do not include:

- land outside the limits of development which contains sporadic development
- sites where a housing development has fallen into disuse or
- sites outside the limits of development with an expired development permit

3.1.16 The Planning Authority monitors major and medium-sized developments including larger residential projects in its strategic projects monitoring database (SPMD). This section reviews the efficacy of Structure Plan policy to restrict development in non-urban areas. During the period under study, the number of applications for major and medium developments approved within non-urban areas totalled 178 of which 50 were agricultural in nature. The total area taken up by these approvals amounts to 15 Ha.

### ***New Dwellings in Non Urban Areas***

3.1.17 From the dwellings database it is estimated that some 4% of all dwelling applications (276 dwelling units) were located outside designated development areas. It needs to be emphasised that the 276 figure includes all applications for dwellings (including alterations/additions to existing units) in the ODZ. Since the figures fluctuate on a yearly basis, no trend can be identified. These approvals still show a situation where despite the strict criteria for dwellings in the ODZ, policy breaches are still occurring and are increasing slightly. Nevertheless, as noted in the previous monitoring report, the numbers approved exceed those which can be justified under the strict criteria defining necessary dwellings for full-time farmers. It should be noted that the figure given above needs more analysis before it can be ascertained how many were agricultural dwellings.

3.1.18 Table 51 gives an overview of the Local Plan Areas that are recipient of dwelling development ODZ. The main areas of concern are Gozo (38% of all ODZ) and North West (35%). The other four LPAs (except Marsaxlokk, which had no development ODZ) in total registered 27% of all ODZ approvals. The analysis therefore, shows that areas with a high proportion of countryside are being subjected to relatively high development approvals.

3.1.19 The largest number of dwellings approved in the ODZ during the monitoring period were apartments, which accounted for 45% of the total. This is followed by a substantial number of maisonettes which accounted for 34% of the total.

3.1.20 The highest percentage (24%) of all the approved apartments outside the development zones are located in Rabat (Malta) at Mtarfa. Although Mtarfa is outside the development boundary, some development (primarily residential) in this area has already been permitted. It is now considered to be an established residential area. 20% of the remaining are located in Rabat (Gozo) and a further 19% in Xaghra (Gozo). The remaining apartments are spread over a further 30 local council areas. A large percentage of maisonettes amounting to 31% of the total number of maisonettes are located in Rabat (Malta), a further 13% are located in Xaghra (Gozo).

Table 51 - Approval of dwellings development outside development zone 1996/97

Local Plan Area	1996-97 ODZ
North West	98
Grand Harbour	2
North Harbours	0
Gozo	105
South	55
Central	16
Total	276

*Source: Dwellings Database, PA*

3.1.21 For the purposes of monitoring development trends outside development zone, an analysis of the medium and major applications granted was undertaken based on SPMD. The data resulting from this analysis is provided in the Table 52.

Table 52 - Medium and major applications<sup>35</sup> approved ODZ during 1996/97 (In m<sup>2</sup>)

ODZ	1996	1997	1996/97	% of Total 1996-97
Dwellings	4941	3550	8491	6
Offices	7136	622	7758	5
Retail	5746	3538	9284	6
Tourism	0	0	0	0
Recreation	7243	354	7597	5
Agriculture	16627	6513	23140	15
Services	35507	2090	37597	25
Manufacturing	23659	10389	34048	23
Warehousing	7350	3675	11025	7
Parking	9635	2454	12089	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>117844</b>	<b>33185</b>	<b>151029</b>	

Source: SPMD, PA

3.1.22 The number of major (3 or more dwelling units) residential projects approved outside development zone was 33 during the monitoring period. This is a minor increase over the 29 applications approved between 1993 and 1995. An area of 0.8Ha was approved during 1996 and 1997, whereas 3.4Ha had been approved during the prior period. This indicates that although the number of dwellings has increased slightly, their average size has diminished.

### **Commercial and Industrial Approvals in Non-Urban Areas**

#### *Industry*

3.1.23 The floorspace approved for industrial development outside development zone has gone down (to 34,000 square metres) during the monitoring period compared to the period 1993 to 1995 when a total floorspace area of 55,000 square metres was approved. It is evident that the problem is greatest within the industrial sector since a quarter of the industrial floorspace approved during 1996/97 was created outside the development zone.

3.1.24 Only two approvals for development were given near to a private industrial estate while all other approvals relate to areas which are far from these designated areas.

3.1.25 Two other developments (concrete batching plants) were also approved. The main development occurred in Luqa where 14,000 square metres were taken up by a scrapyards. Other developments included a quarry at Siggiewi, an extension to a batching plant at Naxxar, and garages in Mqabba and Gudja.

#### *Warehousing*

3.1.26 Non-urban areas are increasingly being used for Warehousing purposes, a use which is generally considered to be land hungry. During 1996-97 38 projects were approved totaling 11025 sq.m..

3.1.27 As far as the location of approvals are concerned, a number of warehousing projects happen to lie on the urban fringe areas of existing industrial estates, mainly the private ones. The five largest developments included: the construction of a showroom, storage of agricultural instruments, use of a disused quarry for the storage of containers and heavy equipment and, the construction of additional storage area at first floor levels in an existing development.

<sup>35</sup> Medium and major projects include all developments over 50m<sup>2</sup>.

### *Retail*

3.1.28 Twenty-four projects were approved outside scheme totalling 9284 sq.m.. The major projects included the approval of shops, Government offices, club premises and private offices in Rabat (Malta) and the construction of a warehouse, showroom & marble factory at ground floor & showroom at 1st floor in Zurrieq. The other main projects included showrooms in a mixed development. The level of approved floorspace in developments in this sector between 1993-95 was 7330 square metres which broadly matched the converted floorspace during 1996-97. However one must note that the number of developments has decreased from 14 in the previous period to 7 between 1996 and 1997, which indicates a trend towards more larger projects.

3.1.29 These figures also signify a continuing pressure for the provision of retail floorspace outside development zone.

### *Offices*

3.1.30 Fifteen projects were approved outside designated areas for development, covering an area of 7258 square metres. As indicated in the Monitoring Report 1990-95, the probability of having mixed development of offices and retail in the same application is high, and approvals for completely new, freestanding office developments are rare. In fact the government offices complex mentioned in the retail section also has 5746 square metres area dedicated to office space. Seven other projects involved mixed use.

### ***Tourism Projects Approved in Non-Urban Areas***

3.1.32 All developments carried out in 1996-97 were within scheme boundaries, with the exception of Xaghra's Cornucopia Hotel which was partly outside the development zone.

### ***Social and Community Facilities Approved in Non-Urban Areas***

3.1.33 The following social and community facilities were approved during the monitoring period:

Table 53 - Developments outside Scheme in the social and community sector

Type of development	No of projects
Schools	1
Field study centre	1
Hospitals (ext.)	1
public gardens	2
community care	4
Total	10

Source: SPMD

### ***Utility Projects Approved in Non-Urban Areas***

3.1.32 Nine utility developments were approved during the period 1996-1997. These projects included five water-related developments, mainly reservoirs and ancillary works. There were also projects involving the development of two electrical sub-stations while two permits were approved for the extension and upgrading of the Gozo Helipad Terminal facilities.

## 3.2 Rehabilitation and Renewal

3.2.1 The Structure Plan includes a number of strategies aimed at encouraging development within the urban areas. These include the phasing out of Government subsidies for new housing and re-directing it to urban areas, offering grants and refurbishment loans for the refurbishment of private property, etc.

### Rehabilitation Initiatives

**The Structure Plan proposes re-direction of housing subsidy to encourage development within existing urban areas and the rehabilitation of existing properties. Home ownership subsidies for rehabilitation and renewal will be introduced, together with grants and loans for the rehabilitation of privately-owned homes (SET3, SET4). The Plan also urges review of rental legislation, to increase incentives for building rehabilitation (SET5). There are also a number of policies related to the rehabilitation of urban structures of conservation value; these centre on the establishment of a Land Tribunal and Heritage Trust (UCO12, 15.14; UCO17, 15.19).**

#### *Urban Rehabilitation 1996-97*

3.2.2 In recent years the Government has been operating certain schemes to encourage urban rehabilitation. Such schemes have had a reasonable degree of success. Scheme SHD 17 (issued in 1995) provided housing subsidy on value added tax paid on first dwelling house by owners who would be using the dwelling for owner occupation, was replaced by Scheme SHD18 in 1997. It provided housing subsidy on excise tax incurred on first dwelling house by owners who would be occupying the dwelling. Scheme HD14, which provided subsidised loans to help in the purchase, finishing and/or refurbishment of dwellings for owner occupation, issued in 1988, was replaced by Scheme SHD16 in 1991 and by Schemes 'M' and 'N' in 1996.

3.2.3 In 1995, new rents were liberalised. However, there are still no clear indications that liberalisation of new rents has brought about any increase in the rental stock leased to Maltese citizens.

3.2.4 In the continued absence of a Land Tribunal and Heritage Trust, the Planning Authority has introduced two schemes: the Cottonera Balconies Scheme (1996-1998) and the Urban Environmental Partnership Scheme (June 1998). These are described in more detail in 4.1.13.

### Development within Urban Conservation Areas

**In addition to the general objective of urban rehabilitation, the Structure Plan is committed to the enhancement of urban conservation areas (UCO12). The Plan encourages rehabilitation and suitable conversions within Urban Conservation Areas, particularly: residential development (HOU2, HOU7); upgrading of shopping centres (COM7); and the sensitive introduction of tourist uses (TOU9).**

3.2.5 The general approach to rehabilitation within Urban conservation Areas is discussed in detail in Chapter 4. This section deals with a specific aspect of urban conservation: the extent to which new development is happening within urban conservation areas. This analysis is based on the Strategic Projects Monitoring Database and the UCA boundaries (including the UCAs which have been approved by the Planning Authority Board but are still pending public consultation). Since many village core areas have not been formally defined as UCAs they have been excluded from this analysis, thus the results below are not comprehensive.

3.2.6 In the period monitored in the report, a number of development projects were approved which, in floorspace coverage, are shown in Table 54.

Table 54 - Floorspace in UCAs between 1996-1997 (In m<sup>2</sup>)

UCA	1996	1997	1996/97
Dwellings	12365	13094	25459
Offices	1345	388	1733
Retail	2623	5929	8552
Tourism	0	3283	3283
Recreation	228	240	468
Agriculture	0	828	828
Services	3899	770	4669
Manufacturing	80	152	232
Warehousing	655	1218	1873
Parking	5721	4976	10697
Total	26916	30878	57794

Source: Strategic Projects Monitoring Database, PA

(Dwellings Floorspace Figures only include dwelling applications with 3 or more units).

3.2.7 The data indicates that the amount of new urban development taking place in urban conservation areas (UCAs) has not increased during 1996 and 1997. A total of 5% of all approved floorspace included in the strategic projects monitoring database was in UCAs.

3.2.8 The majority of development projects in UCAs were medium-sized residential developments, mainly in Gozo (55 projects), and Grand Harbours (29). In the North Harbours Local Plan Area there were a number of large residential developments of more than 1000 square metres particularly in Sliema and St. Julians. This is in line with Structure Plan objectives aimed at increasing the population in the Inner Harbour region.

3.2.9 Other large developments include rehabilitation of the Xara Palace in Mdina, a 20 flat and 33 garage re-development in Floriana and a Crisis Intervention Centre in Cospicua. A large proportion of these developments are for new developments rather than conversions which may not be achieving the objective of enhancement (see Section 4.1.33).

3.2.10 Even though the nature of approved developments in UCAs are mainly residential, which is in line with Structure Plan policies, only 5% of all medium and major development has occurred in UCAs. Thus, implementation of this policy has not succeeded in achieving the underlying objective of the Structure Plan. It may necessitate introduction of additional incentives and initiatives in order to stimulate both public and private sector investment.

3.2.11 A total of 19 rural buildings were approved as either needing conversion or extensions. They included extensions and re-erectments of pig, sheep, poultry, cow and rabbit farms. Other conversions approved included replacement of dangerous buildings.

### 3.3 Using Land and Buildings Efficiently

3.3.1 The Structure Plan encourages more efficient use of land and of buildings. It indicates the need to phase out old rent laws which are stagnating the rental market, encourages development on previously used (recycled land) and encourages conversion of old buildings by integrating more than one unit into a single home or vice versa: the conversion of large dwellings into smaller units.

### ***Development on recycled land***

3.3.2 Development within urban areas can occur either on previously developed land or on virgin land. Section 3.1 included a discussion of residential development on recycled land. This section looks at all medium-sized and major developments that were approved on recycled land (demolition and redevelopment) as well as additions or alterations to existing developments from the Strategic Projects Monitoring Database.

3.3.3 Spatial analysis indicates that 53% of all development approved during 1996/97 was on previously recycled land. All Local Plan Areas registered some type of development on recycled land. The large part of development on recycled land occurred in the South (14.5Ha) and Central (17.9Ha) Local Plan Areas.

3.3.4 The main users of floorspace within recycled land were dwellings and parking. Land taken up on previously utilised land amounts to 454,065m<sup>2</sup>. Floorspace increase on previously utilised land was mostly accounted for by dwellings (150,563m<sup>2</sup>), parking (75,070m<sup>2</sup>), manufacturing (65,163m<sup>2</sup>), retail (49,548m<sup>2</sup>), warehousing (42,157m<sup>2</sup>) and offices (21,834m<sup>2</sup>).

3.3.5 The above points indicate that development on recycled land is moving forward at a rate that should be encouraged, as it reflects an intensive use of land.

## 4. Upgrading the Environment

The third and final goal of the Structure Plan is to radically improve the quality of all aspects of the environment of both urban and rural areas (3.5).

This chapter monitors trends in respect of the following policies and which have a significant meaning on all aspects of the environment of both the urban and rural areas:-

- i) Urban Conservation;
- ii) Development Control and design guidelines for new urban areas;
- iii) Halting the spread of development into the countryside;
- iv) Marine Conservation Areas.

### 4.1 Urban Conservation

4.1.1 The Structure Plan's strategy for areas containing special historical or architectural interest is to designate Urban Conservation Areas (UCAs). The UCA designation affords such areas the nature of protection needed to safeguard their character and enhance the environmental quality of these areas.

#### Designation of Urban Conservation Areas

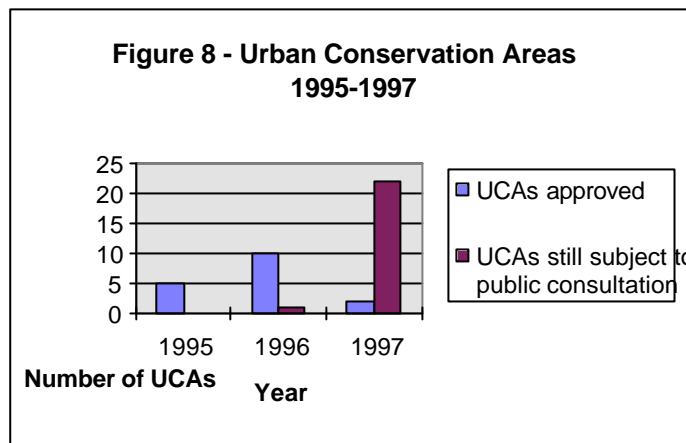
The Structure Plan designates Urban Conservation Areas (UCAs), where policies for environmental upgrading are to be strictly applied (UCO1, UCO2, UCO3, UCO6, UCO8, UCO9, UCO10, UCO14, UCO15, 7.4, 7.7, TRA4, RDS7). A UCA is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Structure Plan strategy in this area rests on particularly strict control of development, coupled with an injection of public and private funds for rehabilitation (section 15.3).

The areas specified in the Plan for immediate protection are: Valletta and Floriana; the Three Cities (Vittoriosa, Senglea and Cospicua); Mdina; the Cittadella and its environs (Gozo); the central area of Sliema; the central area of Hamrun and other village core areas in the Temporary Provision Schemes (UCO1).

The Valletta Harbours Heritage Conservation and Improvement Area will be defined with an overall aim of enforcing the role of Valletta/Floriana as a mixed use capital city with increases both in households and employment (UCO3).

4.1.2 During 1996 and 1997, 10 and 2 UCAs were designated respectively. Despite the declining trend evident in the last year, there has been an improvement over the previous monitoring period, during which only 5 UCAs were designated. The slowdown during 1997 was principally due to a lack of staff resources.





4.1.3 In addition to the approved UCAs, 22 new UCAs, mainly in Gozo, have been approved by the Planning Authority Board but are to be re-assessed following public consultation.

4.1.4 Table 55 shows the Urban Conservation Areas designated and pending (identified as being subject to public consultation) between 1993-1997.

Table 55 - Urban Conservation Areas designated and pending (1993-1997)

Year	Status	Number of UCAs	Area protected (ha)
1993-1995	Approved	6	236
1996	Approved	10	356
	Subject to public consultation	1	62
1997	Approved	3	84
	Subject to public consultation	21	315

*Source: EMU, PA*

4.1.5 As recommended by UCO2, the main source of data for UCA designation is the Local Plan process. In fact, UCAs in the Marsaxlokk Bay, Grand Harbour, and North West local plan areas have almost all been approved, while the UCAs for Gozo await public consultation. In some cases where development pressures are considerable, UCAs are designated before the commencement of a local plan for the area. Examples of this are Sliema and St. Julians.

Table 56 - Urban Conservation Areas approved or subject to public consultation (1993-1997)

Year	UCAs Approved	UCAs approved but still subject to public consultation
1995	Cittadella; Mdina; Valletta; Floriana; Birzebbuga; Marsaxlokk	none
1996	St. Paul's Bay; Dingli; Mellieha; Mgarr; Rabat; Cospicua; Senglea; Vittoriosa; Kalkara; The Three Villages.	Paola & Tarxien
1997	Sliema, St. Julians, Paola and Tarxien	Kercem; Qala; Rabat & Fontana; Xewkija; Ghammar; Gharb; Ghasri; Ghajnsielem; San Lawrenz; Santa Lucia; Mgarr (Gozo); Munxar; Nadur; San Pietru; Sannat; Sannat - Triq Ta'Cenc; Xaghra - Triq Srug; Xaghra Village; Xaghra - Triq Marsalforn; Xaghra - Triq Mannar; Zebbug

*Source: EMU, PA*

4.1.6 UCO1 sets out a list of priority UCAs: Valletta; Floriana; the Three Cities; Mdina; Cittadella (Gozo); Sliema; and some of the village core areas have now been designated as UCAs. Until all the village core areas (set out in the Temporary Provisions Schemes) are designated, implementation of UCO1 remains a central objective for the Environmental Management Unit (EMU).

4.1.7 The Structure Plan identifies Valletta in conjunction with adjacent Harbours, as the principal Urban Conservation Area. The Grand Harbour Local Plan has taken on board the general direction of the policy, and its main thrust is the reinforcement of the vitality and viability of Valletta as the nation's capital and as a residential, commercial and touristic centre. It aims to continue the role of Valletta/Floriana as a mixed use capital city (see Grand Harbour Local Plan - section 5.17).

## Rehabilitation Initiatives for Urban Conservation

The Structure Plan is committed to the enhancement of conservation areas (UCO12). The Plan encourages rehabilitation and suitable conversions within Urban Conservation Areas, particularly: residential development (HOU2, HOU7); upgrading of shopping centres (COM7); and the sensitive introduction of tourist uses (TOU9). Wherever possible, buildings, gardens and other structures of historical interest will be conserved through a combination of control and positive intervention (UCO13).

The Structure Plan envisaged recycling of fees and fines as upgrading grants for buildings in Conservation Areas through a Land Tribunal and Trust. It also proposes the establishment of an independent Heritage Trust, funded jointly by government and the private sector (15.19, 19.7, UCO12, UCO13, UCO17).

The Plan also calls for a government-funded pilot project of urban rehabilitation, in one of the smaller Urban Conservation Areas, as a priority (UCO18).

## Public Sector Initiatives

### *Central Government*

4.1.8 Central government, which is a major source of funding of urban conservation initiatives, has increased its funding over the last monitoring period. A major part of the funds went towards government offices in historical buildings, both at a central and municipal level. Support for the Government's principal rehabilitation projects, the Valletta Rehabilitation Project and the Cottonera Rehabilitation Project, has remained constant over the monitoring period. Valletta received the large part of the funds, much of which was spent on the paving of Republic Street, and on cleaning and maintaining the bastions. The total amount allocated for these two projects fell with respect to the previous period.

4.1.9 At Fort St. Elmo, conversion of the Captain's house for use by the Sovereign Military Order of St. John continued during the monitoring period.

4.1.10 During 1997, Government was studying international experience with a view to preparing a white paper on a National Trust for Malta (UCO17). No progress has been registered towards setting up a Land Tribunal and Trust (UCO12). The aim of these initiatives is to provide vehicles for joint public/private sector projects. Through government support for NGOs, which also raise funds from the private sector, this already takes place to a certain extent. NGOs have noted a decrease in public sponsorship for restoration projects during this period, while funds for tourist attractions with historical themes are increasing.

4.1.11 Principal projects undertaken by the Government are listed in Table 57:

Table 57 - Government Rehabilitation Projects (1996-97)

Ministry	Vote	Expenditure	
		1996	1997
<b>Office of Prime Minister</b>	Rehabilitation of Historical Sites and OASI Centre	33,000	20,000
<b>Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Environment</b>	Rehabilitation of Palazzo Parisio	40,000	-----
<b>Ministry of Education and National Culture</b>	Refurbishment of Detail office, maintenance of Government Schools and restoration of Studies Centre.	150,000	630,000
<b>Ministry of Justice and Local Councils</b>	Rehabilitation of House of Catalunya, Municipal Centres and other refurbishment works.	160,000	30,000
<b>Ministry of Public Works and Construction</b>	Rehabilitation of forts, fortifications and historical places, include. VRP and CRP	700,000	1,200,000
<b>Ministry of Health, Care of Elderly and Family Affairs</b>	Refurbishment Works	120,000	25,000
<b>Ministry for Social Security</b>	Refurbishment works	120,000	25,000
<b>Ministry for Housing</b>	Refurbishment works	50,000	40,000
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		1,373,000	1,970,000

Source: Estimates 1997, 1998

4.1.12 The Bank of Valletta International has recently set up a trust (BOVI Trust) to promote the conservation of national built heritage.

#### ***The Planning Authority***

4.1.13 The Planning Authority has offered two funding schemes in fulfillment of the Structure Plan's commitment towards Urban Rehabilitation. By means of the Cottonera Balconies Scheme a sum of Lm17,689 was paid to the public during 1996-1998 in timber balcony refurbishment grants. Of this amount, the Planning Authority has paid Lm15,000 and the remainder was contributed by the Cottonera Rehabilitation Committee. This item was listed as a pilot project on historic building grants in the previous monitoring report - the scope of the project was narrowed to target wooden balconies in the Cottonera area.

4.1.14 In a second scheme, the Urban Environmental Improvement Partnership Scheme aims to improve public open spaces by assisting local councils to undertake high quality urban renewal projects, to benefit the local community and the local environment. A sum of Lm100,000 was made available by the Planning Authority under agreement entered into with the Department of Finance in 1996. Funding for any one scheme was set at a maximum of 50 percent of the total cost of works. Seven projects, including a pedestrianisation scheme in Mosta (Lm27,000) and a regional garden in Zabbar (Lm38,000), were sponsored. Upgrading works in the main thoroughfare at Hamrun/Sta. Venera were also given a partial grant of Lm21,000. The majority of these projects were for improvements to town centres.

4.1.15 The Structure Plan's proposed pilot project on urban conservation in a small UCA, has still not been taken up.

### *Urban Upgrading in the Local Plans*

4.1.16 The Grand Harbour Local Plan, which was published for consultation in the monitoring period, includes a number of initiatives to improve environmental quality in urban areas. The Plan envisages environmental upgrading to be achieved through the designation of Urban Conservation Areas, reduction of the impact of transport on the urban environment, improvements to landscape; and upgrading historical features.

4.1.17 The Grand Harbour Local Plan area is characterized by its wealth of historical heritage. Urban Conservation Areas are designated in Valletta, Floriana; Marsa; Senglea; Cospicua; Vittoriosa; and, Kalkara. Particular attention is given to good design in Valletta (GV13-17) and Vittoriosa (GG14). A Cottonera Waterside Revival Area is proposed (GB11). Monuments will be protected and restored (GH04, GH05) while the Planning Authority is to maintain a flexible approach to development in historical buildings, in order to secure the restoration and future of historic buildings. Historical trails have been proposed which will extend along the bastions and historical sites in all the local councils (eg. GF12, GI08). The Local Plan also provides encouragement for bastions improvement and reuse. It gives protection in advance to any buildings which may be listed by the Planning Authority in the present or the future (GH03).

4.1.18 The Plan also proposes upgrading projects linked to specific areas or buildings. It proposes, for example, that Valletta's City Gate and Freedom Square are redesigned, it encourages the restoration and reuse of Il-Macina and the derelict site of the Admiral's house, situated in Triq is-Sirena, Senglea, and it provides support for Enemalta in improving the Marsa power station site. Uses such as oil storage within Kalkara Creek at It-Toqba as well as other small or medium sized industries in inappropriate areas are to be relocated. The Local Plan also identifies Opportunity Areas such as the one at Il-Menqa. Although the commercial port use is to remain, environmental upgrading is expected to take place in conjunction with improved public access.

### ***The Local Councils***

4.1.19 Local Councils have also emerged as a major source of funding for urban rehabilitation and upgrading. Projects range from the provision of paving and street furniture to restoration of town squares, monuments, listed buildings and churches.

4.1.20 The data below results from a mail survey carried out by the Planning Authority, among Local Councils. A total of 24 local councils indicated that during 1996 and 1997, a minimum of Lm1.3 million were spent on urban upgrading, involving an area of at least 27,300 m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>36</sup> This indicates an increase in local council funding for urban upgrading, when compared to the Lm620,000 spent during the 1993-1995 period. The level of increase noted here may be partly attributed to an improved survey response rate: only some 17% of local councils replied to the survey reported in the previous period, compared to a 50% response rate this time.

4.1.21 A summary of Local Council projects for urban upgrading during 1996 and 1997 is presented in Table 58.

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<sup>36</sup> Not all projects were specified in terms of financial value or area.

Table 58 - Local Council urban upgrading projects (1996-1997)

Local Council	Project name	Estimated Expenses (Lm)	Area (m sq.)
ATTARD	Village square conservation, new pavements at Triq Nutar Zarb.	75,000	2,200
B'KARA	Embellishment of urban environment	85,000	*
FLORIANA	Restoration of pavements and the Wignacourt Tower facade, landscaping, and the storm water catchment project.	*	*
GHAJNSIELEM	Regeneration of paving and landscaping.	28,886	2,711
HAMRUN	Restoration of square, landscaping, pavements	374,000	6,933
LUQA	Heritage Conservation	9,100	*
MARSA	Urban upgrading	72,000	*
MOSTA	Upgrading of Triq Il-Kurat Calleja	38,038	1,396
MUNXAR	Embellishment of site at 12th December Street	4,208	125
QORMI	Upgrading of paving in Main Street, restoration of "Kristu Rxoxt" niche, restoration of "San Gwakkin" niche.	60,000	12,200
RABAT (Gozo)	Upgrading of streets and landscaping, opening of a war shelter.	51,745	1994
S. PAWL IL-BAHAR	Paving of street near the Wignacourt Tower.	3,500	828
SAN GWANN	Restoration of flour mill, Roman Tower: Ta' Ciedd, Chapel of San Gwann ta' l-Gharghar, Cart Ruts, Chapel of San Filippu and San Gakbu, Ta' Indri Garrison	*	*
SAN LAWRENZ	Restoration of Triq il-Qadima	2,000	
SWIEQI	Restoration of pavements, new pavements & public garden	53,757	*
TARXIEN	Upgrading of landscaping	20,200	*
XAGHRA	Restoration of cross monument at Pjazza Vittorja and paving	11,000	*
XEWKJA	Restoration of farmhouse, Historic windmill	*	*
XGHAJRA	Restoration and rehabilitation of the Batteries, Heritage Trail and upgrading of landscaping.	25,500	2,103
ZABBAR	Upgrading of public garden, playing field	152,000	6,755
BALZAN	Restoration of village core	16,426.	1550
DINGLI	Rehabilitation of village core	*	*
MQABBA	Rehabilitation of village core, signs, the old hospital, restoration of the "Municipju", commemorative plaques	300,000	11,100
SANTA LUCIJA	Santa Lucija Hypogeum.	*	*

\* data not provided

Source: Planning Authority survey of local councils, 1998

## Private Sector Investment

4.1.22 Private sector funding for restoration in UCAs continues to focus on private dwellings. Although this type of information is difficult to obtain, analysis of soft information suggests that during the monitoring period, the level of private sector investment in residential units in UCAs has dropped. Most development tends to involve only minor changes. Although the total number of new dwellings approved in UCAs is increasing the majority of them are new developments (see section 4.1.30).

4.1.23 Private sector funds are often channelled through non-government organisations such as Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna, and Din L-Art Helwa. It is the general view of the main heritage NGOs that private sector funding for conservation projects has all but dried up during 1996 and 1997.

## Development Control in the Urban Conservation Areas

Effective development control is a vital element in the strategy to preserve and enhance Urban Conservation Areas (UCO6, UCO13). New buildings within Urban Conservation Areas must respect their surroundings (UCO8). The Structure Plan aims to remove recent accretions to buildings and relocate existing inappropriate uses (UCO5). The Authority is to encourage the suitable development of gap sites and discourage demolition creating gaps (UCO8, UCO9). Satellite dishes will only be permitted in Urban Conservation Areas if they are hidden from public view (UCO15).

4.1.24 The framework for development control in UCAs is now up and running, supported by policy and design guidance and a decision-making framework as advised by the Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC).

### ***Policy and Design Guidance for Urban Conservation***

4.1.25 There has been no further specific guidance on UCAs since the 'Development Control within UCAs' policy document was prepared. The only two policy documents approved during this monitoring period which have indirect relevance are the 'Local Shops' policy (Parking Provision for Local Shops, Offices and Catering Establishments) which deals with parking requirements, and the Height Limitation Guidance, which merely confirms the height limitations in the 1988 Temporary Provisions Schemes.

### ***Specialist Advice on Urban Conservation Matters***

4.1.26 The Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) continued to fulfill its function as a specialist advisor to the Planning Authority. Meeting 300 times during the monitoring period, it processed more than 1000 files each year. Each week two meetings take place to make recommendations on applications, and an additional meeting is dedicated to site visits. The general direction of the HAC during this period was to make its procedures and practices more efficient. To this end it has introduced a small element of delegation to the Urban Conservation Team of the EMU. Minor changes to buildings in UCAs and to listed buildings are now being dealt with by the EMU under delegated powers. In addition, the 1997 GDO changes have widened the range of minor developments that do not require development permission, although they do require that the Planning Authority is notified.

4.1.27 The Cultural Heritage and Urban Conservation Team of the EMU continues to work on the processing of development applications, liaison with the HAC, and scheduling. Staff reductions in the Team have however, seriously jeopardised its effective operation.

4.1.28 EMU has now set up computerised databases of scheduled buildings and the buildings in the National Protective Inventory.

### ***Urban Conservation in Practice***

4.1.29 Floorspace approved in UCAs is indicated in Table 59. This analysis includes development in all UCAs (including those on which public consultation is still awaited).

Table 59 - Floorspace (m<sup>2</sup>) approved in UCAs between (1993-1997)

Floorspace in UCAs	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Dwellings	6176	12094	4659	12365	13094
Offices	12141	2807	1070	1345	388
Retail	816	1047	473	2623	5929
Tourism	0	0	0	0	3283
Recreational	223	1022	283	228	240
Social and Community	5050	12359	240	3899	828
Agriculture				0	770
Manufacturing	0	0	0	80	152
Warehousing	778	364	281	655	1218
Parking	2072	8599	2558	5721	4976
Totals	27256	38292	9564	26916	30878

Source: Strategic Projects Monitoring Database, PA

Table 59 shows trends by the type of approved development in UCAs. It reflects an increase in approved floorspace in dwellings, retail, warehousing and manufacturing. Tourism and agriculture have made some inroads during the monitoring period, while approved floorspace in offices, recreation, social and community and parking experienced some decline.

#### *Residential development in UCAs*

4.1.30 The increasing trend for dwellings in UCAs reflects one of the objectives of the Structure Plan, which seeks to encourage growth in the number of residents in UCAs. It also indicates investment in UCAs, another Structure Plan objective. However, results must be viewed in the light of increased designation of Urban Conservation Areas (some 39 areas during 1996 and 1997).

4.1.31 The dwellings floorspace figures above only include major dwelling applications with three or more units. More detail on new dwellings in UCAs is available from the Dwellings Database, which includes all dwelling applications which have been approved by the Planning Authority. The increasing trend in residential development within UCAs indicated in the Dwellings Database is also evident, with 222 dwelling units approved in 1996 and 264 approvals in 1997 (Table 60). Most of these approvals are in the UCAs in Gozo (217), with fewer in the North Harbours (86), the North West (79) and Grand Harbour (59) local plan areas. Clearly these figures are directly related to the distribution of UCAs across the Islands, and the analysis includes the UCAs which have been approved by the Planning Authority Board but are still awaiting public consultation.

Table 60 - Number of dwellings approved in UCAs (1996-1997)

Number of dwellings approved in UCAs	1996	1997	Total
Dwelling units	222	264	486

Source: Dwellings Database, PA

4.1.32 Further analysis of the dwelling units approved in UCAs indicate that the type of development taking place, although small in actual number (6% of all dwelling units), may not be in keeping with the aims of the Structure Plan in designating UCAs. In addition, 60% of all dwelling units approved in UCAs are in apartment blocks, 15% are in maisonettes, and only 24% are in the form of terraced houses, which may not indicate the ideal trend in the structure of development of urban conservation areas.

#### *Other development in UCAs*

4.1.33 The increasing trend indicated in the warehousing sector runs contrary to policies seeking to relocate inappropriate uses out of UCAs. The increase in retailing floorspace, particularly in Valletta, on the other hand, is compatible with the relevant policies of the Structure Plan which seek to contribute to the vitality of Urban Conservation Areas. Offices in UCAs continue to decline, due

to restrictions imposed on new offices in Valletta and Floriana by the Structure Plan. A small number of restoration projects for palaces in Valletta have been refused due to COM2.

4.1.34 Comments made in the first monitoring report about the improved quality of restoration efforts in certain areas of Malta remain valid. In addition to restoration of properties in Attard, Hal Balzan, Hal Lija, Mosta, Naxxar, Gharghur, and Haz-Zebbug, mentioned in the previous monitoring report, Siggiewi is also benefiting from sensitive restoration projects. Despite continued growth in awareness of Malta's built heritage, preferences and financial constraints in all areas tend to favour the replacement of traditional wooden fixtures on older buildings with aluminium ones.

4.1.35 Another major issue for urban conservation (also highlighted in the previous monitoring report), is the failure of the Development Control decisions to reflect the objectives of the Structure Plan. It mainly reflects the lack of support of the Development Control Commission for Heritage Advisory Committee and case officers' recommendations when conservation policy is weighed against social (usually financial) considerations.

4.1.36 The previous monitoring report noted that the quality of case officer's assessments was variable and that some assessments identified in the 1995 Development Control File Audit failed to take full account of urban conservation objectives. Since no Development Control File Audit has been carried out since 1995, it has been impossible to re-evaluate this finding in the light of more up-to-date information.

4.1.37 A third major issue again highlighted in the previous monitoring report, relates to the Structure Plan's approach to urban conservation. The 1993-1995 monitoring report noted that forceful practical arguments have been mounted against this approach, including: the unsuitability of some of the older housing for modern living, particularly due to size limitations, dampness, traffic access problems, and parking problems; and the financial burdens of owning an old property. Perhaps the most potent argument is the economic one: conservation of older properties is more expensive than redevelopment, and the replacement of wood by aluminum fixtures is more affordable than that of wooden ones. The arguments on size and dampness can be overcome more easily through the joining up of adjacent properties and the use of modern technical solutions. Government grants towards conversion of old properties continue to be insensitive to conservation objectives, often subsidising harmful alterations to properties of conservation value.

4.1.38 Some progress has been made in overcoming some of the intractable problems like parking in the UCAs which posed a practical problem in the development of commercial projects. However, these projects can now contribute to Commuted Parking Payment Schemes in a number of areas, and no longer need to provide off-street parking.

4.1.39 Despite indications in the 1995 and 1996 WSC data that population continues to decline in UCAs, observation suggests that occupancy might not be falling at quite the same rate. This issue, however, deserves further study in the light of Water Services Corporation data for 1997 on residential vacancies, which will soon become available. Nevertheless, the Structure Plan's conservation strategy still appears vulnerable and it is clear that careful re-evaluation is likely to be required in this area.



## Traffic and Parking in Valletta and Floriana

The Structure Plan identifies traffic and parking as a major problem in Urban Conservation Areas, but particularly in Valletta and Floriana. The intention is to enforce peak hour traffic restraint to Valletta/Floriana and other Urban Conservation Areas, coupled with a policy of restraining parking standards within the cores (15.6, TEM10, TRA4).

### Peak hour traffic in Valletta/Floriana

4.1.40 Figures on peak hour flows in Valletta/Floriana were updated in 1997, and indicate that traffic flows fell slightly during the peak periods, probably due to lack of parking space in Valletta. Increases in licensing fees for vehicles entering Valletta and Floriana were announced in late 1997.

Table 61 - Average peak hourly weekday traffic in Valletta/Floriana(1990-1997)

Average peak hourly weekday traffic in Valletta/Floriana	Jan/Feb 1990	Jan/Feb 1996	Jan/Feb 1997*
Cars entering St. Anne's Street towards Valletta (morning peak 7:30-8:30am)	3154	2552	2303
Cars entering St. Anne's Street away from Valletta (afternoon peak 16:45 -17:45)	2202	3202	2938

\*Figures for 1997 are for the hour from 8:00 to 9:00am for the morning peak and 5:00 to 6:00pm for the afternoon peak.

Source: Transport Planning Unit traffic counts, PA

4.1.41 A lunch-time peak has developed in traffic flowing from Valletta between 11am and 2pm, of 2620 vehicles per hour.

### Peripheral public parking in Valletta/Floriana

4.1.42 Healthy patronage of the new car park at Floriana continues. Recent moves towards stronger enforcement of parking legislation are likely to be already having a positive effect. The Grand Harbour Local Plan outlines recommendations for pedestrianisation and residents only parking areas, which should once again increase the patronage of car parks (section Transport section 2.8.23). The Plan also recommends that a park and ride facility is implemented at Blata I-Bajda (GT07).

4.1.43 Patronage at the Sliema car park has been stronger than that at Valletta, possibly due to the lack of alternatives for parking. Nevertheless the developer applied for a change of use from parking to commercial for part of the structure, during the monitoring period. This application has recently been approved (during 1998).

## 4.2 Listed Buildings

4.2.1 The Structure Plan recommends that all items in the National Protective Inventory (NPI) are designated and afforded the same protection as Urban Conservation Areas (15.10).

### National Protective Inventory

The Structure Plan calls for the designation for conservation of all items listed in the National Protective Inventory and continued research to add to the list (15.10, UCO4).

4.2.2 The NPI is a list of buildings and spaces which although they may be physically separate from Urban Conservation areas, require protection. Each building, structure or space has been surveyed and the NPI includes a site plan, photography of the facade of the structure, and brief descriptive details on each entry, which are recorded on cards. Surveys are assessed by qualified persons and an appropriate level of grading is suggested.

4.2.3 During the two-year monitoring period, 815 properties were surveyed for the NPI, in parts of Sliema and of Rabat. This figure is less than the 1000 per year average reported in the previous monitoring report. The reason for the slowdown in the NPI process is that it was under review during 1997. The comments made in the previous monitoring report are still valid: the process is functioning too slowly to satisfy the Planning Authority's requirements for property scheduling. However, the process is now being reviewed to make it more cost-effective and efficient.

4.2.4 The majority of properties in the NPI list are in the South of Malta. Of the buildings surveyed, 175 (21%) were recommended for scheduling at Grade 1 or 2, as shown in the chart below. This is a slight improvement over the last monitoring period when only 18% of properties surveyed were to be recommended for such grades, making the NPI survey more effective for scheduling purposes. Some properties have not yet been assigned a grade.

Table 62 - Categorisation of properties in the NPI list.

Grading	No protection	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Ungraded	Grand Total
Total	204	2	173	361	75	815

Source : EMU, PA

## Scheduled Buildings

**The Structure Plan establishes a grading system for all scheduled buildings:**

- **Grade 1 buildings are those of outstanding architectural or historical interest, for which demolition, or alteration which impairs the setting or changes the external or internal appearance of the building, is prohibited.**
- **Grade 2 buildings are those of some architectural or historical interest. Permission to demolish such buildings will not normally be given.**
- **Grade 3 properties, of relatively minor architectural interest, may be demolished provided the replacement building is in harmony with its surroundings (UC07).**

**Accretions to historic buildings will be removed, original structures and finishes will be made good and help will be provided for relocating inappropriate uses (UC05).**

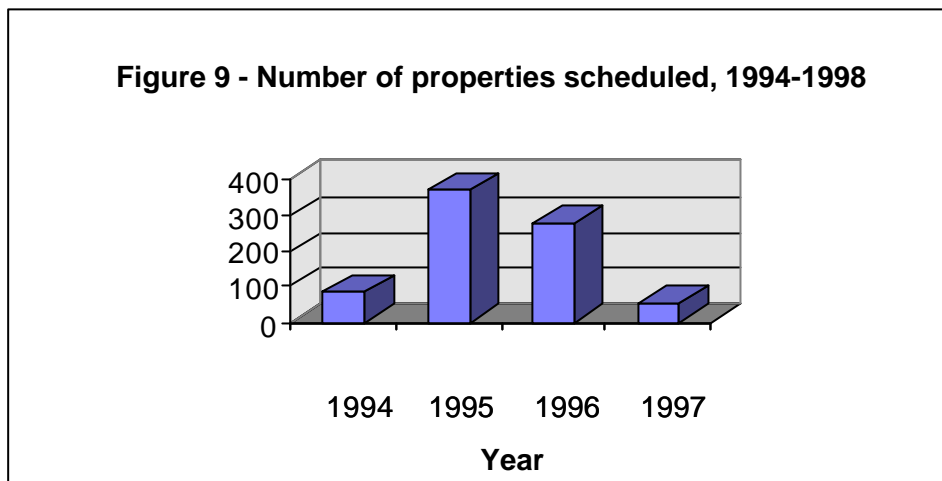
4.2.5 Properties in the National Protective Inventory are being scheduled under the Development Planning Act of 1992. The number of properties scheduled during the monitoring period was 323, of which 273 were scheduled in 1996, and 50 in 1997. Table 63 indicates the location of scheduled buildings in the various Local Plan Areas. Since many of the buildings and spaces in the NPI are in the South and Marsaxlokk Local Plan Areas, most scheduled buildings are in these areas.

Table 63 - Distribution of Scheduled Properties by the Local Plan Areas.

Local Plan Area	M'Xlokk	N.West	Grand Harbours	North Harbours	Gozo	South	Central	Total
1996	52	4	2	58	2	150	5	273
1997	1	7	1	3	8	26	4	50
Total	53	11	3	61	10	176	9	323

Source: EMU, PA

4.2.6 As Table 63 indicates, considerably less scheduling took place during 1997 than during 1996. Even 1996 (273 buildings) involved less scheduling than 1995 (366 buildings). It is now considered that a further grading level should be introduced, a Grade 2\*, which will help to fill the gap between Grade 1 buildings and Grade 2 buildings, as defined above. The issue of Grade 2\* and its scope needs to be examined as part of the Structure Plan Review.



*Source: EMU, PA*

4.2.7 Work to schedule buildings under particular threat from development continued during the monitoring period, particularly in the North Harbours Local Plan area. The comments in the previous monitoring report on the lack of success in securing re-locations of inappropriate uses (UCO5), and removing inappropriate accretions, have remained valid.

4.2.8 The Planning Authority has continued to monitor restoration works on Grade 1 scheduled buildings. Permissions being monitored include: Dwejra Tower; Santa Cilja Tower; and, Mistra Gate.

## 4.3 Rural Conservation and Landscape

4.3.1 The countryside provides the backdrop for Malta's agricultural sector, for a major segment of its recreational activity, and, to a lesser extent, various residential, commercial, industrial and social uses. The Structure Plan's strategy is to designate Rural Conservation Areas in which development will be rigidly controlled. The Plan also advocated the need for particular areas to be afforded special protection. Positive measures are also proposed for the careful management and enhancement of degraded areas.

### Designation of Rural Conservation Areas

4.3.2 The Structure Plan designated most of the countryside as a Rural Conservation Area (RCA) as identified in the Structure Plan Key Diagram. In these areas there is a blanket presumption against urbanisation (15.28), and positive measures and investment are proposed to upgrade them.

#### Surveys

**The Structure Plan calls for a number of surveys as a prelude to the designation of potential protected areas. These include surveys of archaeological sites (ARC5 and ARC7), agricultural land quality (AHF3) and degraded landscapes (RCO19).**

4.3.3 As part of the local plan process, extensive environmental surveys are also undertaken. In effect, these surveys constitute a major source of data for the scheduling process. Surveys of the environment in rural and marine areas of the North Harbours Local Plan and Dwejra in Gozo were completed during 1996 and 1997.

4.3.4 AHF3 calls for a survey of the inherent agricultural quality of all agricultural land to supplement the 1989/1990 agricultural land use survey. No such survey was undertaken during the monitoring period. During 1996, a survey on the agricultural landscape of the North West of Malta was completed, as part of the North West Local Plan process. The survey was based on agricultural land quality data supplied by the Agriculture Department.

4.3.5 Work started in the EMU during 1997 on a draft classification of agricultural land, which is to dovetail with Agriculture Department's efforts in this direction. In the absence of a national dataset on agricultural land quality, this classification system will enable the Planning Authority to assess the agricultural value of any site on which development is proposed.

4.3.6 RCO 19 commits the Planning Authority to carry out surveys to identify sites where the habitat or landscape is degraded, and to review them every two years. Although resources for a full national survey to identify degraded sites were not available during the review period, information on such sites is constantly being collected. For example, through the local plan process, degraded sites have been identified and recorded during this review period in the Grand Harbours and North Harbours local plan areas. Another opportunity to identify degraded sites is provided by surveys commissioned for individual development applications, such as the Chadwick Lakes rehabilitation project, through the scheduling process, such as the Lunzjata valley in Gozo, or for the preparation of development briefs, such as the Marine Aquarium development brief. Information concerning the Identification of degraded habitats or landscape is therefore coming on stream on an incremental basis and given the level of resources, it seems unrealistic to envisage the completion of a national survey within a defined period.

#### ***Protected areas***

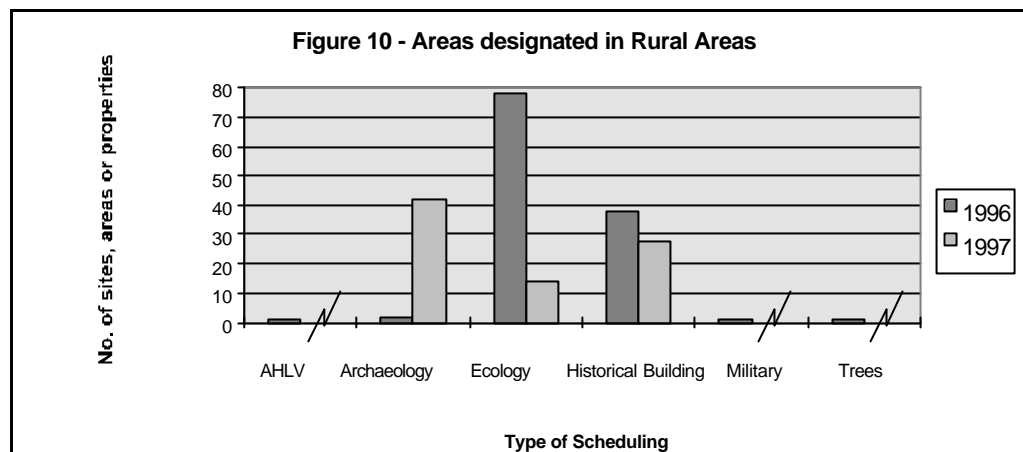
**Within Rural Conservation Areas the Structure Plan also calls for the designation of more specific protected areas (RCO1, RCO7, RCO10, RCO11, RCO12, ARC1, ARC2). Local Plans should develop appropriate measures of protection and enhancement for these areas (RCO3).**

**The Planning Authority is also charged with the designation and management of National Park(s) and potential World Heritage Sites (ARC4, TOU10, RCO14, RCO35, RCO36, RCO37, RCO38). These will include areas at Ta' Cenc, Qawra/Dwejra and Ggantija in Gozo, and Hagar Qim/Mnajdra in Malta.**

4.3.7 During the monitoring period, 215 sites and areas were designated for protection due to their ecological, scientific, archaeological, historical and landscape value (RCO1). This represents a considerable improvement in the implementation of RCO1, compared to the previous monitoring period. On average 25 sites and areas were scheduled per year in the first monitoring period, compared to this period when an average of 70 per year were scheduled. No scheduling of Areas of Agricultural value were approved during the monitoring period, as during the previous period.

4.3.8 Figure 10 presents the number of sites and areas scheduled in the countryside during 1996 and 1997.

4.3.9 A considerable amount of ecological scheduling was approved in 1996, with less in 1997 - the principal item of scheduling during 1996 was that of the coastal cliffs of South-West Malta. The inverse occurrence occurred with archeology where more scheduling was carried out in 1997 than in 1996, due to reallocation of staff resources. The concentration of scheduling has tended to vary by local plan area: preparation of a local plan entails detailed surveys of the area in question and so a fair amount of scheduling is done during this process, in accordance with RCO3. Most of the scheduling was done in the North West local plan area. This is the largest local plan area and it includes the major part of Malta's countryside.



Source: EMU, PA

4.3.10 Less scheduled sites and areas emerged out of the Grand Harbour and North Harbour local plan processes, since these areas have been heavily developed over the years. This does not exclude the potential for scheduling in later stages. A number of natural areas in these plan areas are worthy of scheduling. Table 64 lists scheduled sites and areas in the countryside, including historical and military buildings.

Table 64 - Scheduled sites, areas and properties in rural areas (1996-1997)

1996-1997	M'Xlokk	North West	Grand Harbour	North Harbours	Gozo	South	Central Zone	Grand Total
Archaeology	8	26	0	0	8	2	0	44
Ecology	6	65	14	0	5	2	0	92
Historical Building	14	33	2	0	8	17	2	76
Military	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Trees	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Grand Total	28	126	17	0	21	21	2	215

Source: EMU, PA

### **Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)**

**The Structure Plan offers protection for trees or stands of trees of aesthetic, historical, cultural, arboricultural or scientific interest in the form of Tree Preservation Orders (RCO33).**

4.3.11 No specific Tree Preservation Orders have been issued during the monitoring period. However, in Kennedy Grove at Salina Bay, an afforested area was scheduled during 1996. Also during 1996, 113.2 ha were scheduled at Buskett, of which a large portion is afforested, including stands of native woodland. In addition, when the coastal cliffs were scheduled in 1996, a large number of trees forming part of the cliffside maquis were scheduled. This is an improvement over the period from 1993 to 1995, when no afforested areas were scheduled.

### **Minor Islands**

**The Structure Plan makes a general presumption against further physical development on minor islands (RCO34).**

4.3.12 The previous monitoring report noted that minor islands had been declared nature reserves under the Environment Protection Act of 1991. No development has taken place on minor islands since then. An application for the extension of a hotel and tourist village on Comino was withdrawn by the applicant. It should be noted, however, that Comino is not included in the Structure Plan's definitions of a minor island.

## Conservation and Management Projects

### *Heritage Trails, Country parkways and rights of way*

**The Structure Plan proposes the designation of Heritage Trails (TOU11), Country Parkways, coastal and inland rights of way (REC13, AHF7) and a network of picnic areas (REC14).**

4.3.13 Although no trails and parkways were approved during the monitoring period, work progressed on the provision of footpath networks as proposed in the two draft local plans for the North West and the North Harbours areas.

4.3.14 Local councils have a major role to play in setting up and managing the country pathways that were identified in the local plan process. A significant amount of background work has already been completed to increase the provision of these pathways, although the legal framework, in terms of public rights of way legislation, is still not in place.

4.3.15 During 1997, the Planning Authority assisted the Xghajra Local Council with plans for their coastal heritage trail.

4.3.16 The Local Councils Department within the Ministry for Local Councils and Justice provides special funds to local councils, for rural upgrading. In 1996/1997, a special fund of Lm50,000 towards "country park facilities" was distributed in the form of 12 awards. The following projects were awarded funds:

- conservation of Wied Qirda at Zebbug;
- development of a grove into a recreational area at Zabbar;
- countryside pathway at Dingli Cliffs;
- a countryside pathway at Bir Miftuh, Gudja;
- embellishment of Ta' L-Anciritha and Tal-Gebra L-Kbira, at Gharghur;
- a country walkway starting in Alley no. 4 in Carmel Street, Luqa;
- installation of benches at Tlett is-Slaleb area, il-Kappella ta' San Nikola; and Torri Mamo, at Marsascalea;
- a picnic area at L-Ahrax tal-Mellieha;
- pathways at Wied il-Ghasel and Wied Speranza, Mosta;
- embellishment of San Gwann ta' Hal-Millieri, at Mqabba;
- embellishment of Wied San Blas, at Nadur;
- natural countryside passages and rehabilitation of rubble walls at Ta' Grunju area and embellishment of Hondoq ir-Rummien, Qala.

4.3.17 In 1997/98, another award of Lm100,000 was allocated in special funds for coastal and countryside recreational projects. All the projects chosen had already qualified for subsidy during the previous period, and were being awarded funds for the continuation of their projects. In 1995/1996, only Lm10,000 had been allocated for country park facilities and furniture, so the trend indicated is one of increased investment in countryside recreation projects by central government.<sup>37</sup>

4.3.18 For the first time in 1997/1998, Lm45,000 was allocated for environmental wardening schemes at Valletta; St. Paul's Bay and Sliema.

4.3.19 Rights of way have been included as permit conditions in large applications such as Fort Chambray, which was approved in the previous monitoring period. In the period under study, the Hilton redevelopment project included a right to public access to coast. However, they have not proved easy to implement in the case of minor agricultural applications, as provided for in AHF7.

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<sup>37</sup> Special Funds for Local Councils: Annual Reports 1996/1997 and 1997/1998.

## **Wildlife protection**

**The Structure Plan calls for collaboration amongst the agencies concerned to develop and implement policies for wildlife protection, particularly relating to threatened species (RCO13).**

4.3.20 In all cases the need to protect individual species is taken into account through ecological studies performed in advance of significant development in natural areas, but the remit to protect individual species lies with the other agencies, most notably the Environment Protection Department and occasionally the Department of Agriculture in the case of trees.

4.3.21 By means of conditions attached to scheduled sites and areas, the Planning Authority is able to influence activities carried out in threatened habitats. The Planning Authority has been involved in a number of monitoring programmes such as those relating to development at Kemmuna, Wied il-Qlejgha, and a number of other valleys. There has also been joint work with other agencies to protect individual species (e.g. protection of habitat of endemic species at Corinthia San Gorg and the Hilton). Enforcement action has been taken to protect habitats, for example at Salina and Ramla l-Hamra.

## **Countryside management**

**The Planning Authority is responsible for a programme of enhancement and management in the Rural Conservation Areas, in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture (RCO3, RCO6). The Structure Plan proposes that all protected areas are established, maintained and managed according to World Conservation Union guidelines and terminology (RCO14, RCO36).**

4.3.22 Structure Plan policies RCO6, RCO14, RCO20, RCO22, RCO25, RCO37 promote positive measures to improve the rural environment, including: landscaping, afforestation, rehabilitation of quarries, reuse of abandoned agricultural land, reuse and conversion of rural buildings; rehabilitation of degraded habitats, relocation of inappropriate uses; national parks, particularly at Ta' Cenc and Qawra/Dwejra; and, positive action for coastal cliffs, retaining walls and sand dunes. Management and upgrading projects implemented or initiated in the review period are discussed below.

4.3.23 At Ghajn Tuffieha, the Gaia Foundation has initiated a project funded by the Environment Protection Department (EPD), involving conservation of coastal habitats within the Bay, as well as an afforestation project. The measures introduced during the monitoring period include: part-time wardening, particularly at peak periods; afforestation; signage and interpretation; maintenance work; and the enforcement of existing legislation such as that on camping and offroading.

4.3.24 During the monitoring period, the Ministry for Public Works and Construction launched a National Country Parks initiative. A National Country Parks Steering Committee has been set up, of which the Planning Authority is a member. The Planning Authority is actively involved in preparing management plans for the three country parks which are: Burmarrad; Delimara; and, Ta' Qali. The Burmarrad Country Park has a water theme, although works have to date concentrated on the Kennedy Grove area. Much of the Country Park site has already been scheduled as a Level 1 site of ecological and scientific importance, being the largest extant saline marshland on the island. The site also includes Grade 1 buildings, scheduled due to historical connections with the salt works industry and an afforested area. By the end of 1997 advanced discussions were under way between the Planning Authority and the Ministry of Public Works and Construction, and the Terms of Reference for a project description statement had been prepared. At Delimara, work progressed during 1997 towards a pilot project wherein the Planning Authority was to prepare a management plan for the site recently

vacated by the Deutsche Welle transmitting station. Although quotations for the survey work which is to precede the management plan have been received, financial resources for the surveys have not been allocated. Finally as far as Ta' Qali is concerned, an approved Action Plan for the area is now in place which envisages significant enhancement to the area's recreational potential.

4.3.25 The Ministry for Agriculture also started work on the embellishment of the Chadwick Lakes - Wied il-Qlejgha valley during the review period. Assistance was provided by the Italian financial protocol and the Italian Military Mission in Malta. The main thrust of the project was to clean and rehabilitate the valley while extending its water catchment area. Although a number of surveys and other studies of the area have been finalised, no management plan has yet been drafted for the site.

4.3.26 During 1996, a full management plan was submitted for a national park at Ta' Cenc in Gozo. The proposal included wardening, interpretation of natural areas and maintenance and interpretation of the archaeological remains in the site. An element of the proposals included the changing of a nominal fee for entrance into the site, which is privately owned. The management plan is still being discussed with new owners of the land.

4.3.27 Towards the end of 1997, the Planning Authority also finalised two applications for funding under the LIFE EU-Third Countries programme. One of the applications dealt with the restoration and rehabilitation of sand dunes in the Maltese Islands, and the other aimed at the formulation of a management plan for the Qawra/Dwejra area in Gozo - a candidate World Heritage Site, in line with SP policies RCO35-37. Additional studies were completed for this area during the monitoring period.

4.3.28 The Planning Authority has adopted World Conservation Union guidelines for habitat protection and has been successful at ensuring their implementation through the scheduling process.

4.3.29 There has been no progress on the management of Il-Buskett, Hagar Qim, Ramla l-Hamra and Il-Maghluq, which were mentioned in the previous monitoring report.

4.3.30 The monitoring period has therefore witnessed new initiatives for countryside management. The emphasis of these initiatives is, however, more towards the provision of managed recreational sites rather than conservation of rare or threatened ecological or historical features. The continued work of the Gaia Foundation at Ghajn Tuffieha is the exception.

#### ***Degraded landscapes***

**The Structure Plan requires specific proposals from farmers to promote the rehabilitation of sites which have been misused or neglected. Ecological sites are to be protected from agricultural reclamation (RCO9, RCO20).**

4.3.31 One of the main causes of landscape degradation is the dumping of rubble or waste in the countryside. Some Local Councils have begun to tackle this problem, both by reporting incidents and by clearing up existing dump sites.

4.3.32 Agricultural reclamation of ecological areas is another cause for degradation, since works are often temporary and result in erosion. The 1997 amendments to the Development Planning Act have included land reclamation as a type of development. This enables the Planning Authority to better control land reclamation. However illegal reclamation is still taking place: especially in the Mellieha area.

4.3.33 In a number of local councils, projects have been initiated to clean up degraded valleys, and to restore them as watercourses. In some cases more discussions with Environment Protection Department or Planning Authority



personnel could have reduced the impact of the works on the natural environment.

### **Trees**

**The Structure Plan encourages the planting of trees for the enhancement of the landscape, provision of camouflage and shading (RCO32). Indigenous species should be used in non-urban areas and afforestation projects should not be sited on stable communities (RCO31 and RCO30).**

4.3.34 Little progress has been made in respect of afforestation during 1996 and 1997.

4.3.35 The Planning Authority is currently in the process of preparing detailed guidelines on landscaping, which will take a more flexible stance than that adopted so far on landscaping using exotic species in urban areas, (except if the plants are invasive). The draft Grand Harbours Local Plan presents a number of policies to improve the visual aspects and utilisation of urban afforested areas.

## **Development in Rural Conservation Areas**

4.3.36 No form of urban development is allowed within Rural Conservation Areas (RCAs), except for environmental, agricultural or archaeological projects. Structure Plan policy for RCAs focuses on landscape protection and enhancement (RCO5, MIN5, PUT7, AHF5, AHF16, MIN8-12), improving degraded landscapes (RCO20), afforestation with native species (RCO31), and, the conservation of rubble walls (AHF6-8).

4.3.37 In general, the issues highlighted in the previous monitoring report remain relevant. Residential development has increased in RCAs, while pressure for commercial and industrial development, and social and community facilities remains strong. (A discussion of the detail and causes of this development is provided in Chapter 3). In view of this, there is still a tendency for agricultural approvals to undergo changes of use without applying for permission. Progress in reducing the impacts on the countryside has, however, been achieved on a number of fronts, such as tourism development and the new legislation on rubble walls and offroading.

### **Urban development in Rural Conservation Areas**

**The Structure Plan prohibits urban development in the Rural Conservation Areas. Only appropriate rehabilitation and conservation projects or agricultural development are to be allowed (RCO2). The Structure Plan urges the use of planning conditions and positive measures to improve environmental maintenance in the countryside (AHF6, AHF7, AHF8, RCO20).**

4.3.38 Despite Structure Plan policy, a considerable amount of urban development continues to take place outside the development zone. Development control experience has shown that the most useful Structure Plan policies for the protection of rural areas are SET 11 and SET12, and paragraph 7.6, which lists the developments permitted outside development zone. These policies provide a blanket presumption against development outside the development boundary, except for defined legitimate uses. The following analysis is based on data from the Strategic Projects Monitoring Database, which includes all developments over 50 square metres and all dwelling approvals except those for three dwellings and above. Fuller details of this analysis are provided in section 3.1.

### **Housing**

4.3.39 Approval of some 8000m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace outside the development boundary during 1996 and 1997 was given for residential development. These approvals fall into two main categories: i) the proposals which lie in or adjacent to small hamlets in the countryside or areas previously zoned for

development, which are now outside the development boundary (e.g. Bidnija and Iz-Zokrija in Mosta), which are often viewed as “committed” under SET11; ii) proposals adjacent to the development boundary.

4.3.40 It is considered that clearer policy guidance is needed with regard to the “committed” areas referred to in SET11 and ‘infill’ sites. Development in such committed and infill sites, as well as certain forms of development such as tall apartment blocks on the urban/rural boundary had an adverse impact on the character of the Rural Conservation Areas themselves. The Review could consider specific policies for upgrading the edges of settlements.

4.3.41 Experience indicates that the design of rural farmhouses is being given more weight by applicants and also by the Planning Authority. Efforts are being made to blend architectural styles and materials with the rural landscape, particularly in the case of rural dwellings. A major difficulty, however, exists where Planning Authority recommendations for refusal, which are many in RCAs, are sometimes overturned by the Development Control Commission (DCC) or later on by the Appeals Board. In such cases, since the application would not have passed through the standard development control procedure, no negotiations on design or landscaping would have taken place. The development which has followed such approvals has undermined in certain cases, the efforts of the Planning Authority to bring about a qualitative environmental improvement to rural areas.

4.3.42 The Planning Authority has prepared a draft set of policy guidelines on swimming pools outside development zone, which has not yet been approved by the Planning Authority Board. Despite a general presumption against such developments which are not considered part of the rural landscape, exceptions are recommended when the dwelling is surrounded by a high garden wall, and the pool is close to the residence and is well camouflaged.

#### *Tourism and Recreation*

4.3.43 Experience over the last two years has been more positive in terms of resisting tourism related developments in the Rural Conservation Areas (RCA) than that of the previous period: no major new hotel developments were granted permits outside the development zone. An application for extensive expansion of the existing hotel on Comino has been withdrawn. The permit for the hotel in a valley at Tal-Gidi, San Lawrenz, in Gozo was, however, renewed, and the Cornucopia Hotel (mentioned previously), also in Gozo, was given a permit for an extension which encroaches on a rock face outside the development zone. Two public gardens were approved outside the development zone.

4.3.44 One type of tourism-related development which may have a significant impact on the rural environment is golf course development. The environmental threat of golf courses revolves around the creation of an artificial environment which, being alien to the Maltese climate and soil type, requires considerable amounts of irrigation water, pesticides and fertilisers, which have an impact on ground water supplies. In addition, unless it is situated on degraded land, the creation of a golf course involves either the loss of agricultural land, or of natural areas which are rich in biodiversity, as well as loss of traditional rural landscape.

4.3.45 The Government set up a Golf Course Development Steering Committee which is considering the development of new golf courses, on which the Planning Authority is represented. The Planning Authority published a policy paper on golf in 1997, which, in accordance with Structure Plan policy TOUT12, recommends golf course development only where there is no adverse environmental impact or loss of good quality agricultural land.

#### *Social and Community Facilities*

4.3.46 During 1996 and 1997, a permit was granted for a new school at Mgarr. The impact of schools located in rural conservation areas away from established urban centres, is considerably greater than those located just outside the scheme boundary. The reason for this is that these attract pupils and others to travel to these areas (mostly by car), and these developments are also supported by adequate level of car parking provision. This is particularly true in the case of private schools, which generally have a national catchment area. Another major approval was the extension of the Tal-Qroqq Hospital.

4.3.47 Another type of facility which may be linked to community activity and which is often given a permit outside development zone relates to wedding halls. The reason for this is that this type of development is relatively noisy, and wedding halls in built-up areas have tended to provoke neighbour complaints. Unfortunately these developments have a large footprint, and require extensive car parking facilities, which are infrequently utilised.

#### *Commerce and Industry*

4.3.48 In rural areas, manufacturing (3.7Ha) and warehousing (1.1 Ha) were the sectors with the largest landtake after social and community facilities, during the survey period. The issue of permits for industrial units outside the development zone remains a matter of concern, although this category of development, for the purpose of this analysis also includes minerals developments. Most of the approved floorspace was in new units rather than extensions, and includes a large number of garages, as well as a number of showrooms, with commercial or residential space above.

4.3.49 New MDC policy to allocate government land for small and medium sized industrial units may have helped to ease pressure on rural sites. A number of permits have been granted for garages in disused quarries. Policy IND9 encourages relocation of "obnoxious" industry to disused quarries. Two issues arise from the experience of the last few years: firstly, garages in disused quarries are often used for warehousing, which is not what IND9 recommended; secondly, this type of development tends to be visually disruptive, with the effect that sites with potential for afteruses suited to rural areas are lost to urban uses. In addition, the Water Services Corporation does not encourage industrial development in quarries due to the need to protect ground water supplies from industrial pollutants (see also section 2.4.44).

#### ***Legitimate Development in Rural Conservation Areas***

**The Structure Plan seeks to ensure that any new development that is permitted within rural areas will protect and enhance areas of scenic value (RCO4, RCO5, RCO6). The restoration of rubble walls, removal of visual intrusions and establishment of rights of way are to be encouraged through the use of conditions on development permits (AHF7, AHF8).**

4.3.50 Once development is considered legitimate in the countryside, rural conservation policies come into force. The following section reviews development in the RCAs for each sector.

4.3.51 In general, experience in development control points to the successful use of Structure Plan policies RCO2 and RCO4 within Rural Conservation Areas. Policy AHF5, on permitted agricultural development, is also often used to deal with relevant developments in these areas. The advice contained in the Policy Paper previously known as PLP20, which provides guidance on 'Development outside built-up areas', and the 'Policy and Design Guidance note on Farmhouses and Agricultural Buildings' are also used in dealing with proposals in these areas. Both of these documents were approved in the previous monitoring period.

## *Agriculture*

**The Structure Plan aims to foster improvements in agriculture, horticulture and fisheries, whilst minimizing environmental conflicts (AHF1, RCO8). Agricultural buildings are to blend with the rural landscape or be hidden from view. Greenhouses, in particular, should be hidden from long-distance views. Agricultural buildings should be on least good agricultural land, where possible. Locations must be acceptable in terms of noise, smell and effluent impacts (AHF5).**

4.3.52 The character of Malta's rural landscape is intimately bound up with the quality of agricultural development. Despite efforts to reduce the negative impacts of agriculture on the countryside during the monitoring period, the pressure for agricultural development continues to grow (see section 2.5). The overall environmental quality of certain developments however, is still below standard. A total of 2.7 Ha in medium and major agricultural projects was approved between 1996 and 1997.

4.3.53 While seeking to modernise and encourage the economic productivity of the sector, the Agriculture Department is investing in projects involving watershed management (Chadwick Lakes), pesticide residue monitoring, integrated pest management, and protection for the Maltese goat, which have an environmental dimension.

### *New farm stores*

4.3.54 The Structure Plan Explanatory Memorandum provides criteria for new farm stores: they should not be greater than 15 m<sup>2</sup> and not higher than 9 courses. In effect the Planning Authority is granting permits (some 70 a year) for stores in excess of these figures. The criteria being used is that the size of the store may be in proportion to the land holding of the applicant. A number of the stores are as large as 50 m<sup>2</sup> and some are being used as garages, or for personal recreational use. Reasons for the increasing demand for such stores include the agricultural sector's moves towards greater mechanization, as well as increasing land fragmentation.

### *Animal farms*

4.3.55 The number of permissions granted for new livestock units has fallen from some 36 units in 1995 to 13 units in 1997, which is similar to the 1993 figure. 1997 permissions for chicken and pig farms, the most popular form of livestock farms, fell by half their 1995 number, due to economic factors. Government introduced a freeze on new chicken farms during the monitoring period.

4.3.56 Livestock farms tend to cause two types of environmental problems. The first is visual: the farms often operate in poorly constructed and badly finished buildings which detract from the rural environment. Operating practices, which are mostly unsanitary, tend to increase their negative impact. The second impact is pollution damage: few farms have septic tanks, or are connected to the sewage network, although the number of farms which are managing their waste is increasing. Slurry is sometimes found to have damaged ground water supplies, particularly if the farm is located close to a valley.

4.3.57 Due to neighbour complaints and concern from the Water Services Corporation, a number of relocations of animal breeding units have taken place, although this is not easy for the less profitable producers. A new planning issue now presents itself: what uses should the vacated farms be put to? Applications are being received for changes of use to industry, for example at Maghtab, which is recommended by the WSC and the Ministry of Agriculture for animal farms. Maghtab now has a concentration of animal farms and industrial units.

4.3.58 The Department of Agriculture has taken the initiative to enforce sanitary practices within the poultry processing sector, with a view to closing down non-conforming operators. Permits for chicken farms decreased during 1996 and 1997, subsequent to the introduction of the quota on poultry units. The Department is in the process of issuing detailed guidance for animal breeders, including specifications of design and layout for the farms. This will go some way to curb the unauthorised changes of use which still occur on buildings raised to house animals.

#### *Greenhouses*

4.3.59 In general, with the number of greenhouses increasing through the last monitoring period, and coupled with the use of plastic wind breakers (poly tunnels) which are visually intrusive in Rural Conservation Areas, the negative impact on the rural landscape has increased (see section 2.5 on Agriculture). Since greenhouses depend on maximum natural lighting, landscaping conditions have not been practicable, unless the greenhouses are located on flat land on a plain. The emerging North West Local Plan has suggested that greenhouses are not allowed in the small number of Areas of High Landscape Value which have been identified in the plan, and of which one site was scheduled under RCO3 during 1997. The EMU has prepared a draft set of guidelines on greenhouses during the monitoring period, which is not yet approved. Although the Department of Agriculture is not of the opinion that greenhouse development should be controlled, it has agreed that some areas of agricultural land merit specific conservation status.

#### *Farm houses*

4.3.60 Farmhouses have remained a contentious form of agricultural development over the monitoring period. Some dwellings are legitimate in the countryside - when they are for agricultural use. The number of farmhouses approved annually increased in the last period from only 5 in 1993 to 25 in 1996 and 21 in 1997. Some abuses also still occur, where farm houses are used by non-farmers as dwellings and some structures are built with no permit.

4.3.61 The Structure Plan Review will need to revisit the criteria of eligibility of applicants for agricultural developments in the countryside. There is also room for the revision of eligibility criteria governing the development of farmhouses in Rural Conservation Areas, possibly to restrict them only to farmers for example, owning sizable animal farms. Other alternatives might include of not giving preference to full-time farmers if the land they are considering for development lies just outside the development boundary, and they are not animal breeders.

#### *Minerals*

**The Structure Plan provides a framework for the continued working of important mineral deposits in an environmentally acceptable way. The Planning Authority is to review all existing quarry operations, regularizing them where appropriate (MIN16, MIN17). An Environmental Impact Assessment is required for all new mineral extraction and processing projects and the need must be fully justified (MIN8, MIN9). There will be a presumption against works close to scheduled areas and in areas of good agricultural land (MIN5). Operators will need to demonstrate adequate environmental safeguards, including reclamation measures (MIN11, MIN12). Enforcement is strengthened through insistence on bank bonds, the imposition of time limits on permits and five yearly reviews (MIN10, MIN12).**

4.3.62 Minerals extraction has a major impact on the rural environment: with visual, polluting, noise and biodiversity elements.

4.3.63 With regard to the regularisation of existing quarry operations, a comprehensive exercise has been undertaken by the Minerals and Waste Team of the Planning Authority during the period under review, involving site visits and recording particulars of owners and quarry details, the verification of licenses and the issuing of enforcement notices where this was necessary.

4.3.64 Environmental Impact Assessments were required for several applications submitted in 1996 and 1997. These included applications for rehabilitation of a disused quarry in Gozo, for the extension of a hardstone quarry in Malta, a softstone quarry in Gozo, and for the operation of plant in a disused quarry in Malta. Applications submitted in previous years and determined in the period 1996-1997 were not normally subject to EIA as required by the EIA guidance notes. Nonetheless safeguards were frequently requested as conditions to the permit.

4.3.65 In 1996 and 1997, the policy of presumption against working close to scheduled areas and areas of agricultural importance was upheld. Certain areas in Malta and Gozo were scheduled, thus re-enforcing environmental protection. A refusal was issued for a softstone quarry in San Lawrenz, Gozo. In Qrendi (Qasam il-Kbir), and Siggiewi (il-Maghlaq), refusals issued in previous years were enforced.

4.3.66 With regard to enforcement, guarantees were required on landscaping conditions, as well as on other conditions such as the dismantling of equipment in the case of developments in disused quarries. A number of enforcement actions were instituted, as shown in Table 65. The majority of cases (6) were against illegal extensions to quarries. One enforcement case was instituted against the illegal infilling of a disused quarry, and the two others were against the opening of new quarries without permits.

Table 65 - Enforcement Actions

	Hardstone Quarries	Softstone Quarries
1996	3	0
1997	5	1

Source: Enforcement Unit, PA

### Utilities

**The Structure Plan aims to minimise the visual impact of infrastructure in rural areas (RCO5). Local Plans are to include proposals for the layout and siting of primary utility facilities (PUT5). Water storage reservoirs are either to be located underground or to blend with the landscape (PUT7).**

4.3.67 There have been no major infrastructure developments in rural areas in this period and the proposed sewage gallery (between St. Paul's Bay and Mellieha), has been shelved due to changes in government strategy. A site selection exercise for a new sanitary landfill was carried out in cooperation with the Environment Protection Department, and three potential sites, all outside development zone, were identified (refer to 2.9.21).

### Transport

4.3.68 There have been no major road developments outside development zone during 1996 and 1997. An application for a 32 ha airstrip on Gozo was withdrawn in 1996.

**The Structure Plan allows for some provision of sports and recreational facilities in the countryside, with particular attention to minimising adverse environmental impacts. Rural locations for major impact sports, which are generally inappropriate for residential areas, should only be chosen after a full environmental impact assessment, in conjunction with a thorough appraisal of alternative sites (REC8).**

4.3.69 The previous monitoring report noted that offroading and other motorised sports are gaining in popularity but generating environmental problems in the process on areas of scenic beauty and ecological value. New legislation in the form of Legal Notice 196 of 1997 (under the 1991 Environmental Protection Act) has been passed to control offroading, or driving not on a surfaced road. Offroading is a major impact sport which exacts a heavy toll on the natural environment, particularly valleys, clay slopes, and coastal karstland. The new legislation allows this sport to take place only on sites clearly marked for that purpose. Otherwise an offroading permit is required from the Environment Protection Department. Penalties for those caught contravening this act include removal of offroading permit, fines, up to 2 years' imprisonment, and, loss of driving license. Unfortunately, it would appear that the law is not being strictly enforced for the private citizen who is not taking part in an offroading event: private vehicles are still in evidence parked on the rocky shore and some distance from paved roads.

4.3.70 Recreational activities such as picnicking generate considerable car-borne traffic, particularly on weekends and holidays. The trend, towards increased countryside management presents an opportunity for linking public transport to the use of the sites. Another opportunity presented by the moves towards countryside management is that of resolving conflicts between different users of the countryside.

## 4.4 Archaeology

4.4.1 The Structure Plan identifies Malta's cultural heritage as "... one of the most important of the Mediterranean region" (15.42). Although the responsibility for this sector lies with the Museums Department, the Planning Authority does hold responsibility for protecting the country's archaeological heritage from damage caused by development and for compiling and maintaining an inventory of archaeological sites and features.

4.4.2 As with ecological sites, the Planning Authority's strategy is to identify and protect Sites and Areas of Archaeological Importance (SAIs and AAI), in order to avoid further dilapidation or destruction.

4.4.3 The Museums Department is responsible for the preservation and effective presentation of the nation's archaeological, historical and artistic heritage. Following the presentation of an Management Systems Unit (now Management Efficiency Unit) Operations Review in 1995, the Museums Department has been reorganised into three separate Curatorships: Collections Management; Information Management; and Site Management. This restructuring took place in 1997. Specific measures outlined for the Department for 1997 included: making museums and heritage sites more children and student friendly; development of a mobile heritage exhibition aimed at school-children; organisation of week-end visits for school-children; and, launching of a campaign to attract more Maltese visitors to museums and historical sites.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Estimates 1997.

4.4.4 Major projects undertaken by the Museums Department during 1996 and 1997 included upgrading of the permanent display at the National Museum of Archaeology to almost double the collection on show. The work was undertaken with the help of a \$150,000 grant by the Getty Institution in 1996, which was renewed in 1997. Five temporary archeological exhibitions were organised at: the Archaeology Museum lobby in Valletta, at the Foundation for International Studies, and at the Mediterranean Conference Centre in Valletta, in Victoria (Gozo) and in Florence (Italy).

4.4.5 Major fieldwork carried out by the Museums Department during 1996 and 1997 included: restoration and cleaning works at the megalithic temples at Mnajdra; continuation of works at Hypogeum, Paola; some 50 field investigations including the ones relating to: prehistoric ceramics at B'Kara; a hellenistic tomb at Tal-Qroqq; a grave at M'Xlokk; 19th Century ceramics and glass in a basement of the Auberge de Castille; a large catacomb complex at Zurrieq; hellenistic masonry at Victoria, Gozo; punic ceramic sherds at Bugibba; a punic sanctuary at Tas-Silg, M'Xlokk; a cluster of three Roman rock-cut tombs at Mellieha; features belonging to a late 19th Century battery at Spinola; a small catacomb complex at Rabat; and prehistoric structural remains and earth deposits close to the neolithic temple complex at Tarxien.<sup>39</sup>

4.4.6 A brief for the development of the Tarxien Temple site was completed by the Museums Department in September 1997. The Bank of Valletta International Heritage Trust is committed to funding the project.

## Protection and management of archaeological sites

### *Designation of sites*

**Local Plans must ensure the designation of Areas and Sites of Archaeological Interest (ARC1). Sites may be graded from Class A, of top priority and protected by a buffer zone of at least 100m, to Class D, which may be destroyed after being properly catalogued (ARC2). In the interim period all sites recorded in the National Protective Inventory (NPI) are granted protection under ARC2 (ARC6). The Planning Authority is to implement further research to maintain and extend the National Protective Inventory (ARC7).**

4.4.7 Through the Local Plan process, items are listed in the NPI (see section 4.4.11 on the NPI). The scheduling process is carried out as explained below.

### *Scheduling*

4.4.8 Scheduling is carried out by the Environmental Management Unit of the Planning Authority, based on the following order of priority:

- priority sites as defined in ARC4 and ARC5 of the Structure Plan (see section 4.4.20 on priority sites below);
- threatened sites which need to be protected with an Emergency Conservation Order (ECO), and which are then scheduled;
- Other AAIs not identified in the Structure Plan but emerging clearly from the NPI as a concentration of high grade sites;
- Individual sites of significant importance from the NPI;
- Individual sites of lesser importance from the NPI.

4.4.9 Between the years 1996 and 1997, 14 archaeological sites and features were scheduled. The scheduling of 12 sites in 1997 was a significant improvement over the experience of the previous two years (1996 and 1995) when only two and three sites were scheduled, respectively. However the

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<sup>39</sup> Museums Department Annual Reports, 1996 and 1997.



1994 record of 18 sites being scheduled has not yet been matched. No sites of Class D were scheduled.

Table 66 - Scheduled archaeological sites (SSIs) (1994-1997)

Year	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D	Total
1994	14	4	-	-	18
1995	1	1	1	-	3
1996	-	2	-	-	2
1997	9	3	-	-	12
Total	24	10	1	-	25

Source: EMU, PA

4.4.10 All the above sites have been scheduled with a protective buffer zone (of varying extent according to the grading) in which developments which are likely to have an adverse effect on these sites and their surrounding environment are unlikely to be allowed. This practice was strengthened when the appeals case against the buffer zone of the Mnajdra Temples was won, upholding the Planning Authority's decision to enforce a buffer zone larger than the minimum 100m stipulated in ARC2, around a Grade A archaeological site. The possibility of allowing a buffer zone of more than a minimum 100m therefore, has now been established and tested at appeal. The Planning Authority has also started to designate buffer zones which relate to topographical features rather than adhering to the precise arithmetically defined areas around the sites. This type of buffer zone is considered to be easier to identify on site and to defend at appeal.

#### *National Protective Inventory*

4.4.11 The NPI has continued to be updated with new archaeological sites, during 1996 and 1997. The NPI is updated from various sources: NPI surveys; local plan surveys; obtaining fuller detail of the 200 sites mentioned in the Structure Plan; and ad hoc entries from site visits, applications for development; Museums Department sites, ancient and historical texts, and NGOs. The NPI contains information on precise location of archaeological sites, existing and potential threats confronting them and delineates protective buffer zones around them.

4.4.12 Most of the sites in the NPI have now been entered into a geographical information system (GIS) in the form of a constraints map, and are, therefore, subject to a certain amount of protection, in that development applications are checked against this constraints map. It is intended that all known archaeological sites will be entered into this constraints map in due course, for internal reference. Applications affecting these sites are normally referred to the Environmental Management Unit and the Heritage Advisory Committee, in some areas.

4.4.13 The amount of archaeological sites and features recorded in the NPI at present is close to 500 entries. Table 67 shows the distribution of these sites by the various local plan areas.

Table 67 - Distribution of archaeological sites and features recorded in the NPI

Local plan area	Class A*	Class B	Class C	Class D	Class E	AAI	Total
M'Xlokk	10 (2)	9	-	-	8	1	27 (2)
North-west	40 (9)	138 (2)	23 (1)	3	100	4	304 (12)
Grand Harbour	2	2	-	-	16	-	20 (0)
North Harbours	1 (1)	5 (2)	-	-	8	-	14 (3)
Gozo & Comino	17 (7)	12 (2)	6	1	11	1	47 (9)
Central	3 (1)	7	1	-	4	-	15 (1)
South	6 (5)	23 (3)	2	-	19	-	50 (8)
Totals	79 (27)	196 (13)	32 (1)	4	166	6 (1)	477 (41)
Underwater		12 (1)					

Source: EMU, PA

\*Number of scheduled sites in brackets

4.4.14 Very few items are scheduled as Class D, and there has been criticism of this class in that it is not very useful. The previous monitoring report observed that if this designation was widely used, a series of minor subsequent development decisions may lead to the long term obliteration of sites such as the punic tombs of Malta.

4.4.15 The Class E grading is not catered for in the Structure Plan but it is being used in the NPI for sites that are known to have existed but are currently untraced (see discussion in section 4.4.29 below). Although many of the sites have been covered by the large scale building development during the second half of this century, the sites are not considered lost since the disturbed remains could probably contain significant information.

4.4.16 The EMU intends to continue to extend the NPI and to initiate archaeological surveys for local plans which have not yet commenced, such as the Central and the South local plan areas. This will provide adequate information for the processing of applications in these areas, pending completion of these local plans.

4.4.17 Scheduling criteria for archaeological sites and areas have now been standardised and tightened, principally with respect to the justification of grading levels, and the designation of buffer zones. Scheduling criteria now consider various factors, including:

- justification for scheduling a site, or area, on the merits of its local, national or international significance;
- justification for the extent of buffer zones around archaeological sites and areas on the merits of the value of the surrounding landscape, in relation to the monument;
- current and probable development implications within the area - where possible compromise is sought to avoid future conflicts.

4.4.18 Also during this monitoring period, the Planning Authority's archaeological research and documentation function was considerably enhanced through the appointment of an archaeological officer and the acquisition and production of more accurate mapping, and high quality photographic evidence. In addition, the Planning Authority has begun to provide the general public, particularly Local Councils, with information on scheduled sites in their locality, in order to improve local-level awareness and monitoring.

4.4.19 Despite the 41 sites scheduled over the last 4 years, it has been difficult to expedite the scheduling process because of the following:

- lack of technical staff;
- need to standardise the scheduling process;
- difficulty of updating information of existing inventories and scheduled sites;
- acquisition of more detailed data before scheduling for justification, especially information about property ownership, which is time consuming;
- processes such as identifying and informing owners, as well as reconsideration and appeals take time.

#### ***Priority sites***

**The Structure Plan calls for the scheduling of Hagar Qim/Mnajdra and Ggantija as a matter of priority. These sites are to be developed as National Parks (ARC4). The Planning Authority is to initiate investigations into the early designation of other important areas, particularly Il-Qliegħa south of Fomm ir-Rih Bay, Bingemma Gap north west of Rabat, Gebel Ciantar to Għar il-Kbir south west of Siggiewi and Għar Dalam area north of Birzebbuga (ARC5).**

4.4.20 During 1997 greater emphasis was laid on scheduling the Areas of Archaeological Importance (AAIs) stipulated in the Structure Plan (ARC4) than in previous years. As at the end of 1997, only one of the priority sites identified in the Structure Plan had been scheduled - the Hagar Qim/Mnajdra complex. However the preliminary work for the scheduling of the other five sites mentioned in the Structure Plan was completed in 1997 and all the six sites have since been scheduled in early 1998.

Table 68 - Areas of archeological importance

Year	AAI	No. of Archaeological sites and features	No. of cultural properties
1997	Hagar Qim/ Mnajdra	4	2
1998	Il-Qlejgha	10	2
	Ghar il-Kbir	8	1
	Ghar Dalam/ Borg in-Nadur	10	1
	Bingemma	6	1
	Ggantija	5	1

Source : EMU, PA

4.4.21 The areas mainly comprise a concentration of Class A archaeological sites. However, other archaeological sites and features and properties of cultural/historic value within the buffer zone have also been scheduled. Scheduling of additional AAIs, which were not priority AAIs listed in the Structure Plan, are in preparation, namely in archaeologically important urban areas such as Rabat/Mdina and Cittadella/Victoria.

4.4.22 The Museums Department plans improvements at major archaeological sites which are accessible to the public, such as Hagar Qim/Mnajdra. The Planning Authority supports initiatives taken by the Museums Department for the upgrading of sites, particularly those which the Planning Authority has scheduled or designated as Areas of Archaeological Importance.

4.4.23 The Structure Plan proposed the provision of a National Park at Hagar Qim/Mnajdra, which is principally the remit of the Museums Department and the Ministry of Tourism. There has been little progress in the establishment of this National Park, although the Museums Department is currently in the process of replacing and resiting protective fences around the monuments and providing an improved ticket booth, staff facilities and public toilets. The area still lacks the basic facilities of National Parks, such as signposted footpaths, an interpretation centre and interpretive panels.

4.4.24 The Wied Dalam/Borg in-Nadur Heritage Park was scheduled in 1998 as an AAI, with the intention to facilitate its development as a Heritage Park. Currently the Planning Authority is working on bringing together independent efforts by the Works Division to rehabilitate damaged rubble walls and by the Museums Department which wishes to introduce a heritage trail in the area.

4.4.25 The Planning Authority is also represented on the Heritage Action Committee which has been set up by the Ministries of Education and National Culture, Public Works and Construction, and Tourism. The Committee comprises representatives of government departments and NGOs, and aims to speed up the work required to upgrade heritage sites which are visitor attractions. The main achievement of this Committee was the setting up of a temporary exhibition of prehistoric artefacts at the Mediterranean Conference Centre at Valletta, while the Archaeology Museum in Valletta was temporarily closed for upgrading. Other work of the committee was mainly confined to improving access to a number of late 19th century British fortifications.

## Development impacts on archaeological sites

**The Structure Plan prohibits development on archaeological sites where there is an overwhelming case for preservation. Otherwise adequate opportunities must be provided for the recording and possible excavation of the site (ARC3). Both scheduled sites and potential sites will be protected from development where there is an overriding case for preservation (ARC3).**

4.4.26 At present the Planning Authority is encountering difficulty with sites on which, or near which, there are requests for development and which are potential archaeological sites. In such cases the Planning Authority requests on-site monitoring of development and the scientific excavation, recording and salvage of the archaeological remains affected by the development, by a competent authority. Although this is being done, the progress is slow due to lack of resources. Some progress is however being made in this respect due to the recent intake of new staff at the Museums Department.

4.4.27 The need to rescue archaeological remains is becoming more evident as the information obtained from such emergency excavations is yielding important results about otherwise unknown aspects of Maltese archaeology. In fact, a major area of cooperation between the Planning Authority and the Museums Department is the 'rescue' excavation of archaeological sites unearthed by development projects. A number of joint excavations have already taken place and the two organisations are examining the possibility of further pooling of resources.

4.4.28 As reported in the previous monitoring report, there has been some criticism of ARC3 which prohibits development on sites where there is an overwhelming case for preservation. This is for two reasons: firstly, it is not related to the grading structure of ARC2, and secondly because the policy is too restrictive. It is suspected that a considerable number of archaeological sites are unearthed during construction, many of which remain unreported. There appears to be a need for a policy which effectively protects valuable sites and effectively encourages the reporting of finds. It is important to reiterate the conclusion made in this regard in the last monitoring report that any new policy initiative would have to be supported by a more streamlined system of consultation amongst government departments and within the Planning Authority which would help improve the quality of protection of 'surprise finds'.

4.4.29 In addition, the Planning Authority has been proactive in its attempts to improve its service: work has been initiated on a series of papers which aim to tackle certain archaeological issues in depth. These papers will be subject to consultation both within the Planning Authority and with external agencies. The topics are:

- Rescue archaeology; (see section 4.4.27 above).
- Underwater archaeology: the protection of underwater archaeology from coastal development, dredging, and dumping at sea. The paper includes references to existing Planning Authority and Government policies, development trends affecting and likely to affect underwater archaeology, identification of issues which require resolution, and policy suggestions;
- Archaeology and agriculture/nature conservation: archaeology and agriculture are largely compatible, but conflicts may arise concerning mechanised farming, greenhouses, orchards and the construction, improvement and enlargement of animal breeding farms. Conflicts with nature conservation goals are less common though not completely absent;
- New designation (as Class E) of archaeological sites which were known to have existed but cannot currently be traced, because the sites have

been destroyed, or covered by development, and might still survive wholly or in part. The existence of such archaeological features may also be an indication of other remains in their vicinity, which were never recorded. From the compilation of the NPI it was found that 22% of known sites are no longer visible. Hence, the Planning Authority has recommended the introduction of a new grading, Class E, for these sites. This suggestion has already been applied in the formulation of the draft North West Local Plan (NWCO13). A class E site is defined as a site or monument known to have existed as referred to in written documents, prints, maps, paintings photographs or according to oral tradition, but is no longer visible. Investigations, including the excavation of the site if necessary, are to be undertaken prior to the grant of a development permit, which should be approved by the Planning Authority. The results of these investigations would qualify the site to any of the protection ratings stipulated in Policy ARC2 of the Structure Plan.

4.4.30 In some cases it has been difficult to justify large urban buffer zones (ARC2). There is a need for a more flexible policy and defining what developments are acceptable in urban buffer zones. Such a policy has been approved by the Planning Authority in 1998 referring to the need to protect the contextual setting of sites.

## 4.5 Coastal and Marine Conservation

### Establishing a Coastal Zone Management Team

**The Structure Plan calls for the establishment of a Coastal Zone Management Unit (CZM1) and the preparation of a Coastal Zone Subject Plan, to combine conservation measures with the enabling of public enjoyment of the coast (CZM2). A comprehensive plan is required to assess the different components of the coastal zone, identify permissible uses, develop criteria and standards, promote and enforce policies and include the coastal zone as an area requiring mandatory EIAs (TOU15).**

4.5.1 The Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Unit was set up as part of the Countryside and Coastal Planning team in the Planning Authority's Environmental Management Unit during the previous monitoring period. By the end of 1997, terms of reference for the Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Subject Plan had been drafted but not yet approved by the PA Board. The Subject Plan is to be a national document, to be produced in-house in collaboration with other authorities and government departments. The CZM Subject Plan is to be completed in three phases, starting in mid-1998, and the Consultation Draft of the Plan is expected to take one year to complete. The first phase consists of external consultations and data collection. The second phase will involve data analysis and the drafting of an issues report. The third phase will include policy formulation, consultation and documentation. With reference to TOU15, it is considered that policy regarding the coastal zone could be consolidated under one section. The requirements of Policy TOU15 are expected to be addressed through the formulation of the CZM Subject Plan.

4.5.2 During the monitoring period, the Planning Authority collated a set of three applications to UNEP's<sup>40</sup> Mediterranean Action Plan's Coastal Area Management Programme (CAMP). Funds have already been approved for a CAMP project in Malta. The three applications submitted were on: technical assistance with the CZM Subject Plan; formulation of a national strategy on

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<sup>40</sup> United Nations Environment Programme

beach replenishment, including surveys and a pilot project; and broad brush surveys of candidate (as defined in MCO1) marine conservation areas, together with assistance in developing a management framework and a MCA pilot project.

## **Designation of Marine Conservation Areas**

### ***Designation***

**The Structure Plan calls for the designation and management of Marine Conservation Areas, following extensive survey and consultation work (MCO1, MCO5, MCO7, MCO8, MCO9, MCO10, MCO12, MCO13). These should be linked to land-based Conservation Areas where possible (MCO6). Archaeological sites and wrecks should be included, where appropriate (MCO2). Fishermen should have first option on any work related to site protection (MCO11).**

4.5.3 No Marine Conservation Areas (MCAs) have been designated in the monitoring period.

4.5.4 The concept of Marine Conservation Areas has however been further developed during this period, as part of the CZM subject plan. It is considered that before MCAs can be designated, a classification of biotopes occurring in the Maltese inshore waters needs to be set up (see 4.5.5 and 4.5.6 below) - research on the marine environment is not yet as extensive as that for terrestrial ecosystems: extensive surveys will then be needed to assess the environmental quality and predominant uses of the candidate sites. This work has yet to commence. It will also be necessary to prepare an administrative and legislative framework which will enable a proper consideration of sites and help resolve conflicts between conservation goals and the various marine uses. Work has not yet commenced on the preparation of either the administrative or legislative frameworks.

### ***Surveys and data management***

**The Structure Plan calls for an underwater survey of infralittoral ecosystems (MCO4) and the establishment of a maritime GIS (MCO3 and RCO42).**

4.5.5 A number of surveys of marine areas have been carried out in the monitoring period. In connection with the emerging North Harbours Local Plan, the MCA candidate site at St. George's Bay and the infralittoral habitats of the LP area were surveyed. A marine archaeological survey was also carried out for the North West Local Plan area. A number of surveys were commissioned as part of the EIAs on large coastal applications: for example Ta' Cenc; Cirkewwa. Other surveys were carried out as part of the monitoring of large scale developments such as areas under fish farms and the Hilton Marina. An ecological survey of the Dwejra area in Gozo, another MCA candidate site, was undertaken during the monitoring period. This study was commissioned as part of the planning gain associated with the San Lawrenz Hotel development, close to Dwejra. Work has started on the setting up of a maritime GIS, with the digitisation of surveys of the North Harbours and Dwejra marine areas.

4.5.6 The Planning Authority has also funded student projects at the University of Malta for the classification of marine ecosystems, which will feed into the process of designation of MCAs.

## Access to the coastal zone

The Structure Plan aims to secure public access to the coastline either adjacent to the sea or along cliff tops. All the coastline is to be brought into public ownership within a specified period. This will include government acquisition of illegal developments and encroachments (CZM3). Fishermen are to be given first option to utilise resources such as access to waterfront areas, where traditional rights existed (MCO11). Government will identify sites for the establishment of secure boat storage with maintenance facilities near to, but not on, the coast (AHF13).

4.5.7 There has been no progress on bringing the coastline into public ownership (CZM3), nor on policies to protect waterfronts for fishermen. During 1997 the PA drafted a set of guidelines on coastal access in order to elaborate and clarify policy CZM3. This exercise included the formulation of a set of maps delineating those areas where this draft policy would be applicable. The draft policies will be reviewed as part of the Coastal Zone Management Plan which is currently being prepared.

### Development control in the coastal zone

4.5.9 The experience during 1996 and 1997 demonstrates that development control has been effective in certain areas, in particular, no new large developments were approved on the coast outside the development boundary. Some upgrading work in urban coastal areas has been undertaken which is in line with the policy framework of the Structure Plan. At the same time, however, approvals in the aquaculture sector have tended to use coastal sites rather than marine ones as suggested in the Structure Plan. A number of new types of development have emerged for which guidance is required (see 4.5.12).

4.5.10 However, within the framework of current coastal protection policy, urban coastal areas (particularly the foreshore) are under particular threat. Rural conservation policy is usually used to protect coastal sites in rural conservation areas, but no such policy exists for the equally sensitive coastal sites, generally of high recreational value, within the development boundary. Urban coastal sites are under pressure from applications for developments such as beach concessions, restaurants and clubs, which tend to commercialise beaches and public areas and reduce public access to and enjoyment of the coastal environment.

4.5.11 The majority of the coastal area of the Maltese Islands is outside the development zone, except for the Inner Harbour Area, St. Paul's Bay, and small but growing settlements in the South of Malta and in Gozo. It is important, therefore, to monitor development in the coastal areas outside the development zone, as well as changes to the foreshore in developed areas, and development in marine areas. The major users of the coast are tourism and recreation, agriculture and aquaculture, and infrastructure. This section discusses development in each of these areas in turn.

#### ***Tourism and Recreation***

4.5.12 Tourism and recreation are two of the predominant uses in coastal areas. No new large hotels were approved during the monitoring period, in line with the spirit of the Structure Plan (15.47 and 15.48). A large application at M'Scala was withdrawn by the applicant after strong protest from local residents, and another large hotel project outside the development zone at Xlendi was refused. Despite the fact that this was a sizable project in an undeveloped stretch of coastline, the Directorate's recommendation for refusal in the Xlendi application was based largely on Structure Plan policy to constrain urban growth (SET11 and BEN5), on location of tourism and yachting facilities (TOU3-4, TOU13, TOU15), and on protection of rural

conservation areas, scenic value, areas of ecological value and valleys, and listed buildings (RCO2-5, RCO10-11; RCO29; UCO7; UCO13). Finally, CZM3, protecting public access to the coast, was quoted. Clearly, consideration of this application highlighted the need for stronger and more strategic policy for the protection of coastal areas.

4.5.13 A major upgrading project was undertaken in Bugibba during 1997. This project was carried out by the central government, and coordinated by a subcommittee involving representatives from the St. Paul's Bay Local Council, the local tourism industry, the Tourism Ministry, the Public Works and Construction Ministry, and the Planning Authority. Works consisted mainly of the embellishment of the promenade, coastal facilities such as public conveniences, surfacing of roads, pedestrianisation and traffic management in the resort centre, and the construction of car parks, while access to the coast was retained

4.5.14 Other more minor recreational applications approved in coastal areas include the sinking of a small number of wrecks, restaurants on barges and a number of ramps and kiosks. Some of these types of development require the formulation of guidelines which will be considered in the Coastal Zone Management Subject Plan.

4.5.15 There is no specific policy guidance in the Structure Plan which covers development in low-lying rocky coastal areas, which is one of the predominant types of coastal environment in the Islands. The fact that permits have been approved in the monitoring period for private sector swimming pools on the rocky foreshore, despite the provisions of CZM3, illustrates the need for stronger and more specific policy guidance to safeguard low rocky coastal areas for their inherent value: (eg. in providing a natural wave breaker), for the natural coastal configuration; and for their amenity value to the general public. Such guidance might facilitate access to the sea and providing open space for informal activities, particularly in the summer months.

4.5.16 During this period development briefs were prepared by the Planning Authority for two coastal sites: Fort Ricasoli; and the Cottonera Waterfront, both of which allowed for coastal access. Fort Ricasoli involved upgrading of the foreshore and establishment of transport links, and recommended that the coastal strip remained in public ownership. The Cottonera Waterfront development brief, which recommended the construction of a yacht marina in Dockyard Creek, involved the creation of a promenade from Senglea Point to Fort St. Angelo.

4.5.17 During 1997, the 1994 kiosks policy paper was under review by an inter-departmental committee involving the Planning Authority, the Hotels and Catering Establishments Board and the Police. No revisions have yet been approved. In addition, a policy paper on campsites was approved by the Planning Authority during 1997, but it was not site-specific. A number of applications for the development of campsites are currently being processed by the Authority.

#### ***Agriculture and Aquaculture***

4.5.18 There have been a small number of development permits for agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture in coastal areas during the monitoring period: farm stores (8); reservoirs (7); boathouses and fisheries (6); farmhouses (5); aquaculture units (4); greenhouses (3); animal farms (2) and a stable. The majority of these developments are considered to be legitimate uses in coastal areas outside the development zone. However there is inadequate guidance in the Structure Plan on developments such as greenhouses and animal farms in scenic coastal areas. These aspects are expected to be dealt with in the CZM Subject Plan.



## *Aquaculture*

**The Structure Plan encourages development in the aquaculture industry, in order to make best use of land and sea resources. It also requires the establishment of detailed planning criteria and conditions to properly control the industry from its beginnings (AHF15). Large land-based units will be confined to industrial estates and former quarries, and small units will have to conform to AHF5 (AHF16)**

4.5.19 The approach of the Planning Authority towards aquaculture continues to be to limit production in marine cages using development permit conditions. Two aquaculture permits were given during the monitoring period, at Salina and Pwales valley, both of which are for land-based farms. A permit and a renewal were given for the same hatchery at Qala in Gozo. No marine cage projects were approved during the monitoring period. Despite the provisions of policy AHF15-16 (see above), production units were land based, not sea based, and units were located on the coast, with some impact on the coastal landscape.

4.5.20 In order to determine the impacts of fishfarms established prior to the PA, surveys of the marine ecosystems underneath the farms were submitted to the PA during 1997. Its findings will be used in the Review of the 1994 fish farming guidelines. Work on the 1994 fishfarming guidelines has now been initiated in collaboration with the National Aquaculture Centre and the Association of Fishfarm Owners. The issues which are expected to be considered for the review of the guidelines may include future development of marine based production units: monitoring requirements for environmental quality; setting standards; land-based support units for marine cage farms.

### ***Infrastructure***

4.5.22 The third major use affecting coastal areas after tourism and agriculture, is infrastructure. A permit was granted during 1997 for dredging works at the port of Cirkewwa. In the meantime an Environmental Impact Assessment is being prepared for an application involving extension of the existing breakwater, creation of a second berth, extensive land reclamation, coastal defenses on the West side of the quay, and works on quay extensions and improvements to the fender system at Mgarr, Gozo.

4.5.23 Although no approvals were granted for yacht marinas during the monitoring period, the Yachting Subject Study was approved in 1997. The study recommended the following sites for yacht marina development, in order of priority: Dockyard Creek, Bormla; Lazaretto Creek, Sliema; Kalkara Creek; and, Xemxija Bay, St. Paul's Bay. The Cottonera Development Brief, published during the monitoring period, includes a yacht marina. Yacht marinas are managed by the Yachting Centre Directorate of the Malta Maritime Authority (MMA), to international standards. They provide a range of facilities including customs services. Although the Malta Maritime Authority Act of 1992 requires the MMA to have regard to the marine environment, regulations and services for the avoidance of pollution from waste oils and tributyl tin (TBT) have yet to be drafted.

4.5.24 A major issue that has emerged during the monitoring period is the dumping of waste at sea. Although the Planning Authority is involved when dumping is related to a development project, as was the case with the 1995 Hilton Redevelopment project, it is considered that fuller Planning Authority involvement in marine dumping issues is desirable. Mention has to be made of the 1997 amendment to the DPA, which states that the PA has control on development at sea and dumping can be considered as development in the same way as dumping on land. This is important to prevent damage to potential Marine Conservation Areas and to ensure that one type of environmental damage (caused by landfilling) is not transferred to another

(destruction of marine habitats). There is a need for the establishment of marine dumping regulations conforming with international obligations, such as conventions signed and ratified by Malta.

#### ***Other coastal developments***

4.5.25 Several types of development have been applied for during the monitoring period, for which the need for guidance has been identified. These include: sinking of wrecks; dumping of waste at sea; dredging works; jetski rental operations; and, restaurants on barges. Guidance for these types of development, and potential coastal developments, will be provided in the CZM Subject Plan. Policy TOU14 calls for a subject plan on diving: it is envisaged that diving will also be covered in the CZM Subject Plan.

### **Enforcement in coastal areas**

4.5.26 Enforcement has a vital role to play in coastal areas. An analysis of enforcement cases in coastal areas (excluding coastal settlements) of Malta and Gozo during the monitoring period yields the following results.

4.5.27 The most common type of illegal development on the coast was boat houses (24), mostly in Malta. New illegal boathouses are still coming up in areas such as Armier and Gnejna, where enforcement action has been common. The next most common types of enforcements were regarding illegal caravans (13), canopies (7) and concrete platforms (7). Cases were also made against placing tables and chairs on jetties and pavements without permits (9). Action on illegal dumping was more common in Gozo (5 cases), than Malta (3 cases), and action against four illegal kiosks was taken.

4.5.28 Historical buildings and scheduled sites in coastal areas were also monitored, and action was taken in 12 cases, of which one involved bird trapping in a scheduled site, and another the discharge of fishfarm waste into a Level 1 scheduled site. Action was also taken against the illegal demolition of six buildings on the coast.

4.5.29 Recreational facilities such as go-carts and bumping cars in coastal areas have been another cause for enforcement action. Such development often involves the construction of concrete platforms in rocky areas. Action was taken against four such illegal operations. In three other cases, the Enforcement Unit took action against the levelling of the foreshore. Finally, action was taken against an illegal pontoon at Salina, a quarry extension at Zurrieq, and two road works without permits.

4.5.30 Although enforcement cases on development in the built-up areas were not covered in this analysis, a quick overview of the cases concerned with development immediately fronting the coast indicates that many of them relate to illegally constructed upper floors and penthouses, and illuminated signs.

## **Beaches**

### ***Development on beaches***

**The Structure Plan prohibits permanent construction on beach and dune areas. It calls for the removal of existing beach structures, wherever practicable (RCO16). The development of coastal defences and enlargement of beaches is to be preceded by environment impact analysis (RCO23).**

4.5.31 Although there were a number of applications granted for development on the coast during the monitoring period, few permits were given for development on sandy beaches. Table 69 shows examples of these applications which were approved or refused.

Table 69 - Granted applications for development on the coast

Approved	Refused
A kiosk at ir-Ramla tal-Mixquqa was approved since it conformed with the 1994 kiosks guidelines.	A refusal for kiosk extension at Qbajjar, Gozo (the development had already taken place) was overturned at appeal.
A significant permit for dredging works at Cirkewwa was given during 1997, which could affect the nearby sandy beach.	Other kiosks at Birzebbugia (1), Marsascala (1); Ramla i-Hamra (3), Gnejna(1) and Marsalforn (1), were refused permission. Enforcement cases had been taken on some of the kiosks both before and after they were refused (see discussion above).
	Boathouses at Ghajn Zejtuna in Mellieha and at Cirkewwa were also refused permission.

Source: DCIS, PA

4.5.32 It is considered that the issue of permanent structures on beaches will be resolved when beach management is introduced. Together with the Tourism Ministry, the Planning Authority was active on a committee on beach management during 1997. The committee was exploring the issue with a view to relinquishing the task of beach management to the proposed new Tourism Authority.

4.5.33 In accordance with policy RCO16, a policy on beach replenishment was being jointly formulated during 1997 by the Ministry of Tourism and the Planning Authority.

#### **Access to beaches**

#### **RCO17 prohibits overnight camping on sand dunes, and prohibits vehicle access to the dunes.**

4.5.34 Overnight camping in areas not designated for this purpose is illegal, as is using a motor vehicle on terrain which is not a surfaced road (except for agriculture).<sup>41</sup> Enforcement of this legislation is undertaken by the police and the Environment Protection Department. At the Ghajn Tuffieha reserve, cases of overnight camping and vehicle intrusion have been reported by environmental wardens. One local council, Sliema, has made its rocky foreshore a vehicle tow zone.

#### **Protecting the coastal zone**

#### **To prevent coastal erosion, sand binding vegetation in dune areas is to receive special protection (RCO18).**

4.5.35 During the monitoring period, seven sand dune areas were scheduled: L-Armier; Dahlet ix-Xilep; Ramla tal-Mixquqa; Ramla tat-Torri; Ramla I-Hamra (Gozo); Il-Qala ta' Santa Marija (Comino). The Salina salt pans area was also scheduled for its ecological, historical and archeological value.

4.5.36 In relation to this topic, an analysis of Policy RCO10 shows that the majority of coastal cliffs in the West of Malta (20 ha) were scheduled during 1996. In addition, offroading on the clay slopes at Selmun was prohibited by Ministerial directive when the area was scheduled in 1996. The clay slopes at Ghajn Tuffieha are being managed by the Gaia Foundation, where vehicle access and camping legislation are being tightly enforced.

<sup>41</sup> Motor Vehicles (Offroading) Legislation, 1997

## Controls on offshore operations

**The Structure Plan calls for improved controls over offshore operations, including measures for safety of navigation, safeguards for the natural environment and satisfactory abandonment measures (IND16).**

4.5.37 Most of the proposed improvements fall within the remit of the Malta Maritime Authority which issues regulations for marine safety and other offshore operations. Although the Planning Authority has little direct involvement in this area, it is envisaged nevertheless, that the implications of these issues will be examined as part of the CZM Subject Plan.

## 4.6

### Environmental Upgrading Initiatives

4.6.1 The Structure Plan provides a range of initiatives aimed at positively upgrading the environment. While a number of these initiatives are discussed in other sections of this report, such as urban conservation, this section covers the following specific initiatives which are not covered elsewhere: control of erosion; management of valleys; relocation of obnoxious industry; and, provision of access for all.

#### Control of erosion

##### *Sites prone to erosion*

**The Structure Plan carries a presumption against development in areas prone to erosion and requires positive action to prevent further loss of soil and sand (RCO21, RCO22, RCO26, RCO27).**

4.6.2 The Planning Authority has continued to schedule a number of sites which are prone to erosion. The major sites which have been scheduled during the monitoring period are *ir-Ramla ta' Ghajn Tuffieha*, and the coastal cliffs of Malta (refer to 4.5.35).

##### *Loss of soil*

**Soil conservation and saving measures are mandatory for agricultural projects. Soil replenishment measures will be adopted where the opportunity arises (AHF4, RCO24).**

As rated in the last year's monitoring report, the 1973 soil Preservation Act prohibits the transportation of more than one square metre of soil without the permission of the Agricultural Department and it also prevents the burying of soil under construction.

4.6.3 There has been no monitoring of soil conservation and saving measures in approved agricultural projects, although the type of agricultural development which is most relevant here is land reclamation for agriculture. This activity often leads to loss of soil.

4.6.4 Illegal land reclamation still happens and remains a matter of concern for a number of reasons. It is rare for applicants to undertake any study before planning a land reclamation project. Sites are often natural areas of some value (e.g. garigue), exposed to the elements, and rarely protected by rubble walls. The result is loss of soil.

4.6.5 The Planning Authority has refused land reclamation proposals during the monitoring period, where they proposed to cover natural areas. However, there is a need for more priority to be given to enforcement of these refusals.

4.6.6 Loss of soil is also closely related to maintenance and repair of rubble walls.

## **Rubble walls**

**The Structure Plan encourages projects to repair breached retaining walls (AHF7, AHF8).**

4.6.7 Rubble walls and other non-habitable rural structures were given legal protection under the Environment Protection Act, 1991, during this monitoring period. Legal Notice 160 (LN160) of 1997 stipulates that such rural structures are protected, cannot be demolished or covered by tanks or drums. The Minister may declare *conservation areas*, in which no alterations may be made to rubble walls without written permission, and in which rubble walls have to be maintained or re-built where necessary. Penalties for contraventions are outlined in the Notice, and include the possibility of up to two years' imprisonment. No rubble walls *conservation areas* have yet been declared. These regulations have been criticised because they are difficult to enforce, and because they need a tighter definition of rubble walls.

4.6.8 During the same year, the new General Development Order (No 2 of 1997) stipulated that development permission was no longer required for the construction of new rubble walls. However it does allow walls to be faced in rubble rather than constructed out of random rubble. This matter merits further consideration as part of the Structure Plan Review.

4.6.9 Although the GDO of 1997 has made it easier for farmers to build walls, it has made enforcement of Planning Authority policy RCO4 on rubble walls more difficult: enforcement action is now required to ensure that new rural walls are built of rubble and not new softstone blocks. This amendment has also made it more difficult to implement policy AHF6 which does not allow subdivisions of rural landholdings, since development permission is no longer required for the erection of a wall to subdivide an agricultural holding.

4.6.10 Rubble walls are maintained by a number of councils such as Mqabba. Irrespective of this, during this period there was a rise in the stealing of worn stones for the building of rubble walls, from other walls.

4.6.11 Conditions for the maintenance of rubble walls and the construction of new rubble walls have been used with some success in cases of rural developments at Rabat, Dingli and Siggiewi.

## **Management of valleys**

4.6.12 Policy to protect valleys has been difficult to implement fully and to monitor, because not all valleys have yet been delineated. Hence a number of problematic cases often arise on the borders of valley sides. A large number of valleys have been scheduled. On the other hand, certain areas of valleys within the development zone continued to be developed with little attention having been given to the special protection afforded them in the Structure Plan.

### **Protection of water catchment areas**

**The Structure Plan calls for the protection of valleys as important water catchment areas (RCO28, RCO29);**

4.6.13 During the monitoring period, 40 valleys were scheduled (or partly scheduled) for their ecological landscapes and water catchment importance, in comparison with the five valleys scheduled in the previous period. The scheduling of the coastal cliffs of Malta, which took place during 1996, meant that a large number of valleys in the west of Malta were also protected. Table 70 lists these valleys, and the local councils in which they lie:

Table 70 - Scheduled valleys 1996-1997

Locality	Scheduled valleys 1996-1997
Mellieha	valley behind <i>ir-Ramla tat-Torri</i> ; <i>il-Wied ta' L-Imgiebah</i> ; <i>il-Wied ta' Ghajn Hadid</i> ; valley behind <i>ir-Ramla tal-Mixquqa</i> ; <i>Wied in-Nahlja</i> ; <i>Wied ta' Rdum</i> ; <i>il-Wied tal-Baqra</i> ; parts of <i>il-Wied ta' L-Armier</i> .
San Pawl il-Bahar	<i>il-Wied tal-Mistra</i> (partial).
M'Xlokk	<i>il-Wied ta' San Pawl</i> ; valley at <i>il-Hofra l-Kbira</i> .
B'Bugia	<i>Wied il-Mixta</i> ; <i>Wied Znuber</i> .
Zurrieq	<i>Wied Moqbol</i> ; <i>Wied Diegu</i> ; <i>Wied il-Bassasa</i> ; <i>Wied Hareb</i> ; <i>Wied Ganu</i> ; <i>Wied Babu</i> .
Qrendi	<i>Wied iz-Zurrieq</i> ; <i>Wied Hoxt</i> ; <i>Wied iz-Zellieqat</i> ; <i>Wied il-Maghlaq</i> .
Rabat	<i>Wied Gerzuma</i> , <i>Wied Rini</i> , <i>Wied il-Bahrija</i>
Siggiewi	<i>Wied ta' L-Ilsna</i> ; <i>Wied ta' San Gorg</i> ; <i>Wied il-Buskett</i> .
Dingli	two unnamed valleys at Dingli Cliffs; <i>Wied ir-Rum</i> ; <i>Wied Hazrun</i> ; <i>Wied ta' Ghar Ilma</i> ; <i>Wied ta' L-Imtahleb</i> ; <i>Wied Markozz</i> ; <i>il-Wied ta' Migra l-Ferha</i> ; <i>il-Wied ta' l-Ghajn it-tajba</i> ; <i>Wied Gordajna</i> .
Mgarr	<i>Wied il-Hmar</i> ; <i>il-Wied ta' Fomm ir-Rih</i> ; <i>Wied il-Gnejna</i> .
Ghajnsielem (G)	<i>Wied L-Ahmar</i> (Comino);
Mosta	the mouth of <i>Wied il-Ghasel</i> ;
San Gwann	<i>Wied Ghollieqa</i>
Pembroke	<i>Wied Harq Hamiem</i>

Source: EMU, PA

### **Development on valley sides**

**The Structure Plan seeks to prevent new development on valley sides, and especially watercourses, except for projects aimed at soil or water conservation. It also declares that the Authority will have regard to the possible detrimental effects of dredging works in valleys, and undertake positive action to prevent dumping in watercourses (RCO29). There is a presumption against developments on important natural heritage even if it is within existing urban areas (RCO15).**

4.6.14 A draft planning policy paper on development in valleys is currently being prepared by the Planning Authority. The main aims of the paper are: to provide criteria for the delineation of valleys; to explain which policies apply in the delineated sites; to provide more specific guidance for development in valleys (e.g. on surface hydrology). Pending the preparation of this policy guidance, information as what has been actually happening on the valley sides may be gleaned from two sources: first the Local Planning process, second through the monitoring of developments in the valley sides.

4.6.15 As far as the Local Planning process is concerned, the Grand Harbours Local Plan has proposed the scheduling of a large part of Wied Kalkara as a Site of Scientific Importance. Part of this area was zoned for development in the Temporary Provision Schemes, and the Plan proposes to remove this site from the development zone.

4.6.17 The list of valleys which witnessed considerable development within the development zone during the monitoring period include: Wied Ghomor, (San Giljan); Wied ta' Hmsida (B'Kara); Wied is-Sewda (Qormi); Wied l-Gharghar tas-Salib (M'Scala); *il-Wied ta' Martin* (Ghajnsielem (G)); and, *il-Wied ta' Marsalforn* (Zebbug (G)). Other valleys, which include *il-Wied ta' Ghajn Mula* (Burmarrad, Naxxar); *il-Wied ta' l-Isqof* (Rabat), *il-Wied ta' l-Ghasri* (Ghasri (G)), *il-Wied tal-Pwales* (San Pawl il-Bahar) and *il-Wied tax-Xlendi* (Munxar (G)), witnessed some development outside the development boundary, as well as within development zone.

4.6.18 The policy of preventing new development on valley sides has still been difficult to monitor due to the fact that the extent of a number of valleys of Malta and Gozo have not yet been *definitively* identified. Nevertheless, in order to assess the type and extent of development in valleys, an exercise has been carried out using a MapInfo (GIS) contours layer wherein valleys were identified, based on proximity of contours to each other, i.e. the closer a group of contours, the steeper the slope being represented. Using this method, valleys have been identified and mapped into a GIS layer. Though by no means exhaustive, the GIS layer is a fair representation of the location of valleys in Malta and Gozo.

### ***Recreation in valleys***

**Structure Plan policy RCO29 commits the Planning Authority to take positive action to safeguard valleys for walking, cycling and horse riding, through the prohibition of vehicles, other than for agriculture and maintenance, and the establishment of car parks at valley edges. The Structure Plan proposes a number of parkways along valleys (e.g. the Chadwick Lakes in Wied il-Qlejgha).**

4.6.19 A fair number of the Local Councils have started to implement projects for the recreational use of valleys. A postal survey of Local Councils in this regard carried out by the Planning Authority in early 1998, indicates that projects for upgrading country walkways, rebuilding of rubble walls, and laying out picnic areas are becoming more common. The survey covered all 67 local councils, with a 50% response rate. Projects were reported by seven local councils, of which two are in Gozo. Innovative projects were also reported, such as the upgrading of Wied Galvan at Xghajra for the promotion of a cottage industry based on the processing of capers. This section gives a brief summary of the projects identified by the survey:

- at Rabat, Gozo, the local council has initiated a project involving the regular maintenance of a system of country footpaths for recreational use, costing some Lm1414 per annum;
- at Ghaxaq, agricultural pathways are being levelled and paved at Ta' Karag and lx-Xaghra, at a cost of some Lm2400.
- Xghajra Local Council has commissioned a scientific study of the sloping ground under the Ricasoli Industrial Estate, to assess its potential for upgrading and for accommodating recreational footpaths. The project is to include the rebuilding of rubble walls, clearing of dumped material and irrigation using treated sewage effluent. The council is also studying the setting up of cottage industries based on the wild caper crop in Wied Glavan. This project will also involve the clearing of the valley and the rebuilding of rubble walls;
- at Attard, the local council is setting up a series of small gardens (gardini), using land areas that were once dumping sites, at a cost of Lm15,000. A footbridge over Wied Rmied is also planned, to create a public footpath linking Misrah Kola with Mdina Road;
- the Santa Lucija Local Council is planning a promenade along Wied Garnaw, to include street furniture, and the cleaning of water reservoirs, at a cost of some Lm5000;
- the councils of San Gwann, San Giljan and Swieqi are working on clearing Wied Ghomor, rebuilding rubble walls, planting trees, and providing benches and lighting;
- the Ghajnsielem Local Council is starting to clear dumped material from Wied il-Mostra, at a cost of some Lm1500.

4.6.20 Other projects for recreational use of valleys are in progress at:

- Buskett, limits of Rabat - This is a major recreational site which has now been scheduled (June 1996). The area is under the responsibility of the Agriculture Department. A management committee was set up during the previous monitoring period to monitor progress and implement change in this area but it has not met during this period.
- Wied il-Kbir and Wied is-Sewda, Qormi - the problems of flash floods in these valleys have been solved by works carried out by the Water Service Corporation. Illegal animal farms have also been regularised, and contamination to boreholes, arising out of leakage of waste from the farms has also stopped. The valleys are regularly cleaned by the Qormi Local Council.
- Wied il-Fiddien/Wied il-Qliegħa (Chadwick Lakes) project by the Agricultural Department.

## Relocation of Obnoxious Industry

**The Planning Authority is to consider the provision of incentives to relocate obnoxious industry and other developments which cause nuisance in residential areas (IND5, IND9, IND10, AHF9).**

4.6.21 An Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprise (IPSE) has been set up, and land has been allocated on a number of industrial estates for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). During 1997, the Planning Authority conducted a site selection exercise in which a number of sites for SMEs were identified in Malta. It is considered that the provision of incentives for the relocation of obnoxious industries lies within the remit of IPSE, and the Malta Development Corporation, rather than the Planning Authority.

4.6.22 During the monitoring period, the Planning Authority took forward the concept of "obnoxious" industry, as defined in the Structure Plan. The Planning Authority's premises database was extended to include a code classifying the hazard and nuisance value of each enterprise, based on the type of industry concerned. This exercise was undertaken in cooperation with the Cleaner Technology Centre at the University of Malta, and a final report has been prepared which provides details of the classification system.

4.6.23 The draft Commerce and Industry Subject Study recommends that the "obnoxious" industries defined in the Structure Plan, such as lime kilns, concrete batching plants and scrapyards, are approached within the general framework of the 1994 Development Planning (Use Classes) Order regulation. This legislation defines a set of industries as Special Industrial Groups (Classes 13-16). The draft Study recommends the need to designate Special Industrial Zones, within the Industrial zones, in consultation with the MDC where appropriate. The Study further recommends that industrial proposals, including expansion and intensification, falling into Special Industrial Groups are resisted, outside Special Industrial Zones, once these were designated. Consideration for the delineation of these Special Industrial Zones may be given in areas like Hal Far and on the site for long term industrial development at Benghisa.

## Access for All

**The Structure Plan aims to improve access for the disabled, the elderly and children in prams and pushchairs to all public buildings and facilities, including public transport and footpaths (BEN15, SOC24 and COM7).**

4.6.24 During the monitoring period, development permissions were granted for several projects which provided improved access for certain sectors of the Community and these included: construction of a respite home with facilities for the disabled at the existing centre at Ghajnsielem (G); alterations at Rabat



(G) Health Centre to improve access for disabled patients; provision of a handicapped persons access ramp at the Law Courts, Valletta; provision of accessibility at public conveniences at Marsa; construction of a pool and room for handicapped persons at Tre Monelly, Siggiewi. These developments are considered to be a step in the right direction in fulfilling the aims of the policy.

4.6.25 The National Commission for People with Disabilities (NCPD) has not undertaken any monitoring of developments in this sector. As far as national projects are concerned there were attempts to ensure that the upgrading of Bugibba included making all the services fully accessible. There have been improvements in this regard, but Bugibba cannot yet claim to be fully accessible.

4.6.26 A survey was carried out by the Planning Authority on the accessibility of Social and Community Care facilities in local councils. This survey indicates that local councils have taken more of an interest in ensuring that their facilities are accessible, particularly for pensioners and parents with young children. The survey also indicates that in many councils, the local police station is still inaccessible.

4.6.27 The above survey revealed a wide disparity between the responses from different localities. Some localities such as Birzebbuga and Qormi reported that all their social and community facilities were accessible. Others such as Kalkara reported that most of their facilities were still inaccessible. The survey highlighted the need for a clearer definition of the concept of accessibility and the delineation of guidelines to secure the implementation of this concept. Pending that, the responses from the survey must be noted with caution. One can, however, conclude that as the majority of respondents did respond to this question, accessibility is a fairly important issue for the local councils.

## **4.7 Controlling the Impact of Development Projects**

### **Environmental considerations in planning decisions**

4.7.1 One of the most effective ways of monitoring the implementation of policy and the quality of decisions on development projects is by carrying out a Development Control File Audit (DCFA). Since no development control file audit has been undertaken due to shortage of staff during the monitoring period, it has not been possible to update this section of the report.

4.7.2 In general, however, it is considered that, as noted in the last monitoring report, the range of issues considered in the assessment of development permit applications is inadequate. Fundamental planning issues such as landscape impact and the effect of a proposed change of use were not, in general, being fully considered. The previous monitoring report, based on the DCFA of early 1995, identified that further monitoring is required to evaluate whether the quality of project assessment has now reached an acceptable standard in the majority of cases. The importance to undertake this exercise is now considered to be even greater with the passage of intervening years.

## Environmental Impact Assessment

The Structure Plan introduces a requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Traffic Impact Assessment (TIS) (BEN12, SET6, SET12, SOC7, PUT10, PUT14, MIN8, TOU11, TRA2) on large-scale projects, projects in sensitive locations and projects with unusually complex or potentially harmful effects. The purposes of Environmental Impact Assessment are: to investigate the probable effects of a project before a decision is made to proceed; to introduce changes in the design process, where appropriate; and to ensure that everybody involved understands the likely effects of the proposed development.

4.7.3 Environmental assessment of projects has been governed according to the 1994 planning policy guidelines entitled "Policies and Design Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessment in Malta".

4.7.4 EIA regulations were drafted and agreed by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) by the end of 1997. They currently await Planning Authority approval. The new regulations include proposals for:

- a register of consultants;
- wider socio-economic impact assessment, including impact of environmental change on human society;
- clarification that if no EIA is submitted by the developer, the project will be refused;
- consideration of economic feasibility; more powers for the enforcement of monitoring conditions;
- specification for time frames for public consultation;
- necessity for EPD to certify that the EIA is complete and finalised; the finished EIA is put on sale at the cost of printing;
- changes of use or extensions to projects can be subject to EIA;
- cumulative effects of other projects on site should also be considered;
- new methods and production processes might require an EIA after a specified period;
- and, clarification of roles of the Planning Authority, the EPD, the developer, the consultants, and NGOs in the EIA process.

4.7.5 The written part of an environmental assessment may take the form of an Environmental Impact Statement, an Environmental Planning Statement, or simply a Traffic Impact Statement, depending on the size and type of the proposed development and according to the EIA guidelines published by the Planning Authority in 1994. In some cases, an EIS or EPS is accompanied by a TIS and in some cases a TIS is requested independently of wider environmental assessment. No full Environmental Impact Assessments were completed during 1996 or 1997, so the list below includes no Environmental Impact Statements. However Environmental Planning Statements were prepared for 19 projects and Transport Impact Statements were prepared for seven projects. The sector for which most EPS was prepared (6) relates to the minerals sector.

4.7.6 Table 71 lists a series of projects for which environmental assessments have been completed, in the period 1996-1997:

Table 71 - Environmental Assessment completed 1996-1997

Sector	Environmental Planning Statements	Transport Impact Statements
Agricultural and Fisheries	Poultry Farm at Bahrija Il-Hofra z-Zghira Fish Farm at Marsaxlokk	
Residential/Retail	Housing Estate at Santa Lucija	Residential Complex, Sliema
Infrastructure	Telecommunications Training Centre at Swatar	Maltacom Training Centre, Swatar Maltacom Development, Paceville
Commerce and Industry	Brand Factory at Hal Far Ta' Zuta Batching Plant at Siggiewi	Commercial Development, Birkirkara
Quarrying	Hardstone Quarry at Gebel Ciantar Qortin Isopu Hardstone Quarry at Nadur Tas-Sghajtar Hardstone Quarry at Naxxar Ta' Slima Softstone Quarry at San Lawrenz Tal-Ponta Softstone Quarry at San Lawrenz Softstone Quarry at Mqabba	Not yet completed
Tourism	Artificial Wreck at Cittadella Artificial Wreck at Marsascala Imperial Eagle Artificial Wreck at Qawra	Cinema Village, Kalkara Family Theme Park, Paceville
Transport	Helicopter Terminal Building at Xemxija Dredging works at Cirkewwa	
Waste	Waste Sorting Yard at Maghtab Inert Waste landfill at Gharb	
Others		Mixed used Development, Gzira

Source: EMU, PA

4.7.7 The previous monitoring report indicated that there was a lack of clarity as to whether the approved environmental impact assessment is primarily a tool for deciding whether a development should be granted permission, or whether it is a tool to identify mitigating measures for the environmental effects of projects which are to be accepted because they fall within planning policy grounds. During 1996 and 1997, no projects which were subject to environmental assessment were refused development permission. Where a proposal is unacceptable on policy grounds then it is refused without requiring an environmental assessment. Planning practice in Malta has now established that the principal role of EIA is to determine mitigation measures for projects which are acceptable on planning policy grounds. This does not preclude the Planning Authority from refusing applications that have a considerable environmental impact, even if accompanied by an EIA

4.7.8 In some cases, however, developers faced with a negative reaction from the Planning Directorate due to conflict with Structure Plan policy, offer to perform EIAs to determine the extent of that conflict. Clearly there is a middle ground in which environmental impact assessment is required to determine the extent to which the proposed development would compromise the Structure Plan's environmental policy, and in such cases, the EIA would be instrumental in determining the outcome of the Planning Authority's decision on the development.

4.7.9 Although the process for requesting and performing EIAs is slowly reaching maturity, there remain some areas which need attention. The quality of assessments submitted is variable, depending on the local expertise available. Not all sections of the Terms of Reference prepared by the Planning Authority for environmental assessments are given equal attention. Of particular concern is the fact that consideration of social and economic impacts; impacts on other land uses; and the overall coordinated assessment, which is meant to tie together the EIA, are generally inadequate. The Planning Authority is cautious of these limitations and is currently engaged in finding ways to overcome this problem.

4.7.10 As more EIAs are carried out, it has become evident that there is a need to consider the cumulative effect of certain industries (such as animal farms and minerals extraction) or activities (such as sinking of wrecks) as a whole. In the case of wrecks, the Planning Authority has given permits for a small number of wrecks to be sunk, and has now called a two-year moratorium on the further sinking of wrecks, in order to study the environmental effects of the activities carried out so far. In the case of animal farms, an assessment of plans for the development of the industry is required, perhaps in the form of a subject study. The Minerals and Waste Plans, (work on the latter having started recently by the Planning Authority), also need to consider the overall environmental impacts of their alternative proposals.

## Landscaping

### *Landscaping concepts and guidelines*

**The Structure Plan introduces landscaping requirements for development projects and calls for the development of landscaping concepts and guidelines in Local Plans (BEN17, 7.16, BEN18). Development permit applications are to include landscaping proposals and maintenance programmes (BEN17). Local Plans are to include landscape concepts, with implementation guidelines (BEN18).**

4.7.11 By the end of 1997, the Planning Authority's draft guidance on landscaping was at an advanced stage of preparation. The guidance included a list of trees and shrubs which are recommended for use in landscaping projects. Landscaping conditions are regularly used for major applications including the Maltacom project at Swatar, all quarry applications, farm applications in the countryside, Villa Borg Olivier at St. Paul's Bay, the Chadwick Lakes rehabilitation project, the Cinema Village at Fort St. Rocco, Kalkara, the Mistra Village hotel extension, and a regional park at Zabbar. Local councils have undertaken a considerable number of urban embellishment and landscaping schemes. During 1997, the central government completed a major urban improvement scheme at Bugibba, which included landscaping proposals and maintenance programmes.

4.7.12 The Grand Harbour local plan includes a number of policies to improve landscape in the area. Policy GE02 calls for environmental improvements to the immediate visual corridors of arterial roads. Policy GC07 calls for a programme of afforestation in the form of structural planting, as well as the improvement of existing afforested areas.

4.7.13 The Grand Harbour is divided into overall landscape character zones which policy GP07 seeks to retain. The Plan commits the Planning Authority to ensure the retention of these zones in its assessment of development. The Harbour is divided into three zones: the Inner Harbour, the Valletta/Floriana waterfront, and the Cottonera waterfront. The Inner Harbour is of an industrial nature, characterised by features such as cranes, gantries, chimneys and pipework, which the local plan seeks to retain as indicators of the economic vibrancy of this part of the Harbour. The Plan also recommends that their sculptural qualities are emphasised and contrasted with their background,

possibly through the use of strong primary colours. The Valletta/Floriana and the Cottonera waterfronts are characterised by the vertical elements of the buildings, and the contrast they provide with the massive bastions below them, which introduce a dominant horizontal feature.

4.7.14 The GHLP also advocates and supports the efforts of the MDC towards improvements at Kordin Industrial Estate (para 3.1 and GI09).

4.7.15 Landscaping considerations have been incorporated in the Pembroke and the draft Ta' Qali Action Plans, as well as in the development briefs approved in this period. The draft Ta' Qali Action plan proposed that a landscape Master Plan is prepared and implemented for the area, including a new tree planting framework to screen eyesores and the urban fringe. The area is envisaged to become a centre for landscape enhancement and restoration techniques, and a 'demonstration ground' for similar improvements in the rest of Malta. The approved Pembroke Action Plan calls for an Environmental Management Plan to be prepared by the Planning Authority which will cover all ecological areas, trees/landscaped areas, the Valley (Wied Harq Hammiem), as well as for the screening of the existing reverse osmosis plant. The Action Plan envisages all the housing and employment areas to be properly landscaped, with urban parks forming transitional zones between different uses. 10% of each site allocated for housing in the plan area is reserved for landscaping and footpaths.

## Extension of Planning Control to new development types

**The Structure Plan, in conjunction with the Development Planning Act of 1992, extends planning controls to adverts (BEN6), satellite dishes (BEN13), and existing quarries (MIN16).**

Table 72 - Applications granted and refused for new developments types 1993-97

	Applications Granted						Applications Refused					
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	Total	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	Total
Satellite	12	30	58	127	193	420	2	11	0	12	18	43
Advertisements	65	94	200	182	158	699	18	40	1	42	34	135
Quarries	1	1	3	7	4	16	0	24	0	0	1	25
Total	78	125	261	316	355	1135	20	75	1	54	53	203

Source: DCIS, PA

4.7.16 Table 72 shows that the total number of applications receiving approval for the various items listed above has continued the upward trend during the monitoring period. The picture, however, conceals the fact that there is a discernible trend downwards in respect of the number of applications receiving approval for advertisements during this period. It may be partly explained by the significant number of refusals for advertisement applications.

## 4.8 Design Standards and Guidelines - Design of New Areas

4.8.1 The Structure Plan provides a range of policies aimed at improving design standards in urban areas, particularly new urban areas. A particular objective is the integration of social and community facilities into new areas, and the Structure Plan views the local planning system as the appropriate mechanism for redesigning layouts within the temporary provisions schemes. The Structure Plan also calls for the development of design guidance and the setting of standards for new areas, particularly relating to access, parking and infrastructure provision.

### Review of Temporary Provision Schemes in Local Plans

**The Structure Plan judged the Temporary Provision Schemes to be deficient in their provision of non-residential uses, particularly community facilities and local employment (3.18). The Local Plans are to review the layouts of the Temporary Provision Schemes, although boundaries are not to be reviewed piecemeal (SET8, SET7, BEN4). Within the Temporary Provision Schemes, more favourable consideration is to be given to development applications in the serviced areas close to existing development (BEN4). An adequate range of community facilities and employment opportunities is to be provided in new housing areas (SOC25).**

4.8.2 During the monitoring period, the layouts of the Temporary Provisions Schemes in the Grand Harbour Local Plan (GHLP) area were reviewed. New residential development in the GHLP is mainly in Kalkara.<sup>42</sup> Since Kalkara is a small settlement, provision of social and community facilities in new housing areas was not considered to be a major issue. Policy GK24 encourages social and community facilities in the central part of the village, and suggests that an aged people's home could be situated here or in the main housing area.

4.8.3 Proposals in the Grand Harbours Local Plan are in line with the Structure Plan on design in newly schemed areas. For example, special emphasis has been laid in the draft GHLP on the design issues in the 'schemed' area at Wied Kalkara. No development is recommended on the SSI covering the eastern part of the site. The remainder of this area has been included in the UCA of Kalkara, since it is between the bastion walls and the sea. Here the site to the south of the village centre is on steeply sloping ground, is affected by a drainage gallery, and is also an important open area surrounding the town centre. So far, little of this area has been developed, and the draft Plan proposes that before any further development applications are assessed, an outline permit application should be submitted. This application should be the subject of a separate detailed exercise in full partnership with landowners, residents, the local council and other interested parties, to ensure the final acceptability of the proposals. The draft local plan provides a list of considerations to be used in the drafting of proposals for this site: sloping nature of site, making a multi-level, terraced development the most acceptable type of development; visual effect of development on bastions; location of site inside Kalkara UCA; inclusion of open space in scheme; pedestrian connections to other areas, particularly the waterfront (GK03).

4.8.4 Due to the immense visual importance of Kalkara Creek in the landscape of the Grand Harbour, the UCA in Kalkara has been widely drawn, to include the old centre of Kalkara, the adjacent hillsides, and the promontory

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<sup>42</sup> References to the Grand Harbour Local Plan relate to the Consultation Draft dated June '97.

of Bighi. Within this UCA, the design principles which apply include: vertical emphasis for form and detailing of buildings; use of traditional building materials; paramount importance given to protection of skyline; massing, fenestration and ornamentation to respect streetscape; incorporation of public open space in large schemes; and, pedestrian priority.

## Residential Design Guidelines

**The Structure Plan proposes the development of rules and guidelines concerning densities, building heights, design, and parking and other standards for residential areas (HOU3). Relevant Structure Plan policies and guidelines are intended as interim measures, applicable prior to the completion of appropriate standards for individual localities.**

4.8.5 Policy guidance on *Parking Provision for Local Shops, Offices and Catering Establishments* was approved by the Planning Authority Board in December 1997.

4.8.6 During the previous monitoring period, a discussion paper outlining a framework for the revision of DC1/88 (*Conditions for Development and Design Control*) was circulated for comments both internally and externally. The document proposed to rework DC1/88 in three areas: improved guidance for development in residential areas; improved guidance for development in industrial areas; improved performance standards, now covering issues such as emissions. The paper concluded that permit conditions as provided in the current DC1/88 did not need revision. Although the revision is programmed, other priorities have precluded the Planning Authority from starting work. The size and complexity of DC1/88 requires that any revision would need considerable time and resources.

4.8.7 A draft Front Gardens policy paper is in preparation, which revises some of the clauses of DC1/88, relating to front gardens. It is expected to provide clear and detailed guidance on permissible structures (eg. canopies, tables and chairs) in front gardens of both private residences and commercial establishments.

4.8.8 During the latter part of 1997, work commenced at the Planning Authority on the preparation of a set of guidelines covering residential densities.

## Design Guidance for Industrial Areas

**The Structure Plan seeks a review of zonings and design standards within industrial estates and proposes that industrial estates are zoned into smaller areas and developed to high density (ND1, IND4). The Plan also proposes guidelines for both the visual and functional aspects of industrial estates (IND1).**

4.8.9 The draft Grand Harbour Local Plan provides revised layouts for the Kordin and Ricasoli Industrial Estates. GHLP Policy GD04 encourages and supports the improvement of the existing MDC estates and emphasizes the importance of tree planting schemes along the boundaries of the estates. GD03 encourages the reuse and recycling of derelict or despoiled land, and proposes to accept proposals for commercial or industrial uses on sites not previously allocated or used for that purpose, to further this end.

4.8.10 Policy GI01 provides an overall zoning for the Kordin Industrial Development Zone (38 ha), inside which areas for general port related uses, grain terminal and cargo handling, ship repair, general industry (Use Classes Order Class 12), and, small and medium-sized enterprise workshops and sports facilities, are designated. An outline permit is required before individual development applications for SME units are considered. Special emphasis is laid on the possibility of the SME units being developed on more than one level, but negative visual effects are to be minimised, through appropriate design solutions.

4.8.11 On Ricasoli Industrial Estate, the GHLP states that the Planning Authority will support measures to increase efficient utilisation of space, for example by reducing the area for roads and parking (GK20, GK21). A new zoning layout is proposed which incorporates an area for SMEs which can be developed on more than one level due to the topography of the site. This area requires an outline development permit before any individual development applications are considered. The need to upgrade the estate will be given particular attention during the consideration of development applications.

4.8.12 The draft Commerce and Industry Subject Study envisages that more intensive use of land on MDC estates and rapid improvement in the utilisation of Hal Far will be key features for the industrial sector in the coming decade (para 0.2.19);

4.8.13 The Subject Study also points to the need for attention to environmental quality and design issues in private industrial areas. As part of the Commerce and Industry Subject Study, a survey of private industrial areas was carried out by the Planning Authority in April 1997. The survey covered land zoned in the 1988 Temporary Provisions Schemes, well-established garage industry areas and ad-hoc development outside the development zone. The survey identified a number of problems which highlighted a requirement for coordinated action to achieve environmental and infrastructural improvements within existing industrial zones in private ownership. These problems include: haphazard or non-existent provision of common services; and, lack of consideration of parking and services. In such areas, design is often of poor quality and attempts at screening and landscaping are rare, while effluent disposal and noise and air pollution control are also often haphazard. Industrial areas at Mriehel and Zebbug (Mdina Road) represent the more controlled end of private industrial sites. The older garage industry sites such as those at Qormi, typically provide a very poor working environment, with cramped units, a high level of noise and dust, on-street parking and often unsurfaced roads. It is evident that planning standards are scarcely being observed in some of these areas, such as Tal-Handaq, Qormi.

4.8.14 No guidelines have yet been drafted on the visual and functional aspects of industrial estates, however MDC is currently implementing an Lm0.75 million per annum Environmental Improvement Programme. As part of this programme, works were undertaken at Kordin, Ta' Qali and Luqa in 1997. This programme included: improvements to lighting, roads and pavements and landscaping of certain areas. Once the areas are improved and security is provided, service charges are to be levied on users of the estates. Maintenance services are being decentralised to regional offices at the larger estates.<sup>43</sup>

## **Design Guidance for Urban Areas**

**The Structure Plan calls for the urgent preparation of Local Plans for all existing built-up areas. These should lead to substantial improvements in environmental quality, whilst providing for all suitable uses (SET6). The Local Plans are to ensure that traffic within Urban Conservation Areas is controlled, to improve the pedestrian environment, and new access roads are discouraged (UCO14). The Local Plans are also to identify views which should be protected within Urban Conservation Areas (UCO10).**

4.8.15 The national design guidance prepared during the previous monitoring period is still in use and has not been revised. These include: development control in Urban Conservation Areas (July 1995); shopfronts (May 1994);

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<sup>43</sup> Draft Commerce And Industry Subject Study, para. 2.5.12



billboards and signs (May 1994); access for all (November 1995) and, vending machines (May 1994).

4.8.16 The Planning Authority is in the process of drafting guidance on commercial uses in residential areas. Although the guidance is expected to consider providing advice on any kind of non-residential use, the document will concentrate particularly on providing guidance for offices, industry, retail and catering uses.

4.8.17 The Grand Harbour Local Plan includes a number of general policies providing measures through which it aims to improve design in urban areas:

- GS09 designates *Action Areas* to help indicate priorities for public sector investment and to give guidance to the public on the improvements and new developments required and how these should be achieved. In areas of poor quality housing, the Plan recommends the designation of *Housing Improvement Action Areas*;
- GS10 designates *Opportunity Areas* as a way of focusing attention and providing guidance for those localities where the Authority is especially anxious to promote positive and significant change, through development or redevelopment. To aid implementation of this policy the Plan suggests that there may be a need for the preparation of *Development Briefs* which could outline the guiding principles for the development;
- GH01 designates Urban Conservation Areas in which development proposals will be required to preserve and enhance the character of the area, and will have to follow the Planning Authority's approved guidance as well as specific guidance provided by the local plan for the individual UCAs (e.g. GV14, GB01, GG14);
- GS05 actively invites submissions for rehabilitation and redevelopment schemes for the local plan area;
- GS04 provides minimum and maximum plot ratios for terraced (between 50% and 80% site coverage) and semi-detached (between 40 and 50% coverage) developments;
- GS06 lays emphasis on the efficient use of land, inviting submission of innovative or ingenious layouts on sites such as infill schemes, difficult urban sites and ones where tighter arrangement of buildings may be appropriate.

4.8.18 Specific policies for each locality of the GHLP give more detailed guidance:

- Housing improvement action areas are designated at: the lower part of Valletta on the Marsamxett Harbour side; the Balzunetta area of Floriana; L-Isla; five sites in Bormla; a large site covering the central part of Vittoriosa;
- Individual areas in the Local Plan also have specific policies on building heights (eg. GF11), some of which are flexible but subject to strict guidelines, such as in Valletta and Floriana, and others such as the building heights for Kalkara, which are fixed as illustrated in an inset map provided with the Local Plan;
- Residential improvement and redevelopment schemes are proposed for areas such as Kalkara (GK02) which encourages rehabilitation of older dwellings, conversion to housing of other suitable buildings currently used for other purposes, redevelopment to higher densities, and the introduction of innovative forms of housing such as 'sheltered' accommodation for the frail and elderly;
- Each locality has specific design policies, such as policy GV14, which states that all development in Valletta should observe the design guidance,

which includes: the maintenance of the discipline imposed by the current streetscape and building block grid; protection of the 'skyline' view of Valletta is of paramount concern; massing, fenestration and ornamentation should respect the street and townscape context; presumption against bridging of streets; use of traditional building materials; incorporation of accessible space/enclosures for public use and pedestrian priority arrangements.

## 4.9 Construction Management - Improving the Quality of Implementation

### Construction management for major projects

**The Structure Plan proposes a comprehensive attack on environmental degradation; particularly degradation associated with building sites and construction refuse. As an element in this approach, it is proposed that permit conditions should preclude unneighbourly construction procedures, unfinished surfaces and the permanent dumping of building materials on or near the site (BEN9, BEN11, section 7.9).**

4.9.1 Construction management plans were included in a fair number of approvals for major projects, including: Colonial Hotel (Gzira); Telemalta project (Swatar); redevelopment of Villa Eugene (B'Kara); extension at Westin Dragonara Hotel (St. Julians); Social housing (Msida); Hotel at San Lawrenz, Gozo; family theme park (St. Julians); Ta' Qali Crafts Village; small industrial units at Hal Far (B'Bugia); and, industrial units (Luqa).

4.9.2 There has been implementation of time restrictions on the operations of certain types of equipment in areas such as tourism centres. The Planning Authority, in consultation with the Ministry of Tourism and the Federation of Industries, has prepared a discussion paper proposing that construction in tourist areas stops during the summer months. The paper has been presented to the Ministry of Tourism. It is intended that some of the suggestions made in the paper may be implemented by summer 1999.

4.9.3 Casual observation of construction sites suggests that standards on these sites have not improved greatly since the 1993-1995 monitoring report which had stated that the majority of permit conditions were not applied and enforced effectively. There appears to have been a slight improvement with regards to two of the problems referred to last year which indicates that fewer cranes now seem to be blocking roads, and the number of building sites surrounded by temporary walls (not hoardings) is on the increase. One problem that appears to remain for smaller sites near the countryside, is the dumping of excavation rubble in nearby fields, vacant plots or natural areas. However, enforcement of site management is considered to lie generally within the remit of the police than the Planning Authority.

4.9.4 Site management plans are often requested as part of the EIA process. In certain cases, permit conditions which arise out of EIA recommendations are incorporated as permit conditions with approvals.

### Standards on construction sites

**The Structure Plan calls for the introduction of contractor certification for certain types of work, such as rehabilitation. The Plan proposes the use of conditions to enforce the use of contractors having the appropriate certifications (BEN16).**

4.9.5 During the monitoring period, Government set up a Building Industry Consultation Committee (BICC) on which the Planning Authority was

represented. The Committee's work was divided into five working groups: Quality assurance, building regulations and registration of contractors; Research; Health and Safety; Education and Training; Property market and urgent initiatives. The aim of the BICC is to undertake studies and research, and to recommend a framework of policies and procedures which should govern the Building Industry.

## Building Regulations

**The Structure Plan calls for the preparation and implementation of a comprehensive system of Building Regulations. All building designs will require Building Regulations approval before commencement (BEN20, section 7.18).**

4.9.6 The draft set of Building Regulations have been drafted by the Management Efficiency Unit (MEU) in liaison with the Works Division during the monitoring period.

## 4.10 Environmental Education

4.10.1 Environmental education aims to develop a stronger sense of awareness about the environment, coupled with a sense of personal responsibility, knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the environment. It also aims to enable public involvement in decision-making concerning the environment. An important aim of environmental education for the Planning Authority is therefore to overturn old perceptions of a bureaucratic, reactive and unnecessary planning system and replace them with a clear understanding of the role and functions of the Planning Authority.

### Initiatives in Environmental Education

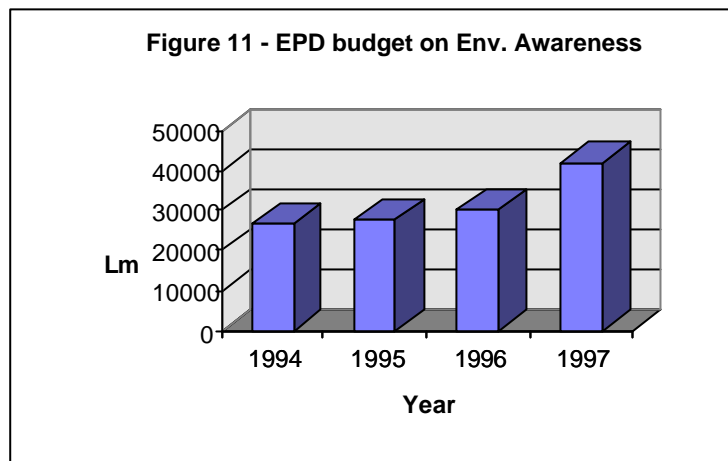
**The Structure Plan indicates that a positive attitude to the environment can best be achieved through education (15.40). Policies are included to promote educational programmes, to create positive behavioral patterns and to raise public awareness of conservation, as a means of achieving conservation objectives (RCO39, UCO16).**

4.10.2 The National Environmental Education Strategy (NEES) has emerged during the monitoring period as an important initiative in this field. NEES is a working group under the Consultative and Advisory Board on the Environment (CABE) within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Environment. This Working Group is made up of representatives from the Environment Protection Department, the Education Division, the Faculty of Education, the teaching profession and the informal education sector. Through the action of NEES, environmental education in Malta has moved from a fragmentary phase of uncoordinated initiatives to a coordinated phase characterised by a national will to coordinate activities and make best use of available resources.<sup>44</sup>

4.10.3 One of the principal players in the environmental educational field is the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Environment. There has been a steady rise in funds allocated for this purpose since 1994, and a significantly larger overall figure was allocated in 1997, compared to the previous years.

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<sup>44</sup> Pace, P. 'Environmental Education in Malta. Trends and challenges'. In *Environmental Education Research*, 3, No. 1, 1997.



Source: Estimates 1996-1998

4.10.4 The principal reason for the increase in EPD funds for environmental awareness projects was the hefty rise in grants to NGOs, and the increase in funding for the Clean Up the World Campaign. Key projects undertaken by the Department were: the Cleaner Technology centre, which promotes environmental improvements within the industrial sector; the environmental management project at Ghajn Tuffieha; and assistance to NGOs. More detail of the EPD funding allocations is provided in Table 73:

Table 73 - Environment Protection Department budget on environmental awareness

Environment Protection Department budget on environmental awareness	1994 <i>Actual</i>	1995 <i>Actual</i>	1996 <i>Actual</i>	1997 <i>Approved</i>
NGOs	3,823	1,372	2,833	10,000
Cleaner Technology Center	10,088	10,000	10,000	10,000
<i>Xummiemu</i> Club	5,016	5,858	5,717	6,000
Clean up the World Campaign	2,937	3,008	540	6,000
Nature Reserve at Ghajn Tuffieha	-	-	10,126	10,000
International Conf. on Sust. Devlp.	-	-	393	-
National seminars on Nature Themes	-	-	322	-
National Park Activities	2,718	2,794	-	-
European Nature Conservation Year	1,870	4,548	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26,452</b>	<b>27,580</b>	<b>29,931</b>	<b>42,000</b>

Source: Estimates 1996-98

4.10.5 Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) continue to play a key role in raising awareness: through research, publication, media work, lectures and actions and they have also succeeded in bringing environmental issues and values into the sphere of everyday experience. One example of an NGO project is the *Dinja Wahda* (One World) award scheme initiated by Birdlife Malta, with the support of the Ministry of Education, the (then) Environment Secretariat and other funding agencies. The initiative involved the participation of all primary schools in 14 class activities which promoted pro-environment behavior. Teachers in the primary schools were expected to integrate the environmental activities into their normal teaching plans. Results from the evaluation questionnaire revealed that the initiative was a success in that, teachers in 74 primary schools used the activities in their classrooms (50% of all primary schools)<sup>45</sup>.

4.10.6 The Planning Authority has also been active in the field of environmental education during 1996 and 1997. Tables 74 to 77 provide the

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

details of exhibitions, brochures, seminars, conferences, lectures and guided tours which were organised and prepared by Planning Authority staff:

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Table 74 - Exhibitions

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'Minerals' at the Building Fair and Trade Fair Jun. 1997  
 'Eco-Logical Behavior Office' at Trade Fair in Aug. 1997  
 Scheduled Property at: Mellieha (Sep. '97); Rabat (Oct. '97); Siggiewi (Oct. '97); San Pawl (Nov. '97); M'Xlokk (Nov. '97); Zurrieq (Dec. '97); Mgarr (Dec. '97)  
 'Urban Conservation Areas' at *Fil-qalba tar- rahal* seminar - Sept. 1997  
 Various topics at the PA foyer  
 Grand Harbour Local Plan - June 1997  
 Ta' Qali Action Plan - June 1997  
 'Conservation in Gozo' - May 1997  
 'Malta's Coastal Features' at the PA's Foyer Jun. 1996  
 'Coastal Features' at the University Hall Jun. 1997

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Table 75 - Brochures

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'Eco-Logical Office' - Aug. 1997  
 '*Baqaghlna b'Xiex Nibnu?*' - Jun. 1997  
 'Urban Conservation Areas' (various)  
 'Planning Consultative Committee'  
 'Planning For the Future' - May 1997

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Table 76 - Seminars and Conferences

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'Minerals Resources and Quarrying for Quarry Owners' at the Building Property and Construction Fair - Jun. 1997  
 'Environmental Management for Malta Local Councils' at the Holiday Inn, Sliema - Oct. 1996  
 'Environmental Management for Gozo Local Councils' at the Gozo University Centre - Oct. 1996  
 'Integrating Environmental and Economic Planning in Small Island States' at the Foundation for International Studies, Valletta - Mar. 1996

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Table 77 - Lectures & Guided Site Visits

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'Sand Dunes in Gozo' for General Public (Gozo) - Oct. 1996  
 'Sliema Urban Conservation Area' for Sliema Summer School - Aug. 1997  
 'Zejtun Urban Conservation Area' for Zejtun Summer School - Aug. 1997

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*Source: Planning Authority*

4.10.7 The Planning Authority finances two courses: the Higher Certificate in Land Administration (Planning), and the Diploma in Planning Studies. In addition, professional staff from the Planning Authority lectured on various aspects of Environmental Management in the following courses: Higher Certificate in Land Administration (Planning); Diploma in Planning Studies; BA (General); Bachelor of Engineering and Architecture; Bachelor in Tourism Studies; Masters in Business Administration; MA in European Studies; MSc in Environmental Management and Planning.

#### **Resource and field centres**

**The Structure Plan commits the Planning Authority to establish a resource centre for environmental education (RCO40). The resource centre will function to keep the Maltese public adequately informed about environmental matters, increasing their awareness of the need for environmental management and providing the media with good quality information on the environment. The Structure Plan also encourages field centres and interpretive visitor centres (RCO41).**

4.10.8 No resource centre for environmental education has been set up by the Planning Authority. Although it does not have a specific resource centre, the

NEES structure does provide a national support network for environmental education initiatives. In addition, the Cleaner Technology Centre at the University of Malta provides a data and consultancy resource to industry wishing to undertake environmental improvements.

4.10.9 An application for a visitor centre at il-Maghluq, M'Scala, was granted in 1996, but works had not commenced by the end of 1997. An application submitted by the Environmental Protection Department for an environmental field centre at Fawwara has also been approved.

4.10.10 The Planning Authority's Sustainability Indicators project has been taken forward during 1996 and 1997. A report entitled 'Sustainability Indicators for Malta' has been produced and approved by the Planning Authority board in April 1997. Compilation of the indicators has begun and some 75% of this work has been completed. It is envisaged that they might be used in the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Structure Plan Review.

4.10.11 During 1996 and 1997 there has been increased emphasis on interpretation facilities. An approval for a Cinema Village project at Rinella was accompanied by planning conditions requiring the use of interpretive panels on historic buildings. Interpretive panels were also erected adjacent to a historical entrenchment wall as part of the Bugibba embellishment project. Signposting and interpretation panels has been used by NGOs such as Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna, in relation to the project which is responsible for restoration and maintenance works at Fort Rinella. Here interpretation facilities include over 50 signs, panels and exhibition boards, two fully kitted barrack rooms, live interpretation on special occasions, display of artifacts, models, and uniforms, and, hands-on experiences. The Heritage Action Committee, has also provided signposting within Fort St. Elmo and Fort Mosta.

4.10.12 Programmes of interpretive planning and provision of interpretive facilities have still not gained sufficient importance and there is ample scope for the Government, Local Councils and the private sector to invest in such projects which would assist in encouraging a greater understanding of and respect towards environmental matters.

### ***Environmental research***

**The Structure Plan calls on the Planning Authority to promote research on the environment and to disseminate it widely. A key element of this work is the establishment of a national Geographic Information System (GIS) (RCO42).**

4.10.13 During the monitoring period, the range and depth of the Planning Authority's GIS continued to improve, as more data is converted on to a map base (eg. Census '95 data, dwellings database, agricultural projects database, residential vacancies database, environmental resource surveys, NPI).

4.10.14 Through its wide ranging research into development planning and environmental issues, the Planning Authority continues to push forward the level of knowledge about the environment in Malta. A transport model is in preparation which will enable the Planning Authority to study the potential impact on Malta's road network of various developments in the future. The EMU continues to update and improve its National Protective Inventory and Scheduling databases (see sections 4.1 and 4.2). As local plans progress, more of Malta and Gozo is expected to be covered by environmental resources surveys. The various subject plans which are currently under preparation, for example, relating to Minerals, Waste and Coastal Zone Management, will all help to increase the amount of knowledge about the environment of the Maltese Islands.

4.10.15 A number of staff who were sponsored by the Planning Authority to study environmental planning in the UK have carried out research in areas

such as the development of environmental policy on agriculture and nature conservation,<sup>46</sup> which has helped in augmenting knowledge in this field. Various research papers have been written by the PA staff for presentation in local and international conferences on the environment and other planning issues.

## **4.11 Environmental Appraisal of the Structure Plan**

### **Sustainable development**

4.11.1 As indicated in the previous monitoring report, the Structure Plan does not explicitly address the issue of sustainability. It was formulated before the 1992 Earth Summit, and the publication of the EU's Fifth Action Programme for sustainable development (although these initiatives were largely in place by the time the Structure Plan was formally approved). The first Review of the Structure Plan will need to take account of the growing international emphasis on sustainable patterns of development.

4.11.2 The Structure Plan calls for the environmental appraisal of each local plan (section 4.5 (10)). The Grand Harbour Local Plan, which was made available for public consultation was not subjected to environmental appraisal but it has been prepared within the framework of the strategic environmental advice contained in the Structure Plan

### **Sustainability indicators**

4.11.3 Reference has been made in Paragraph 4.10.10 to the Planning Authority's Sustainability Indicators project and a report which was produced on this issue. The report "Indicators" presented a progress report on the work carried out by the Planning Authority on indicators. It also recommended that the Planning Authority project is expanded into a national Sustainability Indicators project involving other partners such as the Central Office of Statistics, the EPD, the University, the Local Councils Department, etc.

4.11.4 In the meantime, work progressed at the Planning Authority on the selection of a final set of indicators, based a set of selection criteria agreed on by Planning Authority staff. A set of 58 indicators were selected, and work commenced on the actual compilation of the data. By the end of 1997, some 75% of the indicators had been completed. The type of indicators examined so far ranged from importation of ozone depleting substances and emissions of greenhouse gases to GDP, number of cars and crime rates. Most indicators provide a window into how each environmental, social and economic factor is changing over time.

4.11.5 Work has recently started on the collection of environmental information at the Central Office of Statistics (COS). In addition the Environmental Protection Department has commissioned the Malta Council for Science & Technology (MCST) to prepare a Statement of the Environment Report for the Maltese Islands. The Planning Authority has been involved in getting this project off the ground.

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<sup>46</sup> Lia, R., *'The development of environmental policies on agriculture and nature conservation: conflict or integration?'*. unpublished essay 1998.

## Strategic Environmental appraisal

4.11.6 It is considered that the Structure Plan Review should be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). It is a mechanism to gauge the potential environmental impact of broad policies and programmes, rather than individual projects in identified locations. SEA could be used throughout the process of policy formulation to: assist in the evaluation of broad policy alternatives; test the validity of draft policies; and refine policies which perform poorly against environmental criteria.

4.11.7 The 1997 Project Management Plan for Structure Plan review, provides the outline of an SEA methodology. The Assessment should begin with a definition of key environmental issues for the Maltese Islands. In the absence of a completed State of the Environment report, this should be based on consultations with relevant experts and professionals, as well as reference to available recent publications<sup>47</sup>. This scoping exercise will provide the context for the definition of a series of *appraisal objectives*. These should be specific, measurable and directional, such as:

- minimise CO<sub>2</sub> emissions; or
- minimise further loss of land for development.

4.11.8 They should ideally be prepared in conjunction with the preparation of wider Structure Plan Review objectives. Specific *assessment criteria* can then be defined which provide operational measures of progress in terms of the appraisal objectives. These might include, for example:

- forecast vehicle km per year; and
- forecast annual rate of development on undeveloped land, in Ha.

4.11.9 Work is already in progress to define a set of sustainability indicators for the Maltese Islands (see 4.11.3 above). A sub-set of appropriate indicators could be defined as a basis for the development of appropriate assessment criteria. This approach is expected to provide a robust foundation for further development within the SEA for the Structure Plan Review.

4.11.10 The Assessment needs to be applied in particular to broad strategic policy options. Such *policy packages* might include, for example:

- a major road network improvement programme combined with large scale peripheral parking provision on the edge of main town centres;
- a network of bus priority measures combined with other public transport service improvements;
- a set of regional employment and housing targets for Local Plan areas; and
- provision of a regional network of large food stores on the edge of main town centres.

4.11.11 Strategic Environmental Assessment is no more than an informative aid to decision-making. There can be no guarantee that environmental criteria will always predominate in the choice of the preferred strategy. The results will be combined with the findings of social and economic impact appraisals. In addition, all technical appraisals will be subject to extensive public consultation with the interested parties and organisations, as well as discussions within the core team responsible for steering the work on the Review.

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<sup>47</sup> e.g. Sustainable Malta: a discussion paper. Moviment għall Ambjent, December 1997.



## 5. Framework for Implementation

### 5.1 Development Control System

#### Legislative framework

The basis of a successful development planning, development promotion and development control process is its legal provisions and related statutory instruments and administrative procedures<sup>48</sup>.

5.1.1 A significant milestone in the period 1996-97 was the first amendment of the primary legislation, *the Development Planning Act 1992*, which introduced changes to the structure plan review process and the development control process. The *Development Planning (Amendment) Act* was adopted in August 1997.

5.1.2 The amended Act has increased the period before which the Planning Authority can not review the Structure Plan (from 2 to 5 years). However, the Structure Plan can now be reviewed in part by Parliamentary Resolution, provided that such review does not adversely affect the rights acquired by any person prior to the effective date of such review.

5.1.3 The amended Act had widened the definition of development by including operations “in, on, over, or under the sea”, and adding land reclamation for, or conversion to, agricultural use. The exclusion of maintenance operations from development has been clarified, so that those operations which materially affect the external appearance of a building are now development.

5.1.4 The amended Act has also introduced changes to the development control procedure:

#### *Time limits*

- applications for development within the development scheme boundary should now be decided by the Authority within 12 weeks or the application is deemed to have been approved, provided it conforms with approved policies. Applications outside the development scheme boundary should be decided within 26 weeks (there is no deemed approval in this case). In both cases the Authority can extend the initial period by a further 26 weeks if this is justified on planning grounds. The new time limits have replaced the previous time limit of 8 weeks for all applications and the situation whereby applications were deemed to have been refused if the Authority had not determined the application after 8 weeks.

#### *Public involvement and consultation*

- there is now a Users Committee, comprising representatives of interested national constituted bodies, which supervises the general functioning of the Authority to ensure transparency, uniformity and fairness in the Authority’s procedures and decisions in the interest of the general public. The Users Committee can propose changes to administrative procedures where it deems fit.

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<sup>48</sup> Structure Plan Explanatory Memorandum, 5.1.

- all government departments/agencies must now reply to consultation on development applications within 4 weeks or it is deemed that they have no objection to the proposed development.
- all third party representations on development applications must now be submitted within 15 days of the publication of the application.

#### *Policies, plans and conditions*

- all policies, plans and conditions must now be approved by Government. Also, the Authority's procedures must now be approved by the Minister.
- the Authority must publish (and update) a manual containing policies, plans, conditions and procedures and all other relevant material relating to development permit applications: this is already available as the *Planning Factbook* published in October 1997.
- all applications are now assessed in accordance with the policies applicable at the time of the submission of the application. Policies can not however be applied retroactively so as to adversely affect rights acquired by a valid development permit.

#### *Decision taking*

- The Development Control Commission (DCC) can now at the request of any member hold deliberations of the Commission in private. However, every vote, even if by secret ballot, must be conducted in public.

#### *Appeals*

- the Authority must now reply to an applicant's request to reconsider a decision within 30 days of the receipt of the request.
- the Planning Appeals Board must now appoint the first hearing of the appeal within 3 months of the date of receipt of the appeal. Furthermore, the Authority must now send its appeal statement to the appellant within 30 days of receipt of the appeal.
- third parties now have a right of appeal but only those parties who submitted comments on the original application and only where the decision on the development was not specifically authorised in an approved development plan.

#### *Life span of permits*

- all development permits are now valid for 3 years. Where works have started but have not been completed after 3 years, the validity of the permit is automatically extended for a further period of 12 months. If works have not commenced after 3 years, the applicant must submit a new application to carry out the development.

#### *Revocation/modification of permits*

- the Authority can not now revoke or modify development permissions in any circumstance

### *Conservation and scheduling*

- the Authority must now affix a notice of any conservation order or scheduling on the site in question, as well as personally notify the owner(s) and publish a notice in the Government Gazette.
- the owner(s) of a property which the Authority has scheduled now has a right to request that the decision be reconsidered. This request must be submitted within 30 days of the date when s/he is notified of the scheduling or of publication of the scheduling in the Government Gazette. Also, the Authority must reconsider its decision within 3 months of receipt of the request.
- the owner(s) of a property on which the Authority has served a conservation order now has a right to contest the Authority's decision within 30 days of the date when s/he is notified of the order or of publication of the notice in the Government Gazette. Also, s/he now has a right to access all documentation concerning the order for this purpose.
- the Chairman of the Planning Authority can now, in a case of urgency, make an emergency conservation order without the need to consult the other members of the PA Board.

### *Enforcement*

- the Authority can now serve a stop notice on the occupier of the land where the owner is not known.

5.1.5 A range of subsidiary legislation was also amended during the monitoring period. The *General Development Order 1997* widened the types of minor development which are exempted from the need for development permission. In relation to dwellings, development permission is not now required for the addition of one basement level, small extensions, internal alterations, solar heating panels, satellite antennae, stair/lift wells and engine rooms. In relation to buildings in general, development permission is not now required for parapet walls, swimming pools, certain changes to building elements, maintenance operations and the shoring up of dangerous structures. In relation to highways, development permission is not now required for the alteration/creation of pavements and the installation of traffic lights. All the above are subject to certain limitations and conditions. The revised GDO also introduced a '*prior notification*' procedure in relation to certain types of permitted development, whereby the developer must notify the Authority prior to the commencement of any works.

5.1.6 Other subsidiary legislation amended during 1996-97 was the *Instrument of Delegation 1997*, which extended the powers delegated to officers of the Authority in decision taking on development applications, and the *Building Levy Rates Regulations 1993* (amended in 1996 and 1997).

5.1.7 New subsidiary legislation in the form of the *Scheme Amendments and Changes in Alignment Order 1997* was issued during the monitoring period. This introduced a new application procedure for seeking changes to scheme boundaries and alignments. Also introduced in 1997, to compliment the changes to the development application procedure provided for in the amended Act, was new '*Agreed Procedures for Development Control*'. These introduced the facility for consulting the applicant on the Development

Permit Application (DPA) report, revised procedures for pre-submission discussions on proposals, for vetting and validating of applications, for third party involvement in the process and for decision taking by the DCC, as well as guidance on the application of policies and the requirement for a manual of policy and procedures (the *Planning Factbook*).

5.1.8 The Planning Authority also issued 11 *Planning Authority Circulars* during the monitoring period :

- *CIR PA 1/96*; introduced a revised application form for development applications and a new procedure for the setting out of alignments and formation levels.
- *CIR PA 2/96*; guidance on verbal presentations at DCC meetings and on information to be submitted when submitting applications to regularise unauthorised development.
- *CIR PA 4/96*; introduced the revised *Building Levy Rates Regulations (1996)* and guidance on the vetting of information submitted with development applications.
- *CIR PA 5/96*; introduced changes to the method of payment of the Building Levy and a new procedure for planning control applications and guidance on the validity period of development permissions and information to be submitted with development applications.
- *CIR PA 1/97*; introduced a new procedure for compliance certificates.
- *CIR PA 2/97*; guidance on information to be submitted with development applications and the procedure for dealing with applications on Government land and for allocating application reference numbers, as well as on the issues of change of ownership and third party civil rights.
- *CIR PA 3/97*; introduced the *Planning Factbook* which contains all planning legislation, Policy and Design Guidance and Circulars as well as general information on the planning process and the administration of the Authority in general.
- *CIR PA 4/97*; introduced the changes to development control procedures arising from the *Development Planning (Amendment) Act 1997* and the *Instrument of Delegation (1997)* and guidance for objectors on material planning considerations.
- *CIR PA 5/97*; introduced the revised *General Development Order 1997*.
- *CIR PA 6/97*; introduced the revised *Building Levy Rates Regulations (1997)* and guidance on the new Building Levy Calculator software.
- *CIR PA 7/97*; introduced Volume 2 of the *Planning Factbook* and new policy guidance for yachting development and golf courses. Also provided guidance on the procedure for responding to the Development Permit Application (DPA) report, for third party representations received before the coming into force of the *Development Planning (Amendment) Act 1997* and for accessing applications in the Planning Register.

5.1.9 A number of additional *Policy and Design Guidance* documents have also been prepared during the monitoring period,

dealing with *The Preparation and Approval of Policy (1996)*, *Inert Waste Disposal in Quarries (1997)*, *Golf Course Development in Malta (1997)*, *Parking Provision for Local Shops, Offices and Catering Establishments (1997)* and *Guidelines for Designated Camping Sites (1997)*.

## Local Plans

**The Structure Plan defines areas for which Local Plans will be prepared and establishes guidelines for their development. These will indicate the way in which Structure Plan principles, policies and standards will be applied at local-level and define a detailed framework for development control within each locality (4.1-4.5).**

5.1.10 The second local plan, that for the Grand Harbour, was issued for consultation in June 1997. Work is now at an advanced stage on the North West Local Plan and the North Harbours Local Plan. Work is also in progress on the fifth local plan, for Gozo and Comino.

### **Action Plans**

5.1.11 The Pembroke Action Plan was approved in October 1996 and the Ta' Qali Action Plan was issued for consultation in May 1997 (it has recently been approved by the Planning Authority - June 1998)).

## Consultation and Publicity

**The Structure Plan provides for an open, consultative process of development control. Consultation is to include: relevant Government Departments; the public in general; and, where the potential impact of the project is significant, neighbouring users (BEN14).**

5.1.12 The *Development Planning (Amendment) Act 1997* and the new '*Agreed Procedures for Development Control*' have had a significant impact on the transparency of and the consultative process for development control in relation to the involvement of those seeking development permission, government departments/agencies and the public in general.

### **Involvement of persons seeking development permission**

5.1.13 Transparency of the planning process for those seeking development permission has been enhanced during the monitoring period: applicants are now sent a copy of the Development Permit Application (DPA) report prepared for their application, where previously the DPA report was confidential. Furthermore, they can file a written submission to counter argue the Directorate's recommendation on the proposal. This is presented to the DCC together with the DPA report.

5.1.14 The introduction of this facility has however seen the removal of the opportunity for the applicant to speak at the DCC meeting (other than where the applicant has requested a reconsideration of the decision). In addition, the applicant is now no longer personally notified of the date when the application will be discussed by the DCC. The DCC meeting is still however open to the public and during the monitoring period the Authority has introduced additional methods for applicants, and the public in general, to access agendas for DCC meetings: through poll fax, on the Internet, on display in the Planning Authority foyer and at Local Council offices.

### ***Involvement of government departments/agencies***

5.1.15 During the monitoring period the Planning Authority has streamlined the consultation process with departments/agencies, which has seen both a move away from the 'one stop shop' service and the increased involvement of those departments/agencies with responsibility for matters more directly related to land use planning. The Lands Department and the Wireless and Telegraphy Branch of the OPM are now notified of the decision on development to be carried out on Government land and for satellite antennae respectively rather than consulted during the assessment process. The Education Department is now notified of the decision on development applications relating to private schools as well as consulted during the assessment process.

5.1.16 The *Development Planning (Amendment) Act 1997* has introduced a statutory time limit for consultation with government departments/agencies in order to facilitate the development application process. All departments/agencies must now reply to the Authority within 4 weeks or it is to be considered that they have no objection to the proposed development.

5.1.17 Also during the monitoring period, regular consultation meetings have been established with the Education Department, the Hotels and Catering Establishments Board, the Lands Department and the Agriculture Department to discuss both progress on individual development applications and more strategic issues of relevance to the department/agency. Similar meetings established with the Malta Development Corporation during 1996 are now no longer held.

### ***Involvement of the general public in the planning process***

#### ***Development Application Process***

5.1.18 The involvement of the general public in the application assessment process has been significantly curtailed by the legislative and procedural changes introduced during the monitoring period. Access to information relating to development applications has been restricted: interested third parties are now required to employ the services of a architect in order to access the detailed plans for proposals. In addition, the amended Act has introduced a time limit for submitting comments (15 days from the date of notice that an application has been received). Most notably however, is the removal of the opportunity for third parties to speak at DCC meetings. DCC meetings are still however open to the public.

Table 78 - Meetings in public

<b>Meetings in public</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>
Planning Authority Board	18	16	10
Development Control Commission	133	121	126

*Source: Planning Authority*

5.1.19 One benefit to the general public brought about by the amended Act is the introduction of a right of appeal for third parties who submitted comments on the original application (on condition that the decision on the development was not specifically authorised in an approved development plan). Also, as mentioned in para. 5.1.13

above, the Authority has increased consultation on development permit applications during the monitoring period.

5.1.20 Another benefit is the setting up of a Users Committee, comprising representatives of interested national constituted bodies, with a remit to supervise the general functioning of the Authority and to recommend changes to administrative procedures to ensure transparency, uniformity and fairness in the interest of the general public. The Users Committee was formally established in November 1997 and has met on a regular monthly basis since January 1998. The Committee has so far been concerned with familiarising itself with the functions of the various units within the Authority.

#### *Policy and Plan Formulation*

5.1.21 The involvement of the public in the preparation of local plans, action plans and development briefs has continued during the monitoring period.

Table 79 - Public involvement

<b>Call for comments on draft plans</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>
Grand Harbour Local Plan	210
North Harbours Local Plan	527
Pembroke Action Plan	214
Ta' Qali Action Plan	183
<b>Exhibitions</b>	<b>Number of exhibitions</b>
Grand Harbour Local Plan	2
Pembroke Action Plan	1
Ta' Qali Action Plan	2
<b>Leaflets</b>	<b>Number of Leaflets</b>
Grand Harbour Local Plan	1
North Harbours Local Plan	1
Pembroke Action Plan	1
Ta' Qali Action Plan	1

Source: Planning Authority

## **Consistency and quality of decisions**

**The Structure Plan represents the most thorough attempt to date to develop a cohesive land-use development strategy for the Maltese Islands. The Plan was prepared over a period of two years, with numerous opportunities for public input and comment. It received full Parliamentary approval and can only be amended following further public consultation, reference to an Assessment Panel appointed by the Prime Minister and approval of the proposed changes both at Cabinet level and before the House of Representatives. Structure Plan policy therefore carries great weight and cannot be ignored lightly by those responsible for making planning decisions.**

5.1.22 There has not been a formal examination of the consistency and quality of decisions during the monitoring period. The *Development Control File Audit* exercise undertaken in 1995 has not yet been repeated.

5.1.23 A good indicator of consistency in decision making is provided by the number of requests for reconsideration and appeals upheld by the DCC and Appeals Board respectively (that is, the number of original decisions overturned). Since 1993/4, the percentage of decisions overturned through reconsideration by the DCC and at

appeal in particular has continued to decrease, which indicates a more consistent approach to decision making and a better quality of decisions at the initial stage.

Table 80 - % decisions overturned

<b>% decisions overturned</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>
Reconsideration	67	48	48	38	40
Appeal	-	51	39	30	22

*Source: Planning Authority*

## **Enforcement**

**The Structure Plan envisages tightened enforcement mechanisms which will be actively applied as needed (5.4).**

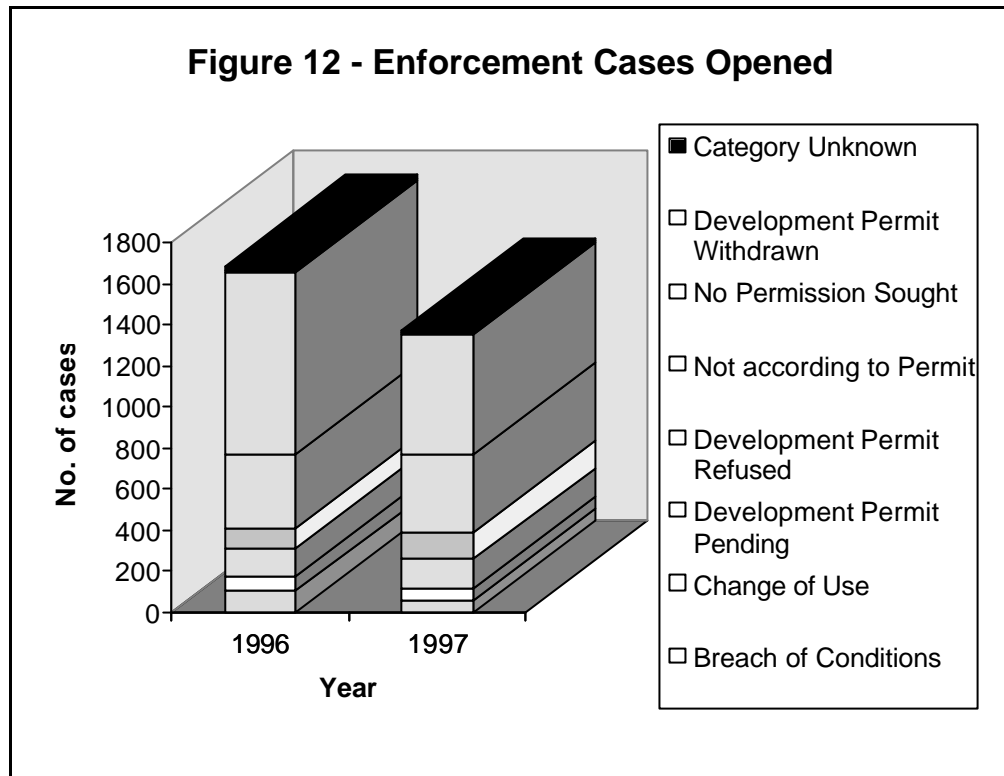
### ***Enforcement Cases Handled***

5.1.24 The Enforcement Unit opened some 1,680 cases in 1996 and 1,370 cases in 1997. This compares with 1,400 cases handled in 1995. The decline in the number of enforcement cases during the monitoring period may be interpreted as a positive sign that the public has become more conscious of Law infringements. However, this may also be a sign of the ineffectiveness of the Authority in monitoring development and detecting breaches of planning control.

5.1.25 The majority of cases opened during 1996-97 related to development which occurred without development permission. However, as noted in the first Monitoring Report, the Enforcement Unit is now handling a growing number of cases which deal with development which is not in accordance with the approved permit or which breaches conditions on the development permit. During the monitoring period priority has been given to monitoring where development permission has been refused and, to a lesser extent, to ensuring full compliance with approved plans and conditions. There is now an internal monitoring system for sites where development permission was refused. Also, in 1996 a Major Projects Team was set up within the Enforcement Unit to monitor large scale development projects approved. This Team meets regularly and has established effective links with developers. However, there is still a need to improve the monitoring of major projects and the detection of deviations from approved plans and conditions, as there have been a number of significant departures in the past year. This is particularly important given the scale and potential impact, as well as the visibility, of such projects.



**Figure 12 - Enforcement Cases Opened**



Source: Planning Authority

### ***Direct Action to Remove Illegal Buildings and Structures***

5.1.26 In 1996-97, the Planning Authority took *direct action* in 139 cases in order to demolish a number of unauthorised structures. This action included the removal of illegal boathouses at Armier, as well as a scrap yard at Birzebugia, a greenhouse and surrounding boundary wall at Zurrieq and a concrete platform at Bahar Ic-Caghaq. A number of illegal advertisements were also removed from several locations in Malta and Gozo.

5.1.27 The threat of direct action has also led to the removal of infringements by the developers themselves in some 148 cases during the monitoring period. The majority of the structures removed or demolished were illegal garages/rooms and advertisements but there were also a number of scrap yards/dumping sites, kiosks/caravans, canopies, structures in front gardens and boathouses.

### ***Public involvement in enforcing control***

5.1.28 The number of complaints received and investigated by the Enforcement Unit has risen during the monitoring period. Of 1,972 complaints registered during the period October 1996-September 1997 1,469 (75%) were dealt with by the end of 1997. Prompted by growing public awareness, the Authority has introduced a 24 hour telephone *'hot line'* service, an enforcement page on the Internet and an emergency weekend service for lodging of complaints.

5.1.29 Local Councils have continued to play an important role in the effective monitoring of development. Regular monthly meetings are now held between the Enforcement Unit and Local Council representatives. There have been 188 meetings during 1996-97.

## 5.2. Legal and Procedural Context

5.2.1 The Structure Plan includes a number of policies relating to the wider legal and procedural context for the operations of the Planning Authority. Emphasis was placed on: the introduction of comprehensive land ownership registration (19.7.6); legislation for multiple-ownership schemes (19.13); and the use of competitive development tendering for major projects (19.14).

### Land Ownership Registration

The Structure Plan defines the introduction of comprehensive land ownership registration as an important concomitant of Structure Plan policies (para 19.7). This is necessary to:

- avoid delays associated with land ownership disputes;
- ensure land and property owner's legal title;
- provide a transactions record as a basis for valuations; and
- assist in land assembly activities.

5.2.2 The 1982 Land Registration Act was amended in 1995 and the revised Act came into effect October, 1996. The Land Registry now has a computerised property log book regarding land and buildings in registration areas. Also, since February 1996, applications at the Registry, whatever the nature of the application, must be accompanied by a computer drawn plan from the office. Notice of all the applications is published in the Government Gazette.

### Competitive development tendering

The Structure Plan advocates a more pro-active approach, based on a competitive development tendering process structured around the issue of a development brief (19.14).

5.2.3 A number of Development Briefs have been undertaken during the monitoring period :

1. *Fort Ricasoli (approved in March 1997);*
2. *Cottonera Waterfront (approved in October 1997);*
3. *Pender Place and Mercury House (approved in January 1998);*
4. *Marine Aquarium, Zonqor Point (approved in February 1998);*
5. *Fort St. Elmo (submitted to the Valletta Rehabilitation Committee in March 1997).*

Some of these have been followed by a process of competitive tendering.

### Progress on multi-ownership legislation

The Structure Plan promotes the development of multi-ownership facilities (19.8-19.12). The intention, as outlined in the Plan, is to enable a developer to market freehold self-contained units to individual purchasers, with the management of central and shared facilities handled by a management company. In some cases, the management company may be owned jointly by individual property owners. The sale of freehold property, with a linked management agreement, distinguishes this approach from timeshare.

5.2.4 Multi-ownership involving freehold sale, as described in the Structure Plan, is not currently being pursued and no progress has yet been made in the development of general legislation to facilitate multi-ownership developments. Fort Chambray is still the only example of a development incorporating multi-ownership provisions. Construction is still underway in this project. In addition to this, Act NO. XXIX of 1997, an act to regulate Condominiums, regulates the rights and obligations of owners (landlords) of buildings where the ownership or use of the common parts thereof is vested in two or more persons and cannot be divided. The Act also regulates procedure in case of disagreement between the owners as to management and for maintenance of condominiums.

5.2.5 Similar multi-ownership provisions were being pursued with the development at Ta' Cenc. However, a change in ownership has resulted in amendments to the development which do not envisage any controlled form of multi-ownership.

### 5.3. Implementation Programme

The Structure Plan suggests that Government needs to allocate responsibilities for plan implementation between Government ministries and departments and any other relevant agencies (20.2). A recommended schedule of responsibilities is required, relating to all Structure Plan policies. Implementation programmes and budgets then need to be identified, including those for the Planning Authority and its Planning Directorate (20.3).

5.3.1 This section of the Monitoring Report considers progress in the *Structure Plan Implementation Strategy*, approved by the Planning Authority in October 1993, and the *Action Programme* for this Strategy, endorsed by the Authority in March 1994.

#### **Positive development control involvement**

5.3.2 The Strategy seeks to provide technical support on major projects (to improve the application of policies, produce clear assessment reports, develop negotiating skills and show the 'positive face' of planning). The importance given to assessment of major projects has continued during the monitoring period. The *Major Projects Group*, has now been operating successfully for over four years and has served to establish a consistent approach to the treatment of major applications and to develop a wide experience base for the assessment of major developments. The operations of the *Major Projects Group* and the assessment procedure for major applications in general was reviewed and streamlined in late 1997.

#### **Project identification and promotion**

5.3.3 The Strategy seeks to develop an *Integrated Development Programme* and implement seven key projects identified in the Structure Plan. The *Integrated Development Programme (IDP)* was prepared in August 1992 and the Ministry of Finance consulted. No further action has been taken on the IDP to date. Progress on the key projects identified is as follows:

- *Fort Chambray*; Work commenced on site in 1996 and is still progressing.
- *Manoel Island/Tigne' Point*, The emphyteutical deed has still not been agreed. The development proposals for Manoel Island were

agreed to in principle in early 1998 however those for Tigne Point are still being discussed. A First Draft Environmental Impact Assessment was submitted to the Authority in November 1998.

- *Ta' Cenc*; The Management Plan has still not been approved (now in its third draft). Also, the ownership of the site has changed and revised plans have been submitted. These are still being reviewed.
- *Golf Subject Study*; The first stage report of the subject study was completed in 1997 however, in the light of Government's decision to issue a call for registration of interest in golf course development, a policy paper was prepared jointly by the Planning Authority, the Ministry for Tourism and the Environment Protection Department. The Policy Paper *Golf Course Development in Malta* was approved by the Planning Authority in August 1997.
- *Fort Ricasoli*; the Development Brief was approved and issued to a selected short list of interest groups in March 1997. Terms of Reference for an Environmental Risk Assessment have been prepared by the Authority and presented to the Ministry for Tourism.
- *Revitalising the Three Cities*; this has been tackled through the Grand Harbour Local Plan.

### **Structure Plan information**

5.3.4 The Strategy sought to produce a communications strategy and publicity material to explain and promote the Structure Plan. The draft *Communications Strategy for the Structure Plan* was prepared in August 1992 however there has been little progress on this. During the monitoring period, there were moves to extend the strategy to cover the operations of the Planning Authority as a whole. However, work on this was halted due to budget constraints.

### **Capital budget planning and allocation**

5.3.5 The Strategy sought to review current procedures and development of recommendations for improvement linked to the Structure Plan framework. Capital budget request guidelines for new public sector initiatives were agreed in September 1992 and issued by the Ministry of Finance with the Estimate Forms applying to capital projects for the 1993/4 business planning cycle. No action has been taken by any department/parastatal on these guidelines. No further progress has been achieved in this area.

### **Government/parastatal/private sector liaison and coordination**

5.3.6 The Strategy sought the formulation of the Inter-departmental Planning Committee (IDPC) and the Planning Consultative Committee (PCC) and the development of relationships throughout the public and private sectors. The IDPC and the PCC were set up during the last monitoring period and both have continued to be involved in the planning process.

5.3.7 The PCC met 21 times in 1996/97. The Committee organised a half day seminar on the Structure Plan in early 1997 and has had discussions on the Grand Harbour Local Plan and the draft emerging North West Local Plan as well as a range of other policies. During the monitoring period the PCC also approved a set of rules and regulations to govern its proceedings.

5.3.8 The IDPC met 3 times in 1996/97, to consider applications from Government departments and local councils referred to it by the Authority. The Committee also carried out consultations with a range of Government departments and agencies on their sectoral plans as part of the Structure Plan review process.

5.3.9 No action has yet been taken in reviewing the operations and productivity of the PCC and the IDPC.

5.3.10 The Development Planning (Amendment) Act 1997 saw the setting up of the Users Committee (made up of representatives of interested constituted bodies) to supervise the general functioning of the Authority, ensuring transparency, uniformity and fairness in the Authority's procedures and decisions in the interest of the general public. Details regarding the establishment of the Users Committee and their operations since the setting up of the Committee are outlined in para. 5.1.20.

#### ***Structure Plan monitoring and review***

5.3.11 The Strategy sought implementation of a monitoring programme for at least one year prior to Structure Plan Review. The first Structure Plan Monitoring Report was completed in June 1997. Work on the second report started in January 1998.

5.3.12 The Structure Plan review process began in November 1997 with the approval by the Authority of the Project Management Plan for the project. Work is now progressing on the first stage of the process with the examination of the issues for the review in the main topic areas.

5.3.13 The Development Planning (Amendment) Act 1997 has amended the procedure for Structure Plan review and increased the period before which the Planning Authority can not review the Structure Plan (from 2 to 5 years). However, the Structure Plan can now be reviewed in part by Parliamentary Resolution, provided that such review does not adversely affect the rights acquired by any person prior to the effective date of such review.

#### ***Local planning***

5.3.14 The Planning Authority is progressing on the preparation of the local plans. The second local plan, that for the Grand Harbour, was issued for consultation in June 1997 (the Marsaxlokk Bay Area Local Plan was approved in May 1995). Work has commenced on three of the remaining five local plans (see para. 5.1.10).

#### ***Preparation of Subject Plans, Action Plans and Development Briefs.***

5.3.15 The *Yachting Development Subject Study* was approved by the Planning Authority in September 1997. Work is now at an advanced stage on the *Tourism and Recreation Subject Study* and the *Commerce and Industry Subject Study*. Work is progressing on the *Housing Subject Study*.

5.3.16 The *Pembroke Action Plan* was approved in October 1996 and the *Ta' Qali Action Plan* was issued for consultation in May 1997 (it has since been approved).

5.3.17 The *Fort Ricasoli Development Brief* and the *Cottonera Waterfront Development Brief* were approved by the Authority in March and October 1997 respectively. A Development Brief for *Pender Place and Mercury House* was also approved in January 1998. During the monitoring period work also commenced on a number of other Development Briefs: *Marine Aquarium (Zonqor Point) Development Brief* which was eventually approved in February 1998; and *Fort St. Elmo Development Brief* which was submitted to the Valletta Rehabilitation Committee to organise public consultation in March 1997 but is now on hold.

***The Planning Authority's role in implementation***

5.3.18 The Authority's role in the implementation of the Strategy was specified as a ten point programme. The progress on the key items of this programme are described in the following paragraphs.

***Establish Coordinating Committees in Tourism, Environment and Transport***

5.3.19 A joint committee was formally established with the Tourism Department in March 1996, after a period of 4 years of both formal and informal meetings. A Transport Working Group was established in December 1997, comprising representatives from the Traffic Control Board, Roads Department, Public Transport Authority, License Testing Department and the Planning Authority. There is no formal committee as yet established with the Environment Protection Department/Ministry for Environment, although informal meetings are held on an ad-hoc basis.

***Establish liaison with Ministry of Finance for Capital Budgeting and Integrated Development Programme***

5.3.20 Liaison was established with the Ministry of Finance in 1992, but has since diminished. A member of the Planning Authority Board is a senior representative of the Ministry of Finance and is a member of the Planning Authority's Tender Evaluation Committee.

***Establish coordinating body with housing agencies***

5.3.21 No action has been taken on establishing a coordinating body in the housing sector, although there continues to be informal discussions over specific issues. More formal liaison will be established with the various housing agencies during the preparation of the Housing Subject Study forming part of Structure Plan Review.

***Prepare Structure Plan Communications Strategy***

5.3.22 A draft *Communications Strategy for the Structure Plan* was prepared in August 1992 but there has been little progress on this (see para. 5.3.4).

***Establish key political relations***

5.3.23 The Planning Authority has not held any formal meetings with the three political parties since 1995. However, informal and ad-hoc meetings with various Ministers continue to be held on specific issues.

***Develop relationships for preparing Sectoral Development Plans***

5.3.24 During the monitoring period, the Planning Authority liaised with the Health Department on the preparation of its development *Health*

*Vision* with Enemalta on the preparation of its *Energy Plan* and with Telemalta on the preparation of a Master Plan for the Telecommunications sector.

5.3.25 Also, during the monitoring period, the Authority was represented on the Forum for a Better Economy (mid 1997), which was working to prepare a strategic economic plan collating the sectoral plans of various sectors - *Value 2000*. The committee responsible for the National Environmental Education Strategy liaised with the following departments and agencies which still need to develop sectoral development plans. However formal liaison needs to be established by the Planning Authority with these departments and agencies during the Structure Plan Review process :

- Education (Policy **SOC10, RCO40**);
- Agriculture (Policy **RCO6**);
- Environment (Policy **RCO6, MCO4**);
- Care of the Elderly (Policy **SOC17**);
- Tourism (**TOU2**)
- Civil Aviation (Policy **AVN2, AVN3**);
- Posts (Policy **PUT27**).

***Set up Heritage Trust***

5.3.26 During the monitoring period, there was some discussion concerning moves towards the preparation of a Heritage Action Plan, an initiative by the Museums Department and the Council of Europe, which provided for the setting up of a Heritage Trust. However, there has been little progress on this to date.

# List of Abbreviations

AAls	Areas of Archeological Importance
BICC	Building Industry Consultation Committee
BOVI Trust	Bank of Valletta International Trust
COS	Central Office of Statistics
DCC	Development Control Commission
DCFA	Development Control File Audit
DPA	Development Permit Application
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EMU	Environmental Management Unit
EPD	Environmental Protection Department
EPS	Environmental Planning Statement
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIS	Geographic Information System
HAC	Heritage Advisory Committee
HCEB	Hotel and Catering Establishments Board
IDP	Integrated Development Programme
IPDC	Inter-departmental Planning Committee
MCST	Malta Council for Science and Technology
MDC	Malta Development Corporation
MEU	Management Efficiency Unit
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NPI	National Protective Inventory
PA	Planning Authority
PCC	Planning Consultative Committee
RCAs	Rural Conservation Areas



RO	Reverse Osmosis
SAls	Sites of Archeological Importance
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SPMD	Strategic Projects Monitoring Database
SSI	Sites of Scientific Importance
TIS	Traffic Impact Statement
UCA	Urban Conservation Area

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