

**Coastal Strategy Topic Paper
Draft for Public Consultation
Response to Comments
February 2002**

Response to Comments made during the Public Meeting held on the 17th December 2001 organised by the Planning Authority.

Item Number	Consultation Draft Comments	Directorate Response	Amendment
1	<p>Mr. Tony Meli (Agriculture Dept.), commenced by pointing out that non-technical comments from “non-qualified” ministries should be suppressed and advice is sought only from specialised agencies. (He was referring to recent proposal by MTA concerning the moratorium on aquaculture development).</p> <p>The second point, related to the expansion of quarries and their negative impact on agriculture. Mr. Meli stressed out the importance of quarry reclamation together with its associated buffer zone.</p>	<p>Ms. Michelle Borg said that the purpose of consultation is to obtain the various opinions held by different sectors. With respect to aquaculture, she mentioned that the MTA is involved in an interdepartmental Steering Committee set up specifically to formulate a National Policy.</p> <p>Ms. Marie Briguglio explained that within the Minerals Subject Plan, no more new quarry permits would be given for the coming five years. This will restrict further destruction of agricultural land or other important habitats.</p>	<p>The first comment is not actually relevant to the document. The second point is already covered in the Topic Paper.</p>
2	<p>Ms. Simone Mizzi (Din I-Art Helwa), questioned the delineation of the Coastal Zone boundary, and expressed concern about those areas where the boundary is close to the shore.</p>	<p>Ms. Michelle Borg explained that the different interactions between land and sea, were the major factors, affecting the establishment of the coastal zone boundary. Nonetheless, this does not imply that activities located outside the boundary that affect the coastal zone, are excluded in the Topic Paper.</p>	<p>Concerns were noted in the Topic Paper.</p>

		<p>Ms. Marie Briguglio commented that limiting the coastal zone actually means that a specific area is identified within which a strategy can be adopted. Other rural areas, outside the identified coastal zone are being tackled within other Topic Papers. There is continuous co-ordination between the relevant Topic Papers to ensure integration in the work carried out.</p>	
3	<p>Ms. Simone Mizzi (Din I-Art Helwa) also asked whether there exist any provisions to correct past mistake. Special reference was made to past development of roads, crosscutting sandy beaches. This results in the obliteration of the latter.</p>	<p>Ms. Michelle Borg mentioned that such provisions might be tackled within other Topic Papers, such as Transport.</p>	<p>The issue is covered in the proposed strategy but would be tackled specifically in Local Plans and Management Plans.</p>
4	<p>Mr. Marco Cremona, questioned the evaluation of the demand for development and whether this has been based on development planning applications.</p>	<p>Ms. Michelle Borg replied that demand was in fact assessed from planning applications and the greatest demand occurred in the Tourism/ Recreational sector.</p>	<p>Concern already taken care of in methodology.</p>
5	<p>Mr. John Schembri (University of Malta, Geography Dept.), commented about having different types of boundaries within the coastal zone area. These will differ according to the level of importance and type of usage. E.g. the most sensitive area would be close to the shoreline, whilst the secondary boundary would be closer to the rural areas.</p>	<p>Ms. Michelle Borg noted the first point and also agreed that a distinction between has to be kept, mostly between different coastal features rather than Local Councils.</p> <p>With respect to the third point raised by Mr. Schembri, Ms. Marie Briguglio</p>	<p>The strategy distinguishes between different coastal areas. The adoption of more boundaries can be considered in</p>

	<p>The second point raised, related to different Local Councils, each retaining own identity.</p> <p>The third point emphasized the fact that the type of development is very much dependent on the type of coast. E.g. Development is more likely to occur within inlets.</p>	<p>stated that on a strategic level there exist different types of character areas proposed in the Topic Paper.</p>	<p>zoning schemes within Management Plan of specific areas.</p>
6	<p>Mr. Tony Meli (Agriculture Dept.), highlighted that in the Maltese islands we have a monoculture problem with regards to tree planting.</p>	<p>No comments</p>	<p>No change</p>
7	<p>Ms. Anne Zammit, questioned the feasibility of wind farming within the coastal zone area. Another question was whether different activities imply different importance. Ms. Zammit continued speaking about jurisdiction of the coastal zone, and user conflicts.</p>	<p>Ms. Michelle Borg replied that each application for wind farming would have to be considered on its own merits.</p> <p>Furthermore, Structure Plan policies would then be interpreted into Local plan policies, hence giving more direction. Consultation with respect to administrative and regulatory functions was carried out with the agencies and departments concerned.</p> <p>Ms. Marie Briguglio explained that the Maltese islands have been split, sectorally and geographically for the Structure Plan review i.e. Coastal, rural and urban areas basically due to the characteristic issues present. However she reiterated that co-ordination is being made between Topic Papers.</p>	<p>Alternative energy sources are covered by the Utilities Topic Paper. Concerns are covered in relevant sections of Topic Paper.</p>
8	<p>Ms. Anne Zammit, made reference to beach replenishment applications, e.g. St. George's Bay.</p>	<p>Ms. Michelle Borg replied that although Structure plan encourages the creation</p>	<p>The issue of beach replenishment is</p>

	<p>replenishment applications, e.g. St. George's Bay.</p>	<p>of sandy beaches, is however for replenishment of existing beaches that are known to have eroded. The issue would need to be economically evaluated, since beach replenishment involves lots of detail and study, e.g. type and size of material, currents, location, etc.</p> <p>An important aspect to be taken in consideration when analysing such applications, is public access.</p>	<p>tackled in the Topic Paper.</p>
9	<p>Ms. Anne Zammit, asked about Marine Conservation Areas and their status.</p>	<p>Ms. Michelle Borg mentioned the underwater surveys to be undertaken for <i>Posidonia</i> meadows. Reference was also made to the CAMP project and the MCA thematic activity, whereby a Marine Conservation Area is being established in the Ghajn Tuffieha area. Ms. Borg explained that for terrestrial ecology, different levels of protection are applied according to the level of importance. Such a system will need to be established for MCA designation.</p>	<p>The issue is tackled in the Topic Paper and within the proposed strategy.</p>

Response to Comments made during the Public Meeting organised by the Planning Authority held on the 18th December 2001 in Gozo

Item Number	Consultation Draft Comments	Directorate Response	Amendment
1	<p>Mr. Felix Grech (UHM). Discussion initiated by making reference to the passage from Marsalforn, going round Gozo, ending in Ghasri, which was planned way back in the seventies.</p> <p>Mr. Mark Busuttil, continued by saying that a list of country walks (about five of these) have been planned, incorporating most of the coast. Works have already started.</p>	<p>Ms. Michelle Borg. At the time, the project was suspended due to financial problems and problems pertaining to infrastructure.</p> <p>Ms. Marie Briguglio commented that this is an example of how by promoting management one is essentially guiding development in a more effective manner. It is a preferred solution to imposing restrictive policies only. There was also a mention of the Transport Topic Paper, emphasising that the policies to emerge from this paper, will be taking into consideration the social aspect with respect to accessibility.</p>	<p>The concerns about development of coast roads and country footpaths are tackled in the Topic Paper.</p>
2	<p>Mr. Guido Zammit, asked about beach replenishment in Gozo. Mr. Zammit was concerned about the limited beaches available in Gozo. These would not only be enjoyed during the summer, but also during the colder months, e.g. through possible beach volley tournaments.</p>	<p>Ms. Michelle Borg replied that the creation of sandy beaches needs to be dealt with great care. This type of development depends very much on the location, as the configuration of the coast determines whether beach replenishment be possible or not. Ms. Borg put forward the idea of having wooden planks on rocky shores. Such application would make possible the enjoyment of the shore, all the year</p>	<p>Similarly to consultation meeting in Malta: the issue is covered in the Topic Paper.</p>

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3	<p>Mr. Felix Grech (UHM), put forward the idea of rock cutting the area near Hondoq ir-Rummien, eventually creating a Yacht Marina.</p>	<p>Ms. Michelle Borg replied that with respect to provisions for Yacht Marinas, the first issue to be considered would be the suitability of provision within already developed areas.</p> <p>Mr. Raphael Ascjak (Planning Authority), mentioned that there has never been a formal application for a yacht marina, although this had once formed part of an electoral programme. Within the Yacht Marina Subject Study, sites had been identified.</p>	Issue and impacts are addressed in the Topic Paper.
4	<p>Mr. Anthony Zammit (Ministeru ta' Ghawdex), queried about any chosen sites for possible Marine Conservation Areas. The second question asked what problems were envisaged within the implementation stage.</p> <p>Mr. Anthony Zammit (Ministeru ta' Ghawdex), argued that more marine attractions (such as wrecks) are wanted. Mr. Zammit asked about any possible locations.</p>	<p>Ms. Michelle Borg (Planning Authority), mentioned the existing Structure Plan policy about MCA's and the 14 chosen sites, and explained that these were chosen with the assistance of divers. Different levels of protection for the marine environment have not been established as yet.</p> <p>Ms. Michelle Borg replied that no list of appropriate locations exists, and that consideration is to be undertaken on a case-by-case basis. Ms. Borg highlighted that with co-ordination between agencies is very important.</p>	The Topic Paper addresses Marine Protection and proposes a strategy for the Marine Environment.

5	<p>Mr. Mark Busuttil, strongly emphasized the urgency for establishing Marine Conservation Areas. He continued, by saying that there is the need for more regulations and management.</p> <p>Mr. Emanuel Bonavia (Planning Authority), made suggestions about including more the Armed Forces of Malta, when it comes to law enforcement within MCAs to be.</p> <p>Mr. Anthony Zammit (Ministeru ta' Ghawdex), added that since the Planning Authority has now absorbed the Environment protection Department, the former must definitely have more enforcement power.</p>	<p>Ms. Michelle Borg (Planning Authority), replied that work on Marine Conservation Areas has started with respect to data collection. Ms. Borg commented that the Dept. of Fisheries had objected to the restriction of Fishing Activity (especially in the vicinity of wrecks), there are problems of enforcement, and that the public view on MCA's is positively changing.</p> <p>Ms. Marie Briguglio (Planning Authority), ended by saying that resources are always a problem in enforcement.</p>	<p>Same as above; Management Plans for different areas are needed to implement strategy.</p>
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