



Screening & Scoping Report

For the Provision of the SEA of the ESF+, ERDF, CF
Programmes and the JTF Plan 2021-2027


Report



SCREENING & SCOPING REPORT
AIS REF. NO: **PRJ-ENV565**
CLIENT REF. NO: **CT3000/2020/2**
SEVENTH VERSION

PUBLICATION DATE
31 January 2022

PART OF  **AIS** GROUP

 AIS Environment Ltd,
AIS House, 18, St. John Street,
Fgura, FGR 1447

 +356 21803374
 www.aisenvironment.com
 info@ais.com.mt

VAT No: MT 1457-1625
Reg No: C18445



DOCUMENT REVISION HISTORY

DATE	VERSION	COMMENTS	AUTHORS / CONTRIBUTORS
19/08/2021	1.0	First Version	Sacha Dunlop Siân Pledger Yasmin Schembri
10/09/2021	2.0	Second Version	Sacha Dunlop Siân Pledger Yasmin Schembri
07/10/2021	3.0	Third Version	Sacha Dunlop Siân Pledger Yasmin Schembri
10/11/2021	4.0	Fourth Version	Sacha Dunlop Siân Pledger Yasmin Schembri
17/11/2021	5.0	Fifth Version	Sacha Dunlop Siân Pledger Yasmin Schembri
22/11/2021	6.0	Sixth Version	Sacha Dunlop Siân Pledger Yasmin Schembri
31/01/2022	7.0	Seventh Version	Sacha Dunlop Siân Pledger Yasmin Schembri

APPROVAL LEVEL	NAME	SIGNATURE
Internal Check	Sacha Dunlop	
Internal Approval	Mario Schembri	

DISCLAIMER

This report has been prepared by AIS Environment Limited with all reasonable skill, care and diligence, and taking account of the manpower and resources devoted to it by agreement with the client. Information reported herein is based on the interpretation of data collected and has been accepted in good faith as being accurate and valid.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	What is SEA?.....	1
1.2	SEA Legislation	1
1.3	The SEA Process.....	2
1.4	Objectives of the Screening & Scoping Report.....	3
2	Overview of the Sector Programmes.....	5
2.1	Institutional and Legislative Framework	5
2.2	Overview of the Programmes	5
2.2.1	European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) Programme	5
2.2.2	European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund (CF), Just Transition Fund (JTF) Programme, including the JTF Plan.....	5
2.3	Responsible Authorities/Institutions	6
2.4	Proposed Measures	7
2.4.1	European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) Programme	7
2.4.2	European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund (CF) and Just Transition Plan (JTF) Programme, including the JTF Plan	8
3	Screening Exercise	9
3.1	Completed Screening Form.....	9
3.1.1	European Social Fund Plus (ESF+).....	10
3.1.2	European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund (CF) and Just Transition Plan (JTF) Programme, including the JTF Plan	21
3.2	Experts' Recommendation	38
3.2.1	European Social Fund Plus (ESF+).....	38
3.2.2	European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund (CF) and Just Transition Plan (JTF) Programme, including the JTF Plan	38
3.3	Description of Key Stakeholders and their Concerns.....	39
4	Scoping exercise	42
4.1	Stages Involved in the Compilation of the Environmental Report	42
4.2	Key Environmental Aspects to be Addressed	43
4.3	Description of the Environmental Baseline Scope	49
4.4	Impact Identification and Evaluation	49
	Appendix 1: Final Assessment Matrix.....	51
	Appendix 2: Stakeholder Consultation feedback	52

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Area Covered by the PP (Malta) 20
 Figure 2: Area Covered by the PP (Malta) 37

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: List of Stakeholders to be Targeted During the Project..... 40
 Table 2: Stages involved in compiling the Environmental Report..... 42
 Table 3: Environmental themes, criteria and indicators related to the ERDF, CF and
 JTF..... 45
 Table 4: Final Assessment Matrix 51

1 INTRODUCTION

The Strategy & Implementation Division (SID) within the Office of the Prime Minister has commissioned AIS Environment Ltd. through the public procurement system (CT3000/2020/2) to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the ESF+, ERDF, CF Operational Programmes and JTF plan 2021-2027.

The SEA will be carried out in accordance with local legislation S.L.549.61 (Environment Protection Act), and involves the following tasks as outlined in the TORs:

- Task 1: Kick-off meeting
- Task 2: Inception report
- Task 3: Screening and scoping report
- Task 4: Draft environmental report
- Task 5: Public and stakeholder consultations
- Task 6: Final environmental report
- Task 7: Draft adoption and monitoring report
- Task 8: Final adoption and monitoring report

This report achieves the requirements of Task 3.

1.1 WHAT IS SEA?

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a process that is designed to safeguard the environment by including environmental considerations in the development of policy, plans and programmes. It is a decision-making tool that helps ensure that any policy/Programme has taken into account its wider environmental implications. A number of alternatives are assessed to ensure that the most appropriate measures are implemented.

The SEA process involves intensive consultation with stakeholders to ensure that all impacts and viewpoints are considered and evaluated. Overall, SEA aims to achieve a holistic approach to help countries strive towards achieving sustainable development through the implementation of environmentally sustainable practices and policies.

1.2 SEA LEGISLATION

The need to carry out SEA is provided in the EU Directive 2001/42/EC of 27th June, 2001. This EU Directive is transposed into national Maltese legislation in S.L. 435.64 (Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations, 2010) of the Environment Protection Act (CAP. 435).

SEA is required to determine whether a policy or programme is expected to have a significant effect upon the environment. The SEA is applicable to all policies/programmes that relate to agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning and land use, which will set a precedent for the consent of future development projects.

1.3 THE SEA PROCESS

The requirement for a SEA is determined through the screening phase, governed by Article 5 Paragraph 1 of S.L. 549.61, which requires an assessment on whether a programme is envisaged to have *“significant environmental, including health, effects either through a case-by-case examination or by specifying types of plans and programmes or by combining both approaches.”* Furthermore, the relevant party is required to *“ensure that the environmental and health authorities referred to in article 9, paragraph 1, are consulted when applying the procedures referred to in paragraph 1 above”* in line with Article 5 Paragraph 2.

If the screening exercise concludes that an Environmental Report is required, the next step in the SEA process is referred to as scoping. Once the main visions of the programme/s have been determined, it is necessary to identify those environmental aspects that will have the largest role to play in the specific programme/s. Paragraph 2 of Article 6 of S.L. 549.61 requires that the scoping report is subjected to public and stakeholder consultation: *“the environmental and health authorities referred to in article 9, paragraph 1, are consulted when determining the relevant information to be included in the environmental report.”*

Once the environmental aspects to be considered as part of the SEA have been identified, the most prominent and relevant factors are selected to be used for the basis of the assessment process. The scoping process also involves the identification of EU, regional and national policies that need to be considered when designing the new programme/s. This is important to ensure that all policies are working together to achieve sustainable development and that they do not contradict one another.

After the scoping stage is concluded, the next stage involves the compilation of the environmental report. This comprises of assessing the role of the identified environmental factors in the formulation of the new programme/s and determining its impact on the environmental themes. The first stage is to carry out extensive research to establish the present conditions (baseline) and trends of each of the specific environmental factors. The baseline conditions and trends are subsequently used to assess the effect that the programme/s will have upon each of the environmental factors. The process involves the consideration of a number of alternatives. The impact of each of the individual environmental factors is assessed for each of the alternatives being considered in the drafting process of the respective programme/s. The significance of each impact is assessed in terms of whether it is positive or negative; permanent or temporary and short, medium or long term. Secondary and cumulative impacts are also considered.

After the assessment stage, the issue of environmental monitoring is tackled. Practical monitoring schemes are proposed for each of the identified environmental factors. Consultation with local authorities is required at this stage to establish the monitoring mechanisms are already in place to avoid duplication. This ensures the most efficient use of resources. It is important to have the monitoring methods in place by the time the programme/s are finalised. This enables monitoring to begin as

soon as the policy is implemented and if necessary, allows prompt action to be taken as necessary.

Once a thorough assessment of all the proposed measures and their impacts have been made, the environmental consultant is in a position to provide an overall assessment of the effectiveness of such alternatives. At this stage the consultant also takes the opportunity to provide recommendations about the proposed measures being assessed and any other relevant information that should be considered in the future.

Public and stakeholder consultation plays a very important role throughout the duration of the SEA process. They are regularly consulted to ensure that all viewpoints are being considered and that the proposed measures within the programmes are appropriate from an environmental point of view. Communication between the relevant authorities and the environmental consultants is therefore vital to ensure that the best possible programme is implemented. The communication between these two bodies must be two way and reciprocal.

Once the environmental report has been finalised and approved, the consultants, on behalf of the responsible authority, will provide a Statement of Adoption in connection with the outcome of the analysis carried out. The statement must outline how environmental factors were considered in the drafting of the programme/s, including a summary of the consultations and findings presented in the environmental report; and justifications for choosing the final measures.

When the programme implementation starts, it is important that the monitoring that was suggested in the environmental report is carried out. Such monitoring is an important aspect to the process to ensure that the programme/s are having the desired environmental effect and are not leading to any unforeseen adverse environmental effects.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE SCREENING & SCOPING REPORT

The aim of the screening exercise is to determine whether a particular plan or programme requires an SEA, based on legislative guidance and requirements. The screening stage is decisive for the initiation of the entire SEA process. The Screening and Scoping Report, as presented, includes a clear recommendation on whether a SEA should be undertaken as well as the proposed measures that shall be discussed with the relevant stakeholders. While the experts have included a recommendation (vide Section 3.1.2), the ultimate decision on whether an SEA will be required falls within the remit of the SEA Focal Point.

Should the screening process determine that an SEA is required, the next phase would involve scoping (refer to Section 4), whereby the context for the assessment and methodology is set out. The scoping phase is one of the most important stages in the process, as it identifies the environmental issues for consideration in the SEA process in accordance with Directive 2001/42/EC on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment. The aims of the scoping report

are to provide a general background to the project and to outline the way forward for the SEA of CT3000/2020/2 and to determine the potential environmental impacts of the Programme for consultation.

The first step in the scoping exercise will involve reviewing the proposed list of measures to be potentially included in the Programme, as provided by the Contracting Authority. The information will be used to feed into the screening report template provided by the SEA Focal Point. During the reviewing process, a number of key environmental themes that will need to be considered in the formulation of the Programme will be identified. Several criteria and indicators will be also be developed at this stage to assess the impact of the proposed strategy measures on the above environmental themes. These indicators are important in the assessment of the effectiveness of the strategy and in the monitoring stages once the strategy has been finalised and implemented. A list of stakeholders that will be involved in the consultation process shall be identified and presented to the CA for discussion.

The Screening and Scoping Report will then be subjected to the first session of stakeholder consultation, as required by Article 5 Paragraph 2 and Article 6 Paragraph 2 of S.L. 549.61. This first consultation period will engage all of the stakeholders who are deemed to be affected by the planning and implementation of the Programmes. The consultation period, in line with guidance provided by the SEA Focal Point, will allow interested stakeholders to provide feedback on the Programme vis-à-vis the environmental themes. The aim of this first consultation period is to ensure that all affected environmental areas have been highlighted and that all viewpoints are considered in the early stages of the SEA and Programme drafting.

Following the stakeholder consultation, a final list of environmental themes that will need to be assessed in relation to the development of the Programmes will be drawn up and included in the final version of the Screening and Scoping Report. The scoping report will act as a guide for the assessment of environmental themes and compilation of the Environmental Report.

2 OVERVIEW OF THE SECTOR PROGRAMMES

2.1 INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy requires that programmes are submitted by Member States and adopted by the Commission as part of the partnership agreement setting out a development strategy using a coherent set of priorities.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMMES

The SEA covers two operational programmes related to the use of European funds in relation to various applications, described below.

2.2.1 European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) Programme

The Draft Programme covers the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), which invests in human capital and aims to strengthen capacities in all sectors with the objective of improving and adapting services to changing needs. Within the Draft Programme, four (4) thematic priorities have been identified, upon which resources shall be focused to address Malta's challenges. These priorities have a total budget (EU+MT share) of some Eur 193 million and are:

- Priority 1: Enhancing employability and labour market resilience;
- Priority 2: Fostering active inclusion for all;
- Priority 3: Quality and inclusive education and enhanced lifelong learning for growth; and
- Priority 4: Addressing material deprivation.

The priorities aim to strengthen the quality of the education system, employment opportunities including digitalization and enhance lifelong learning for growth, whilst ensuring inclusion. Furthermore, the priorities will allow active inclusion to provide equal opportunities for disadvantaged groups, including children, as well as to alleviate the situation of people at risk of poverty. Measures will be addressed at ensuring the effectiveness, resilience and sustainability of the healthcare systems and fostering social protection and improving life-chances for disadvantaged people.

2.2.2 European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund (CF), Just Transition Fund (JTF) Programme, including the JTF Plan

The Draft Programme covers three (3) funds namely the ERDF, CF and JTF. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) fund aims to reduce economic, environmental and social disparities and foster a green and sustainable socio-economic growth. The Cohesion Fund (CF) provides support for those Member States, such as Malta, that have a gross national income per capita which is lower than 90% of the EU-27 average with a focus on environment and trans-European networks. The Just Transition Fund (JTF) is one of the three pillars of the Just Transition

Mechanism, which aims to ensure a swift transition towards a climate-neutral economy.

Within the Programme six (6) thematic priorities have been identified, upon which resources shall be focused, to address Malta's challenges and support its opportunities⁹⁹. These priorities have a total budget (EU + MT share) of some Eur 971 million and are:

- Priority 1: Fostering competitiveness and an innovative and smart economic transformation;
- Priority 2: Promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, and sustainable urban mobility;
- Priority 3: Enhancing transport connectivity;
- Priority 4: A more social and inclusive society;
- Priority 5: Fostering sustainable urban development in Gozo; and
- Priority 6: Facilitating a just transition.

The priorities aim to achieve the environment and socio-economic development over the programme cycle, and shall contribute to low carbon, sustainable transport, inclusive education and training, foster economic recovery, and invest in green and digital transition. Moreover, investments will aim to achieve economic sustainability and recovery, fiscal policies, and the resilience of health systems.

The Just Transition Fund Plan is also included within this programme. The Plan outlines the decarbonisation approach to support the transition process towards a climate-neutral economy. The plan will include the decarbonisation of international ports and road transport through alternative fuel infrastructure. The decarbonisation of ports shall be directed towards investment in mainland Malta, mainly since it provides the link to mainland Europe through its international two Core Ten-T Ports. Furthermore, the deployment of alternative fuel infrastructure will also facilitate the transition towards cleaner land transport to promote the reduction of public and private vehicles reliant on conventional fuel.

2.3 RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES/INSTITUTIONS

The Strategy & Implementation Division (SID) within the Office of the Prime Minister which is the Contracting Authority, is the Responsible Authority for the drafting of the programmes/plans that will adopt the provisions of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund (CF) and Just Transition Fund (JTF). AIS Environment Ltd has been contracted by the SID to carry out the Strategic Environmental Assessment in accordance with the SEA Regulations (S.L. 549.61) and determine whether an Environmental Report is required according to the provisions of the SEA Regulations (S.L. 549.61).

The Responsible Authority governing the SEA process is the SEA Focal Point, which has been appointed in line with Regulation 15(1) of the SEA Regulations (S.L. 549.61).

2.4 PROPOSED MEASURES

In accordance with Regulation 7(4) of the SEA Regulations (S.L. 549.61), "*The responsible authority shall make the plan or programme and its environmental report available to the public electronically and in published form for viewing at its offices for the purposes of sub-regulation (2).*" The Draft Programmes were subject to a public consultation exercise and may be accessed on www.eufunds.gov.mt.

2.4.1 European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) Programme

ESF+ funds shall aim to improve access to employment for all, achieve a more gender-balanced labour market, foster active inclusion, with a focus on the integration of vulnerable groups, including children and migrants and the strengthening of social protection systems, whilst also addressing material deprivation. These initiatives are supported by the National Employment Policy, the Migrant Integration Strategy and Action Plan, and the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion respectively. The proposed measures outlined under each priority are as follows:

Priority 1 of the ESF+ Programme includes proposed measures aimed at improving access to employment and activation measures for all jobseekers, in particular young people, especially through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, for long-term unemployed and disadvantaged groups on the labour market, and for inactive people, as well as through the promotion of self-employment and the social economy. Funding under this priority area also aims to promote a gender-balanced labour market participation, equal working conditions, and a better work-life balance including through access to affordable childcare, and care for dependent persons.

Priority 2 includes proposed measures aimed at fostering active inclusion with a view to promoting equal opportunities, non-discrimination and active participation, and improving employability, in particular for disadvantaged groups. Funding under this priority area also aims to promote socio-economic integration of third-country nationals, including migrants; and enhance equal and timely access to quality, sustainable and affordable services, including services that promote the access to housing and person-centred care including healthcare; modernising social protection systems, including promoting access to social protection, with a particular focus on children and disadvantaged groups; improving accessibility including for persons with disabilities, effectiveness and resilience of healthcare systems and long-term care services.

Priority 3 proposed measures aimed at promoting equal access to and completion of quality and inclusive education and training, in particular for disadvantaged groups, from early childhood education and care through general and vocational education and training, to tertiary level, as well as adult education and learning, including facilitating learning mobility for all and accessibility for persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the promotion of lifelong learning, in particular flexible upskilling and reskilling opportunities for all taking into account entrepreneurial and digital skills, better anticipating change and new skills requirements based on labour market

needs, facilitating career transitions and promoting professional mobility will be funded under this priority area.

Priority 4 includes funds assigned to addressing material deprivation through food and/or basic material assistance to the most deprived persons, including children, and providing accompanying proposed measures supporting their social inclusion.

242 European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund (CF) and Just Transition Plan (JTF) Programme, including the JTF Plan

Areas of support under ERDF, CF and the JTF are outlined in one programme, which aims to foster socio-economic development across various sectors. The proposed measures outlined under each priority are as follows:

Priority 1 outlines initiatives that aim to foster and stimulate R&I capacities during the 2021-2027 programming period, increase investment in R&I as well as increase gross R&D expenditure as a percentage of GDP. Furthermore, Government aims to put Malta at the forefront of ICT development and sustain the growth of SMEs.

Priority 2 outlines proposed measures aimed to mitigate the impacts of the energy sector on the environment, and address climate and environmental challenges. Additional investments are also needed for better energy storage in relation to Malta's dependence on non-renewables, whilst also investing in sustainable water management vis-à-vis wastewater. Further planned interventions are also foreseen in the preservation of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. Such interventions are also complementary to those under Priority 6, which aim to address potable water, the extension of the Waste Separation and Collection Services, as well as clean mobility.

Priority 3 includes actions relating to TEN-T infrastructure, particularly the Core and Comprehensive Network, thus contributing towards enhanced connectivity, interoperability and competitiveness at the local level.

Priority 4 outlines proposed measures primarily related to further reducing the early school-leaving rate whilst improving tertiary education attainment levels and increasing lifelong learning. In addition, efforts are required to stop intergenerational and situational poverty and social exclusion, while also striving to alleviate the overall burden on the health system. Focus shall also be emphasised on the renovation of cultural assets and valorisation of Malta's cultural heritage.

Priority 5 includes proposed measures related towards an integrated targeted approach to address the needs and challenges of the island of Gozo, thus improving the social economic and environmental development, whilst fostering integration and inclusion.

Priority 6 outlines actions under the Just Transition Plan which aim to further promote Malta's ambitions for decarbonization and reduction of GHG emissions. Efforts will focus on the roll out of alternative fuel infrastructure for land transport as well as the decarbonization of Malta's main international ports, to address decarbonization by land and sea collectively.

3 SCREENING EXERCISE

3.1 COMPLETED SCREENING FORM

The screening template provided by the SEA Focal Point has been filled in with details on each of the plans/programmes, as presented in the following pages.

3.11 European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)

	SEA Screening Template	
	Based on S.L. 549.61 (L.N. 497 of 2010, as amended by Act XXV of 2015 and LN82 of 2019)	April 2021

This screening template has been drafted by the SEA Focal Point based on the SEA Regulations and is being distributed in document format for ease of use. Submitted versions shall only be considered if they align with this original version also available on the SEA website.

Part A – Plan/Programme (PP) & Responsible Authority (RA)	
Title of PP: European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) Programme	
Responsible Authority: Strategy and Implementation Division, Office of the Prime Minister	
Contact Person: Maria Pia Pace	Position: Director General (Strategy and Implementation Division)
Contact Address: 32, House of Catalunya, Triq Marsamxett, Valletta, Malta	
Email: maria-pia.a.pace@gov.mt	Telephone: +356 22957620
Date: 22/11/2021	
As per S.L., when more than one entity is responsible for the PP (or parts thereof), a single responsible authority should be nominated by agreement between the authorities responsible for the PP.	

Part B – General Information about the Plan/Programme (PP)
<p>Purpose of PP: The Draft Programme covers the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), which invests in human capital and aims to strengthen capacities in all sectors with the objective of improving and adapting services to changing needs. The applicable sectors are employment, education, health and society.</p> <p>The areas of support under the ESF+ cover four (4) thematic priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Enhancing Employability and Labour Market Resilience » Fostering Active Inclusion for All » Quality and inclusive education and enhanced lifelong learning for growth » Addressing material deprivation <p>The priorities aim to strengthen the quality of the education system, employment opportunities including digitalization and enhance lifelong learning for growth, whilst</p>

ensuring inclusion. Furthermore, the priorities will allow active inclusion to provide equal opportunities for disadvantaged groups, including children, as well as to alleviate the situation of people at risk of poverty. Measures will be addressed at ensuring the effectiveness, resilience and sustainability of the healthcare systems and fostering social protection and improving life-chances for disadvantaged people.

Period Covered by PP: 2021-2027

Envisaged updates/modifications: N/A

Area covered by PP (also attach map): Malta (**Figure 1**)

Summary of PP content: ESF+ funds shall aim to improve access to employment for all, achieve a more gender-balanced labour market, foster active inclusion, with a focus on the integration of vulnerable groups, including children and migrants and the strengthening of social protection systems, whilst also addressing material deprivation. These initiatives are supported by the National Employment Policy, the Migrant Integration Strategy and Action Plan, and the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion respectively. The proposed measures outlined under each priority are as follows:

Priority 1 of the ESF+ Programme includes proposed measures aimed at improving access to employment and activation measures for all jobseekers, in particular young people, especially through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, for long-term unemployed and disadvantaged groups on the labour market, and for inactive people, as well as through the promotion of self-employment and the social economy. Funding under this priority area also aims to promote a gender-balanced labour market participation, equal working conditions, and a better work-life balance including through access to affordable childcare, and care for dependent persons.

Priority 2 includes proposed measures aimed at fostering active inclusion with a view to promoting equal opportunities, non-discrimination and active participation, and improving employability, in particular for disadvantaged groups. Funding under this priority area also aims to promote socio-economic integration of third-country nationals, including migrants; and enhance equal and timely access to quality, sustainable and affordable services, including services that promote the access to housing and person-centred care including healthcare; modernising social protection systems, including promoting access to social protection, with a particular focus on children and disadvantaged groups; improving

accessibility including for persons with disabilities, effectiveness and resilience of healthcare systems and long-term care services.

Priority 3 includes proposed measures promoting equal access to and completion of quality and inclusive education and training, in particular for disadvantaged groups, from early childhood education and care through general and vocational education and training, to tertiary level, as well as adult education and learning, including facilitating learning mobility for all and accessibility for persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the promotion of lifelong learning, in particular flexible upskilling and reskilling opportunities for all taking into account entrepreneurial and digital skills, better anticipating change and new skills requirements based on labour market needs, facilitating career transitions and promoting professional mobility will be funded under this priority area.

Priority 4 includes funds assigned to addressing material deprivation through food and/or basic material assistance to the most deprived persons, including children, and providing accompanying measures supporting their social inclusion.

Part C – Applicability of the SEA Regulations		
Criterion	Yes/No	Explanation
Exemptions – Regulation 4(9)		
Is the PP’s sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency? OR	No	The PP’s sole purpose is not to serve national defence or civil emergency.
Is this a financial or budget PP?	Yes	The PP is an operational programme representing Malta’s primary funding arm for investment in human resources. The PP has been subjected to a screening exercise in order to determine whether the proposed measures could have a significant effect on the environment.
Qualification of PP - Regulation 3		
Is the PP subject to preparation and/or adoption	Yes	Strategy and Implementation Division (SID) within the Office of the Prime Minister

<p>by a national, regional, or local authority? OR</p>		
<p>Is the PP prepared by an authority for adoption through legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? AND</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy requires that programmes are submitted by Member States and adopted by the Commission as part of the programming process.</p> <p>The PP is being drawn up in order to fulfil these obligations.</p>
<p>Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Regulations 4(1) to 4(4)</p> <p>The SEA Regulations require that a strategic environmental assessment, in accordance with regulations 5 to 10, shall be carried out by the responsible authority for PPs referred to in sub-regulations 4(2) to 4(4) which are likely to have significant environmental effects, as follows:</p> <p>(i) Regulation 4(2) identifies PPs that are already considered to have a significant environmental effect. Moreover, Regulation 4(2)(b) requires liaison with the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) as the authority responsible for the Habitats Directive and protection of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).</p>		

<p>(ii) Responsible authorities should determine, in line with the provisions of the SEA Regulations, whether PPs identified in Regulations 4(3) to 4(4) are likely to have significant environmental effects [also see Regulation 4(5) below].</p>		
<p>Regulation 4(2) – SEA required automatically</p>		
<p>Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use? <u>AND</u></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The PP represents Malta’s primary funding arm for investment in human resources.</p>
<p>Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive (85/337/EEC – as updated by Directive 2014/52/EU). [These Annexes are transposed as Schedule 1 in the national EIA Regulations] <u>OR</u></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The PP represents Malta’s primary funding arm for investment in human resources. The PP has no effect on the development consent of any projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive (85/337/EEC – as updated by Directive 2014/52/EU). These Annexes are transposed as Schedule 1 in the national EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46).</p>
<p>Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment (Appropriate Assessment) under Articles 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)?</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The PP represents Malta’s primary funding arm for investment in human resources. The PP has no effect on sites related to Articles 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).</p>
<p>Regulation 4(3) – Applied only for PPs referred in 4(2)</p>		
<p>Does the PP in 4(2) determine the use of small areas at a local level? <u>OR</u></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The PP is directed to measures that are not directly related to the use of land.</p>

Is it a minor modification of a PP referred in 4(2)?	No	The PP represents Malta's primary funding arm for investment in human resources.
Regulation 4(4) – Applied only for PPs <u>not</u> referred in 4(2)		
Is the PP, which set the framework for future development consent of projects, likely to have a significant effect on the environment?	N/A	N/A since the PP is referred to in 4(2)

Part D – Determining the Likely Significance of Effects on the Environment referred to in Regulation 4(5) (Schedule II)		
Regulation 4(5) – Applied for PPs referred to in 4(3) and 4(4)		
Criteria	Likely to have significant environmental effects? Yes/No	Explanation on the significant environmental effects (both positive and negative)
Characteristics of the PP		
The degree to which the PP sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating condition; or by allocating resources	No	The PP represents an EU funded programme which serves as the main fund for building a more social, resilient and inclusive Europe. Measures proposed in the programme will be implemented in Malta during the 2021-2027 period.
The degree to which the PP influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	No	The PP has no influence on other plans and programmes since it represents Malta's primary funding arm for investment in human resources. Implementation of the PP proposed measures would have no influence on the environment, in accordance with S.L.549.61.

<p>The relevance of the PP for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The PP has no influence on promoting sustainable development since it represents Malta’s primary funding arm for investment in human resources. Implementation of the PP proposed measures would have no influence on the environment, in accordance with S.L.549.61.</p>
<p>Environmental problems relevant to the PP</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The PP has no environmental problems since it represents Malta’s primary funding arm for investment in human resources. Implementation of the PP proposed measures would have no influence on the environment, in accordance with S.L.549.61.</p>
<p>The relevance of the PP for the implementation of community legislation on the environment (eg. PPs linked to waste management or water protection)</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The PP has no influence on the implementation of community legislation on the environment since it represents Malta’s primary funding arm for investment in human resources. The proposed measures are non-physical and implementation of the PP proposed measures would have no influence on the environment, in accordance with S.L.549.61.</p>
<p>Characteristics of the effects and area likely to be affected</p>		
<p>The probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the effects</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The PP represents Malta’s primary funding arm for investment in human resources. The proposed measures are non-physical and implementation of the PP proposed measures would have no influence on the environment, in accordance with S.L.549.61.</p>

The cumulative nature of the effects	No	The PP represents Malta's primary funding arm for investment in human resources. The proposed measures are non-physical and implementation of the PP proposed measures would have no influence on the environment, in accordance with S.L.549.61.
The transboundary nature of the effects	No	The PP represents Malta's primary funding arm for investment in human resources. The proposed measures are non-physical and implementation of the PP proposed measures would have no influence on the environment, in accordance with S.L.549.61.
The risks to human health or the environment (eg. due to accidents)	No	The PP represents Malta's primary funding arm for investment in human resources. The proposed measures are non-physical and implementation of the PP proposed measures would have no influence on the environment, in accordance with S.L.549.61.
The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of population likely to be affected)	No	The PP represents Malta's primary funding arm for investment in human resources. The proposed measures are non-physical and implementation of the PP proposed measures would have no influence on the environment, in accordance with S.L.549.61.
The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:	No	The PP represents Malta's primary funding arm for investment in human resources. The proposed measures are non-physical and implementation of the PP proposed measures would have no influence on the

<p>I) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage</p> <p>II) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values</p> <p>III) Intensive land use</p>		<p>environment, in accordance with S.L.549.61.</p>
<p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have recognized national, community or international protection status</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The PP represents Malta’s primary funding arm for investment in human resources. The proposed measures are non-physical and implementation of the PP proposed measures would have no influence on the environment, in accordance with S.L.549.61.</p>

Part E – Summary of Environmental Effects

Provide a comprehensive statement on the significant environmental effects of the PP.


The PP represents an operational programme representing Malta’s primary funding arm for investment in human resources. The applicable sectors are employment, education, health and society, amongst others.

The proposed measures included in the ESF+ do not include physical interventions. Consequently, no significant environmental effects are envisaged to arise from the implementation of the PP. A Strategic Environmental Assessment is therefore not required to be undertaken.

Part F – Screening Outcome

Following the screening, as required under the Strategic Environmental Assessment regulations, including all required consultations, the RA is of the view that:

- A SEA is required because the PP falls under the scope of regulation 4(2)
- A SEA is required because the PP falls under the scope of regulation 4(3) and is likely to have significant environmental effects

<input type="checkbox"/>	A SEA is required because the PP falls under the scope of regulation 4(4) and is likely to have significant environmental effects
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A SEA is not required because the PP is unlikely to have significant environmental effects
<p><u>Maria Pia Pace</u> Name of Officer responsible for this report</p>	
	
<p>Signature of Officer responsible for this report</p>	
<p><u>MARIA PIA PACE</u> Name and Stamp of Responsible Authority</p>	
<p><u>01/2/2022</u> Date</p>	
<p>Notes to Responsible Authority</p> <p>A signed copy of this document should be provided to the SEA Focal Point after conducting all consultations. The RA should also attach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the draft plan/programme • a copy of the public notification obligatory under Regulation 4(7) • If appropriate, a copy of the notification for public participation (see Schedule III Article 5 (3) to S.L.549.61) • Copy of consultation correspondence by the Responsible Authorities to designated authorities 	

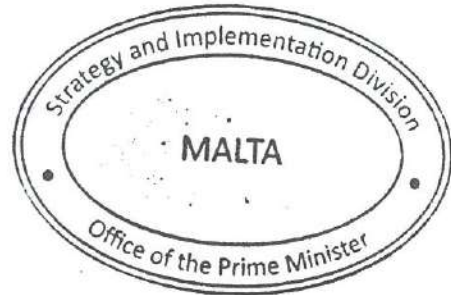




FIGURE 1: AREA COVERED BY THE PP (MALTA)

312 European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund (CF) and Just Transition Plan (JTF) Programme, including the JTF Plan

	SEA Screening Template	
	Based on S.L. 549.61 (L.N. 497 of 2010, as amended by Act XXV of 2015 and LN82 of 2019)	April 2021

This screening template has been drafted by the SEA Focal Point based on the SEA Regulations and is being distributed in document format for ease of use. Submitted versions shall only be considered if they align with this original version also available on the SEA website.

Part A – Plan/Programme (PP) & Responsible Authority (RA)	
Title of PP: European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund (CF) and Just Transition Plan (JTF) Programme	
Responsible Authority: Strategy and Implementation Division, Office of the Prime Minister	
Contact Person: Maria Pia Pace	Position: Director General (Strategy and Implementation Division)
Contact Address: 32, House of Catalunya, Triq Marsamxett, Valletta, Malta	
Email: maria-pia.a.pace@gov.mt	Telephone: +356 22957620
Date: 22/11/2021	
As per S.L., when more than one entity is responsible for the PP (or parts thereof), a single responsible authority should be nominated by agreement between the authorities responsible for the PP.	

Part B – General Information about the Plan/Programme (PP)
<p>Purpose of PP:</p> <p><u>European Regional Development Fund (ERDF):</u></p> <p>The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) fund aims to reduce economic, environmental and social disparities and foster a green and sustainable socio-economic growth.</p> <p><u>Cohesion Fund (CF):</u></p> <p>The Cohesion Fund (CF) provides financial support for investments in the field of environment and trans-European networks in the area of transport infrastructure</p>

(TEN-T).

Just Transition Plan (JTF) Programme & Plan:

The JTF provides a programme for investments which aim to ensure that the transition towards a climate-neutral economy in Europe transpires in a fair manner.

Period Covered by PP: 2021-2027

Envisaged updates/modifications: N/A

Area covered by PP (also attach map): Malta (Figure 2)

Summary of PP content: Areas of support under ERDF, CF and the JTF are outlined in one programme, which aims to foster socio-economic development across various sectors. The proposed measures outlined under each priority are as follows:

Priority 1 outlines initiatives that aim to foster and stimulate R&I capacities during the 2021-2027 programming period, increase investment in R&I as well as increase gross R&D expenditure as a percentage of GDP. Furthermore, Government aims to put Malta at the forefront of ICT development and sustain the growth of SMEs.

Priority 2 outlines proposed measures aimed to mitigate the impacts of the energy sector on the environment, and address climate and environmental challenges. Additional investments are also needed for better energy storage in relation to Malta's dependence on non-renewables, whilst also investing in sustainable water management vis-à-vis wastewater. Further planned interventions are also foreseen in the preservation of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. Such interventions are also complementary to those under Priority 6, which aim to address potable water, the extension of the Waste Separation and Collection Services, as well as clean mobility.

Priority 3 includes actions relating to TEN-T infrastructure, particularly the Core and Comprehensive Network, thus contributing towards enhanced connectivity, interoperability and competitiveness at the local level.

Priority 4 outlines proposed measures primarily related to further reducing the early school-leaving rate whilst improving tertiary education attainment levels and increasing lifelong learning. In addition, efforts are required to stop intergenerational and situational poverty and social exclusion, while also striving to alleviate the overall burden on the health

system. Focus shall also be emphasised on the renovation of cultural assets and valorisation of Malta’s cultural heritage.

Priority 5 includes proposed measures related towards an integrated targeted approach to address the needs and challenges of the island of Gozo, thus improving the social economic and environmental development, whilst fostering integration and inclusion.

Priority 6 outlines actions under the Just Transition Plan which aim to further promote Malta’s ambitions for decarbonization and reduction of GHG emissions. Efforts will focus on the roll out of alternative fuel infrastructure for land transport as well as the decarbonization of Malta’s main international ports, to address decarbonization by land and sea collectively.

Part C – Applicability of the SEA Regulations		
Criterion	Yes/No	Explanation
Exemptions – Regulation 4(9)		
Is the PP’s sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency? OR	No	The PP’s sole purpose is not to serve national defence or civil emergency.
Is this a financial or budget PP?	Yes	The PP presents an operational programme for the reduction economic, environmental and social problems in urban areas. The PP has been subjected to a screening exercise in order to determine whether the proposed measures could have a significant effect on the environment.
Qualification of PP - Regulation 3		
Is the PP subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional, or local authority? OR	Yes	Strategy and Implementation Division (SID) within the Office of the Prime Minister

<p>Is the PP prepared by an authority for adoption through legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? AND</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund requires that programmes are submitted by Member States and adopted by the Commission as part of the programming process.</p> <p>The PP is being drawn up in order to fulfil these obligations.</p>
<p>Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Regulations 4(1) to 4(4)</p> <p>The SEA Regulations require that a strategic environmental assessment, in accordance with regulations 5 to 10, shall be carried out by the responsible authority for PPs referred to in sub-regulations 4(2) to 4(4) which are likely to have significant environmental effects, as follows:</p> <p>(iii) Regulation 4(2) identifies PPs that are already considered to have a significant environmental effect. Moreover, Regulation 4(2)(b) requires liaison with the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) as the authority responsible for the Habitats Directive and protection of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).</p>		

<p>(iv) Responsible authorities should determine, in line with the provisions of the SEA Regulations, whether PPs identified in Regulations 4(3) to 4(4) are likely to have significant environmental effects [also see Regulation 4(5) below].</p>		
<p>Regulation 4(2) – SEA required automatically</p>		
<p>Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use? <u>AND</u></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The PP is prepared to facilitate the involvement of interventions concerning tourism, energy and water management, industry, waste and transport.</p>
<p>Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive (85/337/EEC – as updated by Directive 2014/52/EU). [These Annexes are transposed as Schedule 1 in the national EIA Regulations] <u>OR</u></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The PP aims to foster socio-economic development across various sectors through the following priority areas: fostering and stimulating R&I capacities, mitigating the impacts of the energy sector on the environment, actions relating to Ten-T infrastructure, reducing the early school-leaving rate whilst increasing lifelong learning, addressing the needs and challenges of the island of Gozo and promoting Malta’s ambitions for decarbonisation and reduction in GHG emissions.</p> <p>The PP has no effect on the development consent of any projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive (85/337/EEC – as updated by Directive 2014/52/EU). These Annexes are transposed as Schedule 1 in the national EIA Regulations. The projects included in the list of PP proposed measures would still be subject to the</p>

		planning development procedures and the provisions of the EIA Directive 85/337/EEC – as updated by Directive 2014/52/EU and local EIA regulations S.L. 549.46.
Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment (Appropriate Assessment) under Articles 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)?	No	The PP presents a programme for the reduction of economic, environmental and social problems in urban areas. While any development applications which are covered by the PP will be subjected to an assessment as per the AA screening in line with the Habitats Directive, the AA procedure is not applicable to the PP itself.
Regulation 4(3) – Applied only for PPs referred in 4(2)		
Does the PP in 4(2) determine the use of small areas at a local level? <u>OR</u>	Yes	The PP includes proposed measures which could determine the use of small land areas at a local level.
Is it a minor modification of a PP referred in 4(2)?	No	The PP aims to foster socio-economic development across various sectors through the following priority areas: fostering and stimulating R&I capacities, mitigating the impacts of the energy sector on the environment, actions relating to Ten-T infrastructure, reducing the early school-leaving rate whilst increasing lifelong learning, addressing the needs and challenges of the island of Gozo and promoting Malta’s ambitions for decarbonisation and reduction in GHG emissions.
Regulation 4(4) – Applied only for PPs <u>not</u> referred in 4(2)		
Is the PP, which set the framework for future	No	N/A since the PP is referred to in 4(2)

development consent of projects, likely to have a significant effect on the environment?		
--	--	--

Part D – Determining the Likely Significance of Effects on the Environment referred to in Regulation 4(5) (Schedule II)

Regulation 4(5) – Applied for PPs referred to in 4(3) and 4(4)		
Criteria	Likely to have significant environmental effects? Yes/No	Explanation on the significant environmental effects (both positive and negative)
Characteristics of the PP		
The degree to which the PP sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating condition; or by allocating resources	Yes	<p>The PP aims to foster socio-economic development across various sectors through the following priority areas: fostering and stimulating R&I capacities, mitigating the impacts of the energy sector on the environment, actions relating to Ten-T infrastructure, reducing the early school-leaving rate whilst increasing lifelong learning, addressing the needs and challenges of the island of Gozo and promoting Malta’s ambitions for decarbonisation and reduction in GHG emissions.</p> <p>While the proposed measures may integrate environmental considerations, a large number of the proposed measures are non-physical (such as digitisation of governmental sectors, installation of intelligent sensors, grants and education campaigns). The majority of the proposed measures are expected to involve physical infrastructural interventions which could give rise to significant environmental</p>

		<p>effects. Nevertheless, the locations of most of these proposed measures are not currently known and no details on the interventions are included in the PP. Once such information is available, these developments will be screened for the requirements of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) at project-stage, in line with the EIA Directive (85/337/EEC – as updated by Directive 2014/52/EU), local EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46), the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.44) and the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.42). Furthermore, some of the policies and plans listed in the PPs are subject to a separate SEA screening exercises, such as the investments for better energy storage in Malta and the investments relating to better water management which are also included in Malta’s 2030 National Energy & Climate Plan (NECP) and Malta’s Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS).</p>
<p>The degree to which the PP influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The PP aims to foster socio-economic development across various sectors through the following priority areas: fostering and stimulating R&I capacities, mitigating the impacts of the energy sector on the environment, actions relating to Ten-T infrastructure, reducing the early school-leaving rate whilst increasing lifelong learning, addressing the needs and challenges of the island of Gozo and promoting Malta’s ambitions for decarbonisation and reduction in GHG emissions.</p>

		<p>Certain proposed measures overlap with those included in other existing plans and programmes that are already being implemented, such as the NECP and LCDS national strategies. These proposed measures include the investments for better energy storage in Malta and the investments relating to better water management. Considering that such plans/programmes are already in place, the PP is unlikely to influence them.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the proposed PP measures could potentially be included in new plans or programmes which have not yet been drafted or are in the process of being drafted, including those in a hierarchy.</p>
<p>The relevance of the PP for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The PP aims to foster socio-economic development across various sectors through the following priority areas: fostering and stimulating R&I capacities, mitigating the impacts of the energy sector on the environment, actions relating to Ten-T infrastructure, reducing the early school-leaving rate whilst increasing lifelong learning, addressing the needs and challenges of the island of Gozo and promoting Malta's ambitions for decarbonisation and reduction in GHG emissions.</p> <p>As one of its priority areas, the PP promotes sustainable development. These proposed measures include the investments for better energy storage in Malta and the investments relating to better water management, along with those which aim to preserve biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. The PP will provide</p>

		<p>interventions that will address key investment areas within the territory of Malta for smart, digital and SME growth, creation of jobs, health, culture and education and sustainable urban development. Moreover, the PP will focus on energy efficiency and energy investments, as well as key environmental issues including water management, green infrastructure and Natura 2000.</p>
<p>Environmental problems relevant to the PP</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Proposed measures target various environmental problems such as energy efficiency and stability of Malta’s electricity grid; protecting the resource value of wastewater; and vulnerability of Malta’s Natura 2000 sites.</p>
<p>The relevance of the PP for the implementation of community legislation on the environment (eg. PPs linked to waste management or water protection)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Although not directly contributing to the implementation of community legislation on the environment, some proposed measures may influence the success of community legislation. These proposed measures include the investments for better energy storage in Malta and the investments relating to better water management, along with those which aim to preserve biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. The PP will focus on energy efficiency and energy investments, as well as key environmental issues including water management, green infrastructure and Natura 2000. The implementation of the PP proposed measures would address issues related to the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.44), Birds Directive 2009/147/EC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.42), Water Framework Directive</p>

		<p>2000/60/EC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.100), Ambient Air Quality Directive 2008/50/EC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.59), Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive 91/271/EEC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.22), the Energy Efficiency Directive 2012/27/EU (transposed in Malta by S.L. 545.33), the Renewable Energy Directive 2018/2001 (transposed in Malta by S.L. 423.19) and the Paris Agreement (ratified by Malta on 5th October 2016).</p>
<p>Characteristics of the effects and area likely to be affected</p>		
<p>The probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the effects</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The proposed measures are expected to involve physical interventions which could give rise to significant environmental effects these developments will be subjected to EIA and AA screening at project-stage, in line with the EIA Directive (85/337/EEC – as updated by Directive 2014/52/EU), local EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46), the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.44) and the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.42).</p>
<p>The cumulative nature of the effects</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The proposed measures are expected to involve physical interventions which could give rise to significant environmental effects, some of which may be cumulative in nature. These developments will be subjected to EIA and AA screening at project-stage, in line with the EIA Directive (85/337/EEC – as updated by Directive 2014/52/EU), local EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46), the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.44) and the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.42).</p>

<p>The transboundary nature of the effects</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The proposed measures are expected to involve physical interventions which could give rise to significant environmental effects. The impacts from most of these proposed measures are expected to be confined to the nearby surroundings. Nevertheless, the electricity interconnector is likely to result in transboundary effects such as adverse impacts on the habitats along the seafloor, construction impacts such as noise and light pollution, among others.</p>
<p>The risks to human health or the environment (eg. due to accidents)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The proposed measures are expected to involve physical interventions which could give rise to risks to human health and/or the environment. These developments will be subjected to EIA and AA screening at project-stage, in line with the EIA Directive (85/337/EEC – as updated by Directive 2014/52/EU), local EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46), the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.44) and the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.42). Some of the proposed measures aim to improve the existing human health/environmental risks. The increase in energy efficiency and the transition towards renewable energy will improve Malta’s air quality through the reduction in various pollutants such as GHGs. The proposed measures will also assist in climate change mitigation that will reduce the risk to which the Maltese populations and environment are exposed to climate change effects such as rising sea levels and severe weather conditions.</p>
<p>The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The proposed measures are expected to involve physical interventions which could give rise to significant environmental effects. The impacts of</p>

of population likely to be affected)		most of the proposed measures are expected to be confined to the nearby surroundings, while the electricity interconnector is likely to result in transboundary effects such as adverse impacts on the habitats along the seafloor, construction impacts such as noise and light pollution, among others.
<p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <p>IV) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage</p> <p>V) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values</p> <p>VI) Intensive land use</p>	Yes	The proposed measures are expected to involve physical interventions which could give rise to significant environmental effects. These developments will be subjected to EIA and AA screening at project-stage, in line with the EIA Directive (85/337/EEC – as updated by Directive 2014/52/EU), local EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46), the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.44) and the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.42). The EIA and/or AA processes will identify the value and vulnerability of the area/s likely to be affected.
The effects on areas or landscapes which have recognized national, community or international protection status	Yes	The proposed measures are expected to involve physical interventions which could give rise to significant environmental effects on areas or landscapes which have recognized national, community or international protection status. These developments will be subjected to EIA and AA screening at project-stage, in line with the EIA Directive (85/337/EEC – as updated by Directive 2014/52/EU), local EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46), the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.44) and the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.42). The EIA and/or AA processes will identify the value and vulnerability of the area/s likely to be affected.

Part E – Summary of Environmental Effects

Provide a comprehensive statement on the significant environmental effects of the PP.

Areas of support under ERDF, CF and the JTF are outlined in one programme, which aims to foster socio-economic development across various sectors. The PP includes proposed measures relating to the following priority areas: fostering and stimulating R&I capacities, mitigating the impacts of the energy sector on the environment, actions relating to Ten-T infrastructure, reducing the early school-leaving rate whilst increasing lifelong learning, addressing the needs and challenges of the island of Gozo and promoting Malta's ambitions for decarbonisation and reduction in GHG emissions.

The implementation of the PP proposed measures would address issues related to the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.44), Birds Directive 2009/147/EC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.42), Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.100), Ambient Air Quality Directive 2008/50/EC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.59), Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive 91/271/EEC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.22), the Energy Efficiency Directive 2012/27/EU (transposed in Malta by S.L. 545.33), the Renewable Energy Directive 2018/2001 (transposed in Malta by S.L. 423.19) and the Paris Agreement (ratified by Malta on 5th October 2016).

While the proposed measures may integrate environmental considerations, a large number of the proposed measures are non-physical (such as digitisation of governmental sectors, installation of intelligent sensors, grants and education campaigns). The majority of the proposed measures are expected to involve physical infrastructural interventions which could give rise to significant environmental effects. These proposed measures include the investments for better energy storage in Malta and the investments relating to better water management, along with those which aim to preserve biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.

The locations of most of these proposed measures are not currently known and no details on the interventions are available. Details on the location and the interventions expected to take place is crucial for identifying the magnitude and spatial extent of the impacts, the value and vulnerability of the area to be impacted and to identify risks to landscapes which have recognized national, community or international protection status. Once such

information is available, these developments will be subjected to EIA and AA screening at project-stage, in line with the EIA Directive (85/337/EEC – as updated by Directive 2014/52/EU), local EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46), the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.44) and the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.42).

The physical interventions are expected to be confined to nearby surrounding areas, but could be cumulative and give rise to human health or environmental risks. The electricity interconnector is likely to result in transboundary effects such as adverse impacts on the habitats along the seafloor, construction impacts such as noise and light pollution, among others. Some of the proposed measures aim to improve the existing human health/environmental risks. The increase in energy efficiency and the transition towards renewable energy will improve Malta’s air quality through the reduction in various pollutants such as GHGs. The proposed measures will also assist in climate change mitigation that will reduce the risk to which the Maltese populations and environment are exposed to climate change effects such as rising sea levels and severe weather conditions.

Assessment of the impacts of such broad-scale proposed measures at policy-stage is difficult. Nevertheless, the development of the interconnector may be carried out of Malta’s territorial waters and may give rise to assessments in view of Marine habitats and Marine Natura 2000 sites within and out of Malta’s territorial waters. To this end, consultations with countries where the development will take place is envisaged at project-level.

From the detailed assessment above, only one intervention may be transboundary in terms of impact, and the PP is likely to give rise to environmental effects. Therefore, a Strategic Environmental Assessment on the proposed PP measures can be carried out on a national scale.

Part F – Screening Outcome

Following the screening, as required under the Strategic Environmental Assessment regulations, including all required consultations, the RA is of the view that:

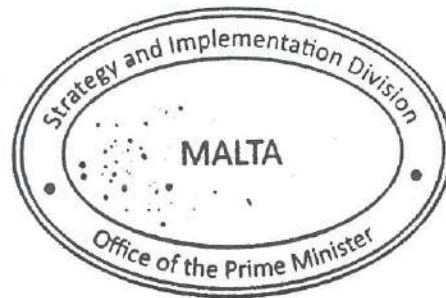
- A SEA is required because the PP falls under the scope of regulation 4(2)
- A SEA is required because the PP falls under the scope of regulation 4(3) and is likely to have significant environmental effects

- A SEA is required because the PP falls under the scope of regulation 4(4) and is likely to have significant environmental effects
- A SEA is not required because the PP is unlikely to have significant environmental effects

Maria Pia Pace
Name of Officer responsible for this report

Maria Pia Pace
Signature of Officer responsible for this report

MARIA PIA PACE
Name and Stamp of Responsible Authority



01/2/2022
Date

Notes to Responsible Authority

A signed copy of this document should be provided to the SEA Focal Point after conducting all consultations. The RA should also attach:

- the draft plan/programme
- a copy of the public notification obligatory under Regulation 4(7)
- If appropriate, a copy of the notification for public participation (see Schedule III Article 5 (3) to S.L.549.61)
- Copy of consultation correspondence by the Responsible Authorities to designated authorities



FIGURE 2: AREA COVERED BY THE PP (MALTA)

3.2 EXPERTS' RECOMMENDATION

The aim of the screening exercise is to determine whether a particular plan or programme requires an SEA, based on legislative guidance and requirements. The screening stage is decisive for the initiation of the entire SEA process, and the recommendation of the authors for each of the operational programmes is outlined below.

3.2.1 European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)

Considering that the ESF+ represents an operational programme which assigns funds to proposed measures and projects which fall under EU Regulation COM/2018/382, the PP will have no effect on the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to Directive 85/337/EEC (Regulations 4(2)(a) and 4(4) of the SEA Regulations, S.L. 549.61). Furthermore, while the projects which are covered by the PP will be subjected to AA screening in line with the Habitats Directive, the PP itself is not (Regulation 4(2)(b) of the SEA Regulations).

The proposed measures are non-physical (such as education campaigns, training, etc.), which are not expected to have significant environmental effects (Regulation 4(3) of the SEA Regulations S.L. 549.61). Consequently, the authors recommend that the SEA process is terminated at screening stage and the Environmental Report is scoped out. This recommendation is lodged within the authors' capacity as the designated key experts on Lot 3 of CT3000/2020, and is subject to approval by the SEA Focal Point.

3.2.2 European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund (CF) and Just Transition Plan (JTF) Programme, including the JTF Plan

Areas of support under ERDF, CF and the JTF are outlined in one programme, which aims to foster socio-economic development across various sectors. The PP includes proposed measures relating to the following priority areas: fostering and stimulating R&I capacities, mitigating the impacts of the energy sector on the environment, actions relating to Ten-T infrastructure, reducing the early school-leaving rate whilst increasing lifelong learning, addressing the needs and challenges of the island of Gozo and promoting Malta's ambitions for decarbonisation and reduction in GHG emissions.

The PP presents a programme for the reduction of economic, environmental and social problems in urban areas. The PP will have no effect on the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to Directive 85/337/EEC (Regulations 4(2)(a) and 4(4) of the SEA Regulations, S.L. 549.61). The implementation of the PP proposed measures would nevertheless address issues related to the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.44), Birds Directive 2009/147/EC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.42), Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.100), Ambient Air Quality Directive 2008/50/EC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.59), Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive 91/271/EEC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.22), the Energy Efficiency Directive 2012/27/EU (transposed in Malta by S.L. 545.33), the Renewable

Energy Directive 2018/2001 (transposed in Malta by S.L. 423.19) and the Paris Agreement (ratified by Malta on 5th October 2016).

While the proposed measures may integrate environmental considerations, the majority of the proposed measures are non-physical (such as digitisation of governmental sectors, installation of intelligent sensors, grants and education campaigns). Nevertheless, some of the proposed measures are expected to involve physical infrastructural interventions which could give rise to significant environmental effects. These proposed measures include the investments for better energy storage in Malta and the investments relating to better water management, along with those which aim to preserve biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.

The locations of most of these proposed measures are not currently known and no details on the interventions are available. Details on the location and the interventions expected to take place is crucial for identifying the magnitude and spatial extent of the impacts, the value and vulnerability of the area to be impacted and to identify risks to landscapes which have recognized national, community or international protection status. Once such information is available, these developments will be subjected to EIA and AA screening at project-stage, in line with the EIA Directive (85/337/EEC – as updated by Directive 2014/52/EU), local EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46), the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.44) and the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC (transposed in Malta by S.L. 549.42).

The impacts of physical interventions are expected to be confined to nearby surrounding areas, but could be cumulative and give rise to human health or environmental risks. The electricity interconnector is likely to result in transboundary effects such as adverse impacts on the habitats along the seafloor, construction impacts such as noise and light pollution, among others. Some of the proposed measures aim to improve the existing human health/environmental risks. The increase in energy efficiency and the transition towards renewable energy will improve Malta's air quality through the reduction in various pollutants such as GHGs. The proposed measures will also assist in climate change mitigation that will reduce the risk to which the Maltese populations and environment are exposed to climate change effects such as rising sea levels and severe weather conditions.

Assessment of the impacts of such broad-scale measures at policy-stage is difficult. Nevertheless, considering the possibility that the PP could give rise to significant environmental effects, a Strategic Environmental Assessment on the proposed PP measures can be carried out on a national scale. This recommendation is lodged within the authors' capacity as the designated key experts on Lot 3 of CT3000/2020, and is subject to approval by the SEA Focal Point.

3.3 DESCRIPTION OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR CONCERNS

In accordance with Article 5(2) of the SEA Regulations (S.L. 549.61), the screening exercise is subject to consultation by designated authorities (i.e. key stakeholders). Such key stakeholders include the environmental and health authorities referred to in Article 7(3) of the SEA Regulations, as reproduced hereunder:

- (a) *"The Environment and Resources Authority or any successor entity responsible for the environment; and where applicable-*
- (b) *the Regulator for Energy and Water Services or any successor entity or entities;*
- (c) *the competent authority responsible for agriculture;*
- (d) *the competent authority responsible for fisheries;*
- (e) *the competent authority responsible for health;*
- (f) *any other authority which is deemed by the responsible authority to have an input into the strategic environmental assessment process."*

Consequently, the list of key stakeholders relevant to the SEA exercise of the ESF+, ERDF, CF and JTF have been identified as those included in Table 1.

TABLE 1: LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS TO BE TARGETED DURING THE PROJECT

GROUP	STAKEHOLDER
Governmental bodies	The Environment & Resources Authority
	Transport Malta
	Planning Authority
	Ministry for the Environment, Climate Change and Planning
	Ministry of Finance
	Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture
	Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects
	Ministry for Gozo
	Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Animal Rights
	University of Malta
	Malta Aquaculture Directorate
	Energy and Water Agency
	Ambjent Malta Agency
	Ministry for Health
	Regulator for Energy and Water Services
	Environmental Health Directorate
	Civil Protection Department
Occupational Health & Safety Authority	
Local Councils' Association	
Malta Resources Authority	
NGOs	Ghaqda Koperattiva tas-Sajd (GhKS)
	Koperattiva tas-Sajd Malta (KSM)

GROUP	STAKEHOLDER
	Flimkien Ghal Ambjent Ahjar
	Friends of the Earth Malta
	Biological Conservation Research Foundation
	Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna
	Nature Trust
	Moviment Graffiti
	Birdlife Malta
	Din I-Art Helwa

Once approved by the Contracting Authority (SID), the Screening and Scoping Report will be subjected to the first session of stakeholder consultation, as required by Article 5 (2) and Article 6(2) of S.L. 549.61. The consultation period, in line with guidance provided by the SEA Focal Point, will allow interested stakeholders to provide feedback on the results of the Screening & Scoping Exercise. The aim of this first consultation period is to ensure that all environmental considerations have been appropriately taken into account and that all viewpoints are considered in the early stages of the SEA.

4 SCOPING EXERCISE

The conclusion of the screening exercise is provided in Section 3.2. The Environmental Report of the ESF+ 2021-2027 has been scoped out since no significant environmental effects are envisaged from this programme in accordance with S.L. 549.61. In line with the ToRs of CT3000/2020 Section 4.2 (Specific Activities), 4.2.5 (Adoption and Monitoring Report), *"in the eventuality that no environmental report is required following the screening exercise of a particular plan or programme (Task 3 as outlined in this table), tasks 4-7 will not be deemed necessary in line with Articles 5 and 6 of LN 497 of 2010."* Consequently, the scoping exercise is not applicable to this PP.

The screening exercise for the ERDF, CF and JTF concluded that an SEA should be carried out in view of the possibility of significant environmental effects. The scoping exercises for these PPs are presented in the following subsections.

4.1 STAGES INVOLVED IN THE COMPILATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

Table 2 outlines the stages involved in the compilation of the Environmental Report.

TABLE 2: STAGES INVOLVED IN COMPILING THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

STAGE	DESCRIPTION
1	Environmental themes Identification of the key environmental aspects to be addressed in the environmental report
2	Environmental baselines Description of the environmental baseline scope
3	Policies Links to other relevant environmental policies, plans and programmes, particularly in relation to the SEA Regulations
4	Potential environmental issues & impact assessment Environmental issues potentially arising from the PaMs Impact assessment exercise during all its phases (i.e. construction/installation, operation and decommissioning), including cumulative impacts, to evaluate whether the proposed policy-level measures are expected to be effective in pre-empting significant impacts
	Designation of mitigation measures for the adverse impacts and determining the residual impacts
5	Assessment of alternatives The zero-option will be identified and assessed as an alternative to the proposed PP to determine the

STAGE		DESCRIPTION
		preferred alternative (including reasons for rejection of others)
6	Recommendations	A description of the recommendations made throughout the SEA process to improve criteria and measures
7	Monitoring proposals	A description of the monitoring requirements to assess the impacts and implications of the policy during the implementation stage

Step 1 falls within the requirements of the scoping report, and has been completed for each of the PPs, as presented in the following subsections. Steps 2-7 are carried out as part of the Environmental Report (Task 4 of CT3000/2020), and their methodology has been outlined in the following sections.

4.2 KEY ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS TO BE ADDRESSED

Stage 1 involved reviewing the list of proposed measures which have been included in the PP. Following the review, a list of key environmental themes was drawn up, as follows:

- Air quality
- Biodiversity (terrestrial and marine)
- Land uses & landscape
- Cultural heritage
- Energy & water consumption
- Climate change
- Transportation & related infrastructure
- Waste management

The list of key environmental themes has been drawn up using the guidelines provided in Schedule I of the SEA Regulations S.L. 549.61. Flora and fauna will be included in the assessment of biodiversity. Soil and material assets will not be assessed as part of the SEA since they are not expected to be affected by the PP measures and are therefore not considered relevant to the Environmental Report. Nevertheless, any environmental issues that may arise during the assessment will also be assessed if and wherever relevant.

The SEA Directive does not specifically require the use of objectives or indicators in SEA, yet they are recognised as the way in which environmental effects can be described, analysed and compared. SEA objectives state what is intended and the plan's performance against objectives is normally measured by indicators. The SEA objectives are different and separate from the policy objectives, although the two influence each other and may overlap. SEA indicators are measurements of temporal

trends. They will be used to ascertain the success of the implementation of the policy against various SEA objectives.

The environmental issues, criteria and indicators associated with each theme have been identified as outlined in Table 3. The inter-relationships between the themes, as well as secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative impacts of the policy will also be addressed.

This list of environmental themes, criteria and indicators is subject to update following consultation with the SEA Focal Point and relevant stakeholders identified in Section 3.3. As outlined in Table 2, relevant policies will also be assessed as part of the SEA and presented in the Environmental Report. Such policies should include EU policies, regulations, communications, directives and international obligations and agreements that will be used throughout the process as well as the relevant national legislation that they transpose or that Malta is party to.

TABLE 3: ENVIRONMENTAL THEMES, CRITERIA AND INDICATORS RELATED TO THE ERDF, CF AND JTF

THEME	SEA OBJECTIVE	CRITERION	INDICATOR	DATA SOURCE
Air quality	1 Improve air quality	Ensure that the national air quality issues and emission limit values are not breached	National emissions (tonnage) of pollutants into the air, with regards to Malta's obligations under the NEC Directive 2016/2284	National Statistics Office
				ERA
Biodiversity	2 Maintain and safeguard protected habitats and species	Maintain and safeguard the conservation of designated habitats and species of flora and fauna	Status of protected habitats and species of flora and fauna	ERA
		Maintain and safeguard other important habitats which are not officially protected yet	Status of other habitats, including valleys and watercourses	ERA
		Maintain and safeguard environmental factors essential to ecosystems	Status of environmental factors, including coastal water, groundwater, geology and soil	ERA

THEME	SEA OBJECTIVE	CRITERION	INDICATOR	DATA SOURCE
Land uses & landscape	3 Protect the quality, integrity and distinctiveness of the landscape and townscapes	Protection of the landscape	Status of landform and topography, landscape, the natural beauty and scenic amenity of the landscape	ERA
	4 Conserve and protect sites of architectural, archaeological and/or ecological importance from adverse impacts of infrastructural works	Conserve and protect sites of cultural heritage	Number of scheduled sites	PA
Energy & water	5 Reduce Malta's dependence on non-renewable sources of energy	Decrease Malta's dependence on non-renewable energy sources	Energy generation by type	Eurostat/EWA/NSO
			Number of solar panel installations	
	Reduce energy consumption levels	To incentivise the reduction of energy consumption by end-users	Energy consumption levels by type	

THEME	SEA OBJECTIVE	CRITERION	INDICATOR	DATA SOURCE
	Reduce water consumption levels	To incentivise the reduction of water consumption by end-users		
	Improve water quality	To improve the quality of primary water		
	Increase Malta's security of supply	Increase Malta's security of supply	Security of supply	
Climate change	6 Reduce Malta's vulnerability to climate change	Conserve energy and promote renewable sources	Annual mean air temperature	ERA/Malta Airport MetOffice/NSO
			Annual total precipitation	
			Concentrations of greenhouse gases	
Transportation and infrastructure	7 Minimise environmental impacts from non-sustainable means of transportation and improve Malta's status	Reduce the number of vehicles running on non-renewable fuel sources	Number of vehicles by type	EWA/ NSO/ TM
			Number of bicycles and e-bicycles	

THEME	SEA OBJECTIVE	CRITERION	INDICATOR	DATA SOURCE
Waste management	Provide and increase use of alternative means of travel	To increase public transport usage	Number of public transport commuters	MECP/ Wasteserv
		To promote cycling as a sustainable mode of transport	Length of cycle lanes	
		To improve accessibility and better access without the use of cars	Number of public transport commuters	
	8 Increase sustainable management of waste, waste preventions and minimisation practices	Promote prevention, re-use, recycling, recovery (energy)	Waste generation by type	
Increase re-use, recycling and recovery wastes		Reduce landfilling	Waste separation and recycling	

4.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE SCOPE

Stages 2 and 3 of the Environmental Report will involve a thorough literature review of any existing and available information relevant to the SEA. Literature to be assessed includes but is not limited to the following data sources:

- The Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (SPED, 2015)
- State of the Environment Report (2018)
- The National Environmental Policy (2012)
- The National Strategy for the Environment (2020-2050)
- The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2012-2020)
- Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations (S.L. 549.44)
- Long-Term Waste Management Plan (2021-2030)
- 2nd Water Catchment Management Plan for the Malta Water Catchment District (2016)
- Bathing Water Quality Regulations (S.L. 465.09)
- Air Quality Plan for the Maltese Islands (2010)
- Noise Action Plan (2013)
- The Limitation of Emissions of Certain Atmospheric Pollutants Regulations (S.L. 549.124), in view of the specific emission ceilings for Malta
- Any other relevant literature sources, such as those from the NSO, ERA, Eurostat, MetOffice, Malta Airport, MESDC and Wasteserv

A thorough assessment of the proposed PP measures shall be carried out, comparing each of the measures to the zero option (do-nothing scenario), which is a theoretical alternative where the PP is not implemented.

4.4 IMPACT IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION

The significance of the environmental impacts will be assessed in Stage 4, in line with the guidelines provided in Section 2 of Schedule II Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Regulation 4(5) of S.L.549.61 on the Strategic Environmental Assessment:

- (a) *the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,*
- (b) *the cumulative nature of the effects,*
- (c) *the transboundary nature of the effects,*
- (d) *the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),*
- (e) *the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),*
- (f) *the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:*
 - i. *special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,*
 - ii. *exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,*
 - iii. *intensive land-use,*
- (g) *the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.*

Impacts on the environmental themes highlighted in Table 3 will be assessed as part of the SEA process and presented in Environmental Report. For each environmental theme, the impact assessment will be presented in tabular format, as indicated in

Appendix 1. Since the PP has already been developed, the zero-option (do nothing scenario) will serve as an alternative during the SEA, which will be assessed as a theoretical option (Stage 5). The matrix (Table 4) will summarise the impacts of the alternatives being considered, the significance of the impacts and the timeframe of the impacts. On the basis of the results from Stages 4 and 5, recommendations for alteration to the proposed measures of the PP will be made (Stage 6), as well as proposals for a monitoring programme of the PP (Stage 7).

APPENDIX 1: TEMPLATE FOR THE FINAL ASSESSMENT MATRIX

TABLE 40: TEMPLATE FOR THE FINAL ASSESSMENT MATRIX

ENVIRONMENTAL THEME:	EFFECT	PROBABILITY	DURATION	FREQUENCY	REVERSIBILITY	CUMULATIVE EFFECTS	TRANSBOUNDARY EFFECTS	RISKS	MAGNITUDE	SPATIAL EXTENT	VALUE AND/ VULNERABILITY	EFFECT ON PROTECTED AREAS	SIGNIFICANCE	JUSTIFICATION
Policy alternative 1:	As proposed in the policy													
Criterion/measure 1														
Criterion/measure 2														
Criterion/measure 3														
Policy alternative 2:	Zero-option													
Criterion/measure 1														
Criterion/measure 2														
Criterion/measure 3														

APPENDIX 2: Stakeholder consultation feedback



Director General
Strategy & Implementation Division
Parliamentary Secretariat for European Funds

14th December 2021

Dear Ms Maria Pia Pace,

**Screening Report for the European Social Fund+ Operational Programme 2021-2027
Consultation in terms of Regulation 4(6) of S.L. 549.61 (Strategic Environmental Assessment
Regulations)**

Reference is made to the OPM's SEA screening consultation on the ESF+ Operational Programme 2021-2027, which the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) received by email on 10th December 2021.

The ESF+ Programme is a strategic level document that brings together various objectives and actions aiming at: (i) Enhancing employability and labour market resilience; (ii) Fostering active inclusion for all; (iii) Quality and inclusive education and enhanced lifelong learning for growth; (iv) Addressing material deprivation; and (v) Technical Assistance.

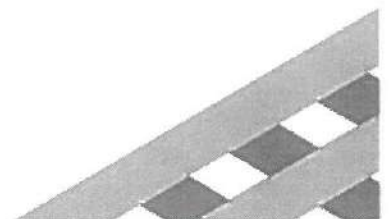
ERA has reviewed the information provided with this SEA screening consultation. The SEA Screening Template for the ESF+ programme, highlights that the measures proposed by the Programme are generally very broad and 'soft' in nature, related to investment in human resources and do not include physical interventions. In this regard, ERA considers that, strategically this programme is unlikely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment.

Notwithstanding, these comments are provided without prejudice to ERA's review and comments on any development project that may emerge from this programme, when more detailed environmental screening may be required.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michelle Piccinino', is written over a faint, larger version of the signature.

Perit Michelle Piccinino
Chief Executive Officer
Environment and Resources Authority



Director General
Strategy & Implementation Division
Parliamentary Secretariat for European Funds

16th December 2021

Dear Ms Maria Pia Pace,

**Screening and Scoping Reports for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund (CF) and the Just Transition Fund (JTF) Programme 2021-2027
Consultation in terms of Regulation 4(6) and Regulation 6(4) of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations (S.L. 549.61)**

Reference is made to the OPM's SEA screening and SEA scoping consultation on the above-mentioned Programme for 2021-2027, which ERA received by email on 10th December 2021.

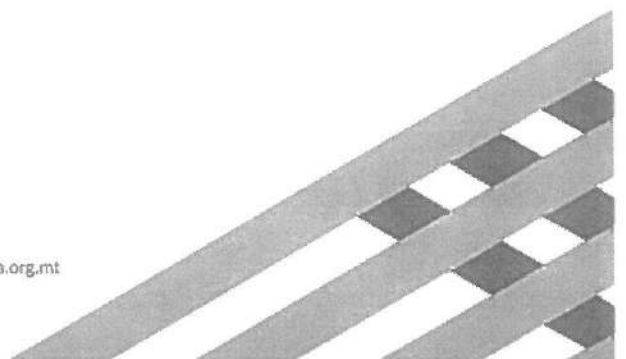
Various proposals in the draft Programme are environmentally relevant, particularly those involving infrastructure and development projects. Therefore, ERA welcomes the decision in the SEA Screening Report, to subject the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund (CF) and the Just Transition Fund (JTF) Programme for the period 2021-2027 to an SEA study. ERA looks forward to being consulted on the SEA Environmental Report.

ERA's comments on the SEA Scoping Report are provided below. It is recommended that these comments are taken into consideration in the preparation of the SEA Environmental Report. The Scoping Report provides an overview of the scope and parameters for the environment assessment of the Programme and preparation of the Environmental Report. However, ERA considers that the issues highlighted below should also be addressed in the SEA process.

Yours sincerely,



Perit Michelle Piccinino
Chief Executive Officer
Environment and Resources Authority



ERA's comments on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund (CF) and the Just Transition Fund (JTF) Programme 2021-2027

16th December 2021

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Reference is made to OPM's public consultation document on the European Regional Development Fund, Cohesion Fund and the Just Transition Fund Programme 2021 to 2027, and the associated SEA Scoping Report prepared by AIS Environment.
- 1.2 The Programme has identified the priority areas for investment in Malta, as follows:
- Priority 1: Fostering competitiveness and an innovative and smart economic transformation;
 - Priority 2: Promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, and sustainable urban mobility;
 - Priority 3: Enhancing transport connectivity;
 - Priority 4: A more social and inclusive society;
 - Priority 5: Fostering sustainable urban development in Gozo;
 - Priority 6: Facilitating a just transition; and
 - Priority 7: Technical Assistance.
- 1.3 The focus of these priority areas are research and innovation (R&I), competitiveness and digitalisation, natural resources and the environment, transport, education, employment, health, tourism and urban development, all of which are of significant importance in the socio-economic development of the country. In this regard, the Programme seeks to mobilise finances to support initiatives under these priority areas, such as infrastructure for waste and water management, clean energy, education, health and transport; biodiversity protection and conservation; clean mobility and support green infrastructure; and Gozo's sustainable urban development.
- 1.4 The following comments are provided without prejudice to ERA's review and comments on the SEA Environmental Report and on any development projects that may emerge from this programme, when more detailed environmental assessment may be required.

2. Appropriate Assessment

- 2.1 At this stage, it is not possible for ERA to determine or confirm whether the emerging plan will require an Appropriate Assessment in view of its potential impacts on Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protected Areas (SPAs), in line with regulation 19 of the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulation of 2006 (as amended). ERA will re-consider this issue throughout the SEA process once additional information becomes available.

3. Considerations for the SEA Environmental Report

- 3.1 ERA welcomes the environmental aspect of the draft Programme, in particular the investment for supporting and promoting environmental protection, biodiversity, environmentally sustainable practices and a more environmentally conscious society and economy. In addition to these, it is recommended that the following comments are also considered as part of the SEA study. **The methodology, evaluation parameters and indicators, proposed in the SEA Scoping Report, may need to be amended to enable the following environmental impact evaluations.**

- 3.2 The priority areas which are of most strategic relevance to the environment are:
- **Priority Area 2:** Promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, and sustainable urban mobility;
 - **Priority Area 3:** Enhancing transport connectivity; and
 - Particular initiatives under **other priority areas** (see below).
- 3.3 Although other initiatives do not specifically target infrastructure and development directly, some may still involve upgrading of relevant infrastructure, e.g. to improve educational and health services. Not all relevant environmental issues may be foreseen at this stage and therefore, additional environmental screening will be needed once the details are available at project stage.

Priority Area 2: Promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, and sustainable urban mobility

- 3.4 Various proposals under this priority involve the provision of additional environmental infrastructure, for example to reduce GHG emissions. **It is recommended that the SEA should evaluate two scenarios, one focusing on the environmental impacts of not providing or upgrading such environmental infrastructure, and another focusing on avoiding major environmental impacts (such as avoiding important natural areas) when planning and implementing such infrastructure.** The type of infrastructure considered in the Programme includes renewable energy, energy storage, water and waste management, upgrading of water networks, rehabilitation of reservoirs, reverse osmosis upgrades, wastewater, amongst others.
- 3.5 ERA welcomes the proposals in the Programme regarding the promotion of Green Infrastructure in urban areas; the protection and restoration of ecosystems; the protection and restoration of Natura 2000 sites; investments in green ecological corridors; reducing pressures and threats on habitats and species in the natural and marine environment; the identification and protection of ecological corridors for the enhancement of habitat connectivity between Natura 2000 sites including valley system; protection of endemic species, amongst others. **The environmental benefits of these important environmental measures are expected to be covered in the SEA.**
- 3.6 With respect to the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility, **it is important for the SEA to consider the most appropriate locations and scenarios where such facilities and infrastructure should be provided in order to avoid major environmental impacts.** Such infrastructure includes pedestrian bridges, facilities for cycling and walking, etc. In order to avoid adverse environmental impacts, such as further take-up of rural or coastal land, it is important that such infrastructure is provided within existing developed areas and similarly committed land as much as possible.

Priority Area 3: Enhancing transport connectivity

- 3.7 The proposed interventions under this Priority Area will continue to build upon previous actions relating to TEN-T infrastructure with the aim of increasing sustainability and climate-resilience through reduced traffic bottlenecks and CO₂ emissions, whilst also enhancing intermodal TEN-T infrastructure. It is also aimed at improving the operational capacity of the TEN-T seaports to address sustainable development needs.

- 3.8 It is recommended that the SEA study takes stock of the road upgrading works that have been carried out under the previous programme and, in particular, the main environmental impacts highlighted by ERA in its review of the respective proposals for such projects. The SEA could include a possible forecast relating to future works with clear recommendations for minimising environmental impacts, such as take-up of undeveloped land and impact on the landscape, as much as possible.
- 3.9 The SEA also needs to consider, strategically, the potential environmental impacts associated with proposals for: (i) the upgrading and enhancing of the ports (e.g. capacity, infrastructure, etc.); and (ii) infrastructure for alternative mass transport systems; taking into account the relevant contexts, strategic alternatives and environmental objectives.

Priority Area 4: A more social and inclusive society

- 3.10 Most of the initiatives under Priority Area 4 may result in specific development projects or upgrading of infrastructure/facilities, relating to education and health (see earlier comment). **It is recommended that such developments should be located within the existing urban areas and already committed sites, preferably closer to their respective hub areas, so as to avoid adverse environmental consequences.** Details of such proposals would require further screening at project stage.
- 3.11 With regard to tourism, the Programme focuses on the protection and restoration of the historic urban fabric and cultural heritage, to enhance and valorise Malta's touristic product. This includes renovation of cultural assets and upgrading of historic buildings (amongst others), which apart from creating a niche market will also contribute towards the amelioration of the social environment. The proper restoration and reuse of historic buildings and spaces will help achieve multiple objectives, including environmental ones. Moreover, from an environmental point of view, the historic areas of certain towns and villages, which are either located in a predominantly rural context or have maintained a rural function (e.g. Bahrija, Mgarr, various settlements in Gozo) are the preferred locations for rural-themed tourism accommodation, and should be promoted as a more sustainable alternative to continued pressures for development of additional accommodation units in ODZ areas which often result in multiple environmental impacts. **Therefore, it is recommended that the environmental benefits of the Programme's proposed initiative, as opposed to current pressures for permitting tourism accommodation ODZ, is thoroughly explored further through the SEA study.**

Priority Area 5: Fostering sustainable urban development in Gozo

- 3.12 The above comments also apply to the Priority Area 5 in respect of development projects and infrastructural works carried out in Gozo. **A more cautious approach is required in respect of Gozo in view of its higher proportion of important rural areas, natural landscapes and cultural heritage, and its generally more constrained topography.** In fact, the Programme's proposals to enhance the potential of sustainable tourism in Gozo, develop sustainable and innovative environmental measures, preserve and promote Gozo's cultural and natural heritage, provide natural and green open public spaces, upgrade and restore physical buildings, improve dilapidated areas, and improve accessibility in urban areas, are welcomed. It is noted that the detailed measures for Gozo will be developed further through Gozo's Development Strategy. ERA will continue engaging in the preparation of the Gozo's Development Strategy and related strategic assessment processes, as relevant.

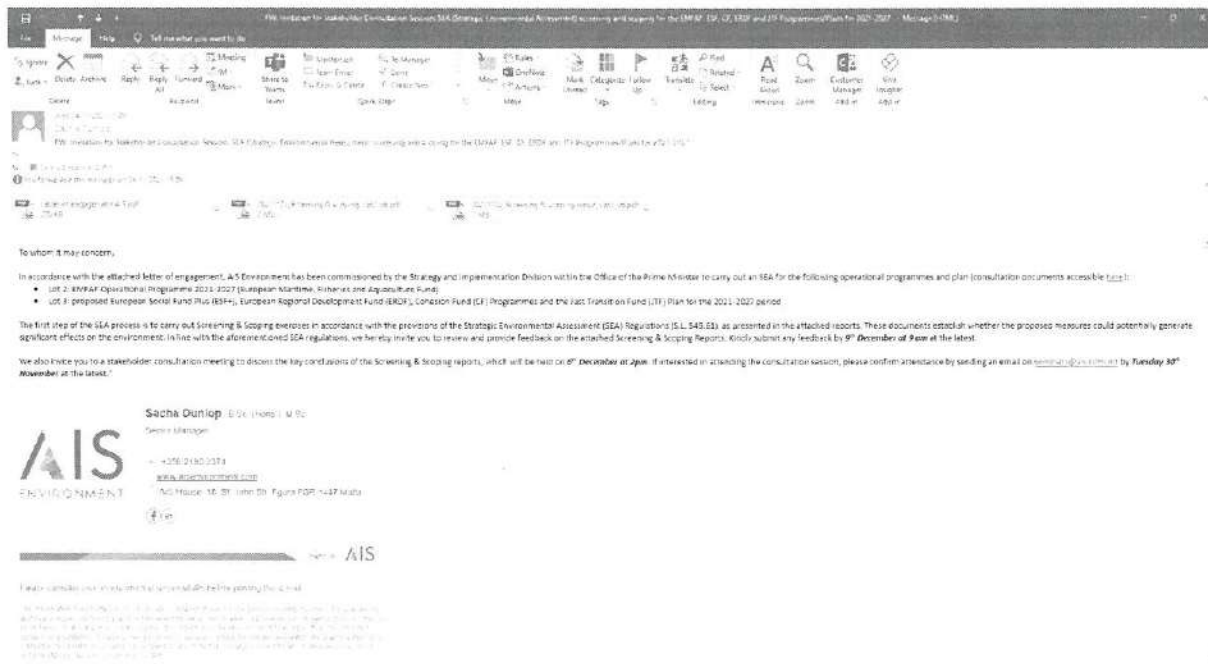
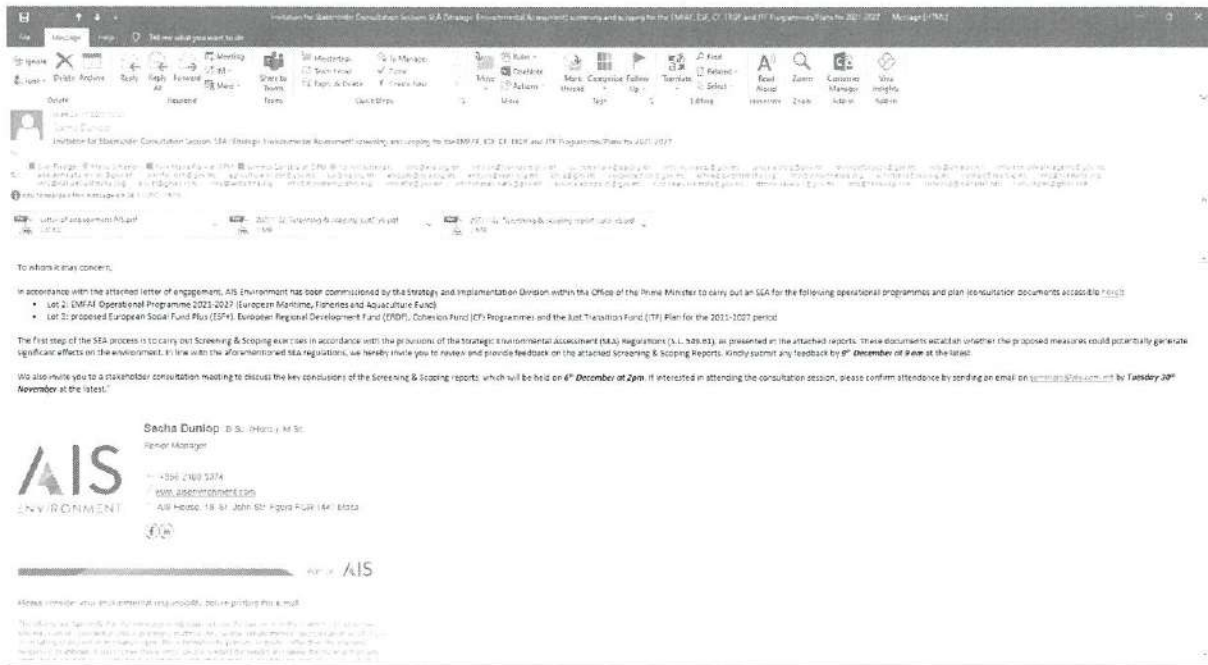
Priority Area 6: Facilitating a just transition

- 3.13 This priority focuses on fostering a just transition under the programme, which will be targeting GHG emissions in Malta's two main ports and alternative fuel infrastructure for land transport. The main proposals are to support (i) the installation of onshore power supplies at the main Ports, so as to connect vessels whilst berthing [their auxiliary engines could be switched off] therefore reducing GHG emissions; and (ii) a more extensive network of charging points for EVs and related infrastructure across the Islands.
- 3.14 The proposals under this priority area are welcomed, as these are considered beneficial for the environment. It is important that the proposed environmental improvement in terms of reducing GHG emissions, do not result in other consequential adverse impacts on the environment, such as, for example, take-up of rural land or intrusions into the natural landscape as a result of additional development intended to increase EV charging points across the Malta and Gozo. **These considerations should be duly taken into account in the emerging SEA study, so that ultimately it provides clear and concrete recommendations for an environmentally conscious implementation of the Programme.** In this case, EV charging points should clearly be supported if proposed within already developed and committed sites which have a suitable physical capacity to accommodate the intended number of vehicles.
- 3.15 The same principle applies vis-à-vis the provision on onshore power supplies for vessels within the main port areas, in view of any possible required interventions on the seabed or coastal areas. **The SEA should take these possibilities into account and make relevant recommendations accordingly.**

Additional comments

- 3.16 It is acknowledged that the increase in energy efficiency and the transition towards renewable energy will improve Malta's air quality through the reduction in various pollutants such as GHGs. However certain measures (such as the use of alternative fuels or increasing bioenergy use in devices without adequate emission abatement technologies) might lead to a reduction in GHGs but increase in air pollutants. It is therefore important to ascertain that the criteria and indicators outlined in Table 3 also include the assessment of potential trade-offs between the transition to a decarbonised energy system and the reduction in air pollution. The aim is not only to ascertain compliance with limit values, but to avoid any increase in air pollution due to the implementation of measures.
- 3.17 In view that the ERDF, CF and JTF Programme has qualified for an SEA (according to the consultants' recommendation), it is recommended that if there are additional or upcoming themes which shall eventually feature in the ERDF programme/plan for 2021-2027 these should also be studied and assessed as part of the environmental report.

Invites (Screenshots)



Notification for Stakeholder Consultation on SEA Strategic Environmental Assessment screening and scoping for the EMAR, FSR, CF, ERDF and JTF Programmes for the 2021-2027

To whom it may concern,

In accordance with the attached letter of engagement, AIS Environment has been commissioned by the Strategy and Implementation Division within the Office of the Prime Minister to carry out an SEA for the following operational programmes and plan (consultation documents accessible [here](#)):

- Lot 2 EMAR Operational Programme 2021-2027 (European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund)
- Lot 3 proposed European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund (CF) Programmes and the Just Transition Fund (JTF) Plan for the 2021-2027 period

The first step of the SEA process is to carry out Screening & Scoping exercises in accordance with the provisions of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations (S.I. 549/2017), as presented in the attached reports. These documents establish whether the proposed measures could potentially generate significant effects on the environment. In line with the aforementioned SEA regulations, we hereby invite you to review and provide feedback on the attached screening & Scoping reports. Kindly submit any feedback by **9th December at 9 am** at the latest.

We also invite you to a stakeholder consultation meeting to discuss the key conclusions of the screening & Scoping reports, which will be held on **9th December at 2pm**. If interested in attending the consultation session, please confirm attendance by sending an email on consult@aisenv.com by **Tuesday 30th November at the latest**.

Sacha Dunlop B.Sc. (Hons.) M.Sc.
Senior Manager

AIS ENVIRONMENT

+353 2180 2374
www.aisenvironment.com
40, Housie, 16 St. John St. P.O. Box 1447, Malton

Notification for Stakeholder Consultation on SEA Strategic Environmental Assessment screening and scoping for the EMAR, FSR, CF, ERDF and JTF Programmes for the 2021-2027

To whom it may concern,

In accordance with the attached letter of engagement, AIS Environment has been commissioned by the Strategy and Implementation Division within the Office of the Prime Minister to carry out an SEA for the following operational programmes and plan (consultation documents accessible [here](#)):

- Lot 2 EMAR Operational Programme 2021-2027 (European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund)
- Lot 3 proposed European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund (CF) Programmes and the Just Transition Fund (JTF) Plan for the 2021-2027 period

The first step of the SEA process is to carry out Screening & Scoping exercises in accordance with the provisions of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations (S.I. 549/2017), as presented in the attached reports. These documents establish whether the proposed measures could potentially generate significant effects on the environment. In line with the aforementioned SEA regulations, we hereby invite you to review and provide feedback on the attached screening & Scoping Reports. Kindly submit any feedback by **9th December at 9 am** at the latest.

We also invite you to a stakeholder consultation meeting to discuss the key conclusions of the screening & Scoping reports, which will be held on **9th December at 2pm**. If interested in attending the consultation session, please confirm attendance by sending an email on consult@aisenv.com by **Tuesday 30th November at the latest**.

Sacha Dunlop B.Sc. (Hons.) M.Sc.
Senior Manager

AIS ENVIRONMENT

+353 2180 2374
www.aisenvironment.com
40, Housie, 16 St. John St. P.O. Box 1447, Malton

Replies from interested stakeholders

Reply Reply All Forward JM



Thu 25/11/2021 09:24

George Cassar <george.cassar@mra.org.mt>

RE: Invitation for Stakeholder Consultation Session: SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) screening and **scoping** for the EMFAF, ESF, CF, ERDF and JTF Programmes/Plans for 2021-2027

To: Sacha Dunlop

Cc: CEO; Marija Pie Gatt

CRM to input

Dear Ms Dunlop,

We have no comments to make on the exercise or the documents in so far as the scope and responsibilities of the MRA (as defined by Article 43 of Act XXV of 2015) are concerned.

Regards

George Cassar

MRA

Malta Resources Authority

Millennia Buildings, Aldo Moro Road, Marsa MRS 9065, Malta

Tel: +356 23350605

www.mra.org.mt

The screenshot shows an email client window with the following content:

Dear Ms Dunlop,
Good morning.
DFA have reviewed the attached and no comments are deemed necessary from their end.
Regarding the stakeholder consultation meeting to discuss the key conclusions of the Screening & Scoping reports, DFA is nominating Mr Dwayne Camilleri to attend the meeting regarding Lot 2 EMFAF Operational Programme 2021-2027 (hereunder, please find his details), endorsed by Dennis Caruana (Aquaculture Director).

Mr Dwayne Camilleri
Assistant Manager
Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture
Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Animal Rights
Tel: +356 22526833
Email: dwayne.camilleri@agriculture.mt

Thank you and regards,
Marija Pie Gatt
CEO
Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Animal Rights
Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture

Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Animal Rights
Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture
Aldo Moro Road, Marsa MRS 9065, Malta
Tel: +356 23350605
Email: info@agriculture.mt

From: Sacha Dunlop <sacha.dunlop@agriculture.mt>
Sent: Wednesday, 24 November 2021 18:03
Subject: Invitation for Stakeholder Consultation Session: SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) screening and scoping for the EMFAF, ESF, CF, ERDF and JTF Programmes/Plans for 2021-2027

Reply Reply All Forward Print

Thu 25/11/2021 15:44



Ambjent Malta at MECP <ambjentmalta.mecp@gov.mt>

FW: Invitation for Stakeholder Consultation Session: SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) screening and **scoping** for the EMFAF, ESF, CF, ERDF and JTF Programmes/Plans for 2021-2027

To: Sacha Dunlop

Cc: Borg Clifford at MECP

Good Afternoon Ms Dunlop

Kindly note that the Ambjent Malta Representative for this session will be Mr Clifford Borg, in copy.
Regards

Therese Zammit
Assistant Director
Office of the DG (Ambjent Malta)
Ambjent Malta

t +356 23316402 e therese.t.zammit@gov.mt
www.environment.gov.mt | www.publicservice.gov.mt | fb.com/servizzpubbliki

King: g03266144; Environment: ambjentmalta; before printing: 2021/11/25



MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
CLIMATE CHANGE AND PLANNING
OFFICES: TEN GREEN BOTTLES, MDINA ROAD,
ZEBBUG, MALTA

From: Sacha Dunlop <Sacha.Dunlop@eis.com.mt>

Reply Reply All Forward Print



Mon 29/11/2021 11:27

Sammut Peter Paul at MECP-OPS <peter-paul.sammut@gov.mt>

invitation for Stakeholder Consultation Session: SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) screening and **scoping** for the EMFAF, ESF, CF, ERDF and JTF Programmes/Plans for 2021-2027

To: Sacha Dunlop

Cc: Galea Maria Victoria 1 at MECP-OPS, Lacibignola Luca at MECP-OPS

Good morning Mr. Dunlop,

Referring to your e-mail sent on 24th November re the invitation on the above mention consultation session, I would like to register. Kindly send link for meeting at your convenience.

Thanks and regards
Peter Paul

Peter Paul Sammut
Senior Manager
Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate
Office of the Permanent Secretary

t +356 23316202 e peter-paul.sammut@gov.mt
www.environment.gov.mt | www.publicservice.gov.mt | fb.com/servizzpubbliki

King: g03266144; Environment: ambjentmalta; before printing: 2021/11/29



MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
CLIMATE CHANGE AND PLANNING
6' OORM ROAD, SANTA VENERA, MALTA

Reply Reply All Forward IM

Thu 16/12/2021 09:20



Mana Victoria Galea | MECP-CPS | mana.victoria.galea1@gov.mt

Stakeholder Consultation Session SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) screening and scoping for the EMFAT, ESE, CF, BRDF and JTF Programmes/Plans for 2021-2027

To: Mr. Dublop; Ms. Schembra

From: Ms. Victoria Galea | MECP-CPS

Follow up - Start by 16 December 2021 - Due by 16 December 2021

Dear Mr. Dublop and Ms. Schembra

Trust this email finds you well.

In view of last week's consultation session on SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) would like to ask you if it would be possible that the presentation to be forwarded to us as a reference in this regard.

Moreover, would like to ask you if the environmental impact assessment should be obligatory to discuss this with our project leaders as well in terms of biodiversity and waste as mentioned in the consultation session?

Looking forward to your reply

Kindest Regards

Mana Victoria Galea
Manager |
Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate
Office of the Permanent Secretary

T: +356 23346777 | mana.victoria.galea1@gov.mt
www.environment.gov.mt | www.psd.gov.mt | t.com/psd/psd00000



MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT,
CLIMATE CHANGE AND PLANNING

© 2021 THE GOVERNMENT OF MALTA



Thu 09/12/2021 16:21

Astrid Vella <astridvella@gmail.com>

Re: FW: Invitation for Stakeholder Consultation Session: SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) screening and scoping for the EMFAF, ESF, CF, ERDF and JTF Programmes/Plans for 2021-2027

To: Sacha Dunlop

Follow up. Start by 09 December 2021. Due by 09 December 2021.

Dear Mr Dunlop,

Thank you for your kind reminder about this SEA. FAA has no comments about the methodology of the scoping and is not involved in fishery or maritime matters, however we are extremely concerned about the misuse of TEN-T funding on the Maltese islands.

The TEN-T programme was originally set up in order to improve transport and facilitate commerce throughout the EU, however, in Malta TEN-T is being implemented in areas where there is no need for wholesale upgrading of roads, let alone scope for commerce. This is clearly the case in the proposed upgrade of the road between Victoria and Marsalforn, a holiday community that is minimally inhabited for 9 months of the year. The traffic studies confirmed that the road is rarely congested, while transport experts are of the opinion that upgrading parts of it would be a viable option. The width of the proposed road is wider than necessary, and will result in a take-up of agricultural land, destruction of water channels and reservoirs and destruction of some 164 trees that presently serve to reduce pollution in the area. Running a motorway through this idyllic valley will also destroy this iconic heritage landscape.

Thus the Maltese Government is using EU funds for a project that is not only unnecessary, but also runs diametrically contrary to the values of climate change measures, while continuing to encourage the Maltese dependence on private transport.

We would be grateful if you could put forward our strong concerns on the need for investigation into the misuse of TEN-T funding in Malta.

Kind regards,

Astrid Vella
Coordinator
Fimkien għal Ambjent Aħjar

Reply Reply All Forward Print



Thu 09/12/2021 12:36

Sacha Dunlop <sdunlop@era.gov.mt>

RE: Invitation for Stakeholder Consultation Session: SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) screening and scoping for the EMFAF, ESF, CF, ERDF and JTF Programmes/Plans for 2021-2027.

To: Astrid Vella

From: Sacha Dunlop <sdunlop@era.gov.mt>

Follow up. Mark by 10 December 2021. Due by 10 December 2021.
This message was sent from a mobile device.
This message was sent from a mobile device.

Dear Sacha,

I refer to this morning's telecon.

I have been informed that the correct email address of ERA's customer service is info@era.gov.mt. I have confirmed with my colleagues at customer service that no emails regarding the subject in caption were received by ERA on 24th November 2021.

Noting the above, the environmental relevance of these programmes and the volume of material that needs to be reviewed, ERA is requesting an extension of the deadline till **Thursday 23rd December 2021**.

Moreover, it would be appreciated if you could provide some clarifications regarding the **CAP Strategy Plan** which is also published for public consultation together with the other programmes, but no SEA screening or scoping reports have been provided for consultation as yet.

Your early reply would be appreciated.

Kind regards,

Sacha Dunlop

sdunlop@era.gov.mt | +356 2122 1000 | www.era.gov.mt



Environment & Resources Authority
Ministerio tal-Ambjent u Risorsi
+356 2122 1000 | www.era.gov.mt

SAVE PAPER - Please print only when necessary

Home > My inbox > 20211122_Screening Scoping Lot3 v6.pdf



Andrew Cambion <andrew.cambion@hse.ie>

FW: Invitation for Stakeholder Consultation Session: MA (Strategy: Environmental Assessment) screening and scoping for the EMFAs, ESE-CE, ERDF and JTF Programmes/Pans for 2021-2027

To: Mike Dunlop

CC: Tanya O'Connell (Health Regulation)

Follow up: Start by 10 December 2021 - Due by 10 December 2021

20211122_Screening Scoping Lot3 v6.pdf - 5 MB
20211122_Screening Scoping Lot3 v6.pdf - 5 MB

Mr Dunlop,

The EHD would like to comment on the following:

- Any physical infrastructure intervention must not pose a risk to human health. The necessary studies and mitigation measures are to be adopted even on long term exposure any sort of pollution which might have a negative effect on human health. (pls refer to the highlighted section in 20211122_Screening Scoping_Lot3_v.6.pdf)
- Any upgrading programmes which affect quays or slipways etc situated near official bathing sites or in the very close proximity should not take place during the bathing season as they will affect the bathing water quality. Kindly note that this comment refers to the highlighted part in the 20211122_Screening Scoping_Lot2_v.6.pdf

Regards,

Andrew

Andrew Cambion
Senior Environmental Health Officer
Environmental Health Division
Department for Health Regulation

Tel: 01-7774629 | Email: andrew.cambion@hse.ie | www.hse.ie



HEALTH PROTECTION
SAFETY AND WELL-BEING



Thu 08 Dec 2021 14:15

To: [Manuel Sapiano](mailto:Manuel.Sapiano@EWA.nl) <Manuel.Sapiano@EWA.nl>
Cc: Invitation for Stakeholder Consultation Session: SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) screening and scoping for the EMFAF, ESF, CF, ERDF and JTF Programmes/Plans for 2021-2027

To: Manuel Sapiano

Subject: Invitation for Stakeholder Consultation Session: SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) screening and scoping for the EMFAF, ESF, CF, ERDF and JTF Programmes/Plans for 2021-2027

Follow up: Start by 09 December 2021. Due by 09 December 2021

Attention to AS:

As a general comment, the document needs to mention the designation of Ambient Air quality as not to apply for a Department within MELP.

In terms of funding, we are not benefiting from EU funds at the moment and all the projects which we carry out are locally sourced and all the activities which are carried out (most specifically) in Natura 2000 sites are carried out in line with Management Plans through Natura Permit. In this regard, we cannot continue further on the plans and (so) not funded by EU funds.

In terms of local legislation strategies, in reference to air quality pollution and the Policy on Air quality, Species should be included in the document as follows:

Guidelines, reports and Action Plan Addressing Environmental Confinement of AS at www.Cooperation.com

In terms of Policy strategies which are being discussed or EU level and are related to the environment (climate change, the following should be included in the ongoing exercise: a) Effort (2) EU Biodiversity Strategy, (b) Green Deal (1) Farm to Fork Strategy, (3) the EU Forest Strategy, (4) Circular Economy and (5) EU Adaptation Strategy. The reason being is that future plans and policies may include EU funded projects which aim to reach the objectives of these EU Strategies.

Kind Regards,

Clifford Group
Environmental Services Office
Sustainable Events Director
London, UK

+44 (0)20 4141 6100 - clifford@clifford.com

www.clifford.com | www.clifford.com

www.clifford.com | www.clifford.com



MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT,
LAND AND PLANNING
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NETHERLANDS



Fri 08 Dec 2021 15:20

Sapiano Manuel at EWA <manuel.sapiano@igov.mta>

FW: Invitation for Stakeholder Consultation Session: SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) screening and scoping for the EMFAF, ESF, CF, ERDF and JTF Programmes/Plans for 2021-2027

To: Sacha Duintjers

Follow up: Start by 09 December 2021. Due by 09 December 2021

Dear Ms Dunlop

Comments from EWA as follows:

- a. How is the consultant proposing to measure the "security of supply" indicator?
- b. EWA does not hold data on any of the indicators listed on the Transportation and Infrastructure Theme.
- c. The energy consumption indicator should be either per capita or split by per capita (residential) and per GVA (non-residential) as otherwise this would not capture changes in population or economic activity.
- d. Is the indicator Energy consumption levels by type to be utilised for the SEA Objective Reduce water consumption levels and improve water quality? If that's the case the proposed indicator is not the most applicable.

Rgds

Manuel Sapiano
CEO

1/1

1/1

