

Tourism Challenges & Opportunities Attaining a Green and Circular Economy

Ms Moira Pisani

Director, Policy Development and Programme Implementation

Ministry for Tourism

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Background

Tourism is an economic stronghold:

- 5% of international GDP
- 30% of the world's exports of commercial services
- 6% - 7% of total exports

EU Level

- Around 1.8 million EU enterprises
- Employing around 5.2% of the labour force
- more than 5% of EU GDP (direct level impact)
- EU GDP contribution is greater than 10% (inc. induced impacts)
- accounts to about 12% of the labour force

(Source: United Nations World Tourism Organisation, UNWTO)

Background

Challenges for island states:

- Stronger dependence on the tourism sector
- Creating an optimal balance between tourism growth & sustainable tourism development

Malta's tourism sector:

- Inbound tourists reached nearly 2 million in 2016 (↑ of 10.2% over 2015)
- Expenditure estimated at €1.71 billion (↑ of 4.3% over 2015)
- Accounts to around 29% of the local GDP
- Full employment impact of tourist expenditure accounts to 29% (circa 40,000 jobs)

(Source: National Tourism Policy 2015 - 2020, NSO)

A transition towards a green and circular economy

‘Small Islands provide a natural laboratory for the circular economy.’

Greening the Islands -3rd edition

Challenges:

- Management of Cultural Attractions
- Sustainable Entrepreneurial investment
- Coastal and Maritime Tourism
- Climate Change adaptation & mitigation
- Green Growth

Management of Cultural Attractions

- Implementing strategies which safeguard destination competitiveness
EU 2020 Strategy:
 - Smart innovation,
 - Eco-innovation,
 - Green jobs,
 - Green procurement,
 - Renewable energy sources
- Effective planning of resources (cultural, natural, maritime, coastal etc)
- Strengthening the knowledge sharing process
- Recognition of best practices (Water Conservation & Awareness Centre)
- Joint action programmes & use of funding instruments

Management of Cultural Attractions

- Examples of capital investment in cultural and environmental assets:
 - ECOC (cultural programme of events for 2018)
 - Development of the Grand Harbour fortifications (Fort St. Elmo & Fort St. Angelo)
 - Restorations of part of the Fortifications of Malta and Gozo
 - Development of City Gate entrance
 - New Parliament building
 - Restoration and re-use of the Old Opera House Valletta

Management of Cultural Attractions

- Examples of capital investment in cultural and environmental assets:
 - Museums in Valletta (MUZA) and Victoria Gozo Museum
 - Heritage trails and rural trails in Malta and Gozo
 - Heritage conservation projects (eg: Hypogeum, Hagar Qim, Mnajdra & Ggantija, Castille square, Grand Master's Palace)
 - Development of small scale accommodation in heritage properties
 - Regeneration of Marsamxett area in Valletta
 - Malta will be setting up a new entity to manage, protect, preserve & educate about the country's rich underwater cultural heritage

Sustainable Entrepreneurial investment

- Fostering a good investment climate
- Greener investment in key areas:
 - energy & water efficiency
 - emission mitigation
 - solid waste management
 - reengineering of existing operational processes
- Foster inter-linkages with other economic sectors (agriculture, fisheries, creative and artistic industries, culture etc.)
- Key initiatives:
 - Eco-certification (MTA)
 - Eco-labelling (EU CION)
 - Green Mobility Hotel Award (pilot project -MOT)

Coastal and Maritime Tourism

- Better use and interpretation of our marine environment
- Synergistic networks at country, European and international level
- Key initiatives:
 - awarding of blue flagged beaches
 - maintenance of coastal tourism zones
 - maintenance of the bathing water quality
 - management plans for SPAs, SACs and Natura 2000 sites
- Malta will be setting up a new agency aimed at researching, protecting, preserving and managing the maritime cultural heritage.

Climate Change adaptation and mitigation

- Climate Change is a resource determining the attractiveness of tourism destinations.
- Tourism related emissions stem from:
 - Leisure to business travel
 - International, domestic to long-haul travel
 - Overnight to same-day travel trips
 - Activities covered (conferences, festivals, shopping etc.)
- Achieve emission reductions in line with global climate policy through:
 - a reduction in overall energy use
 - a shift towards renewable energy sources
 - innovative research
 - major investments technology
 - public education & enhanced consumer awareness
 - direct efforts towards responsible travel & reduction of avg travel distances

Climate Change adaptation and mitigation

- Key local initiatives:
 - Implementation of the:
 - National Action Plan for Green Public Procurement
 - 2nd Water Catchment Plan
 - National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan
 - Afforestation and planting of trees
 - Use of funding instruments directed towards a lower carbon economy
- Expected positive outputs:
 - Water management
 - Biodiversity management
 - Improved landscape aesthetic
 - Sustainable agricultural production (with positive impacts on niches such as wine & food tourism)
 - Reduce the risks of natural hazards & coastal erosion
 - Management of flooding & other natural hazards

Green Growth

- A green economy opens new venues of growth in terms of:
 - foreign direct investment
 - research and innovation
 - technological developments
 - renewable energy sources
- Green jobs are an obtainable milestone
 - architects, designers
 - engineers
 - educators
 - biologists
 - employees in the hospitality and eco/agro tourism niches
 - Installers of renewable energy equipment
 - Jobs related to waste management and energy fueling.

Way forward

- Safeguarding the assets and resources that contribute towards the sustainable growth of tourism;
- Optimising the best relationship between volume growth and value growth;
 - visitor management
- Consolidating collaboration towards the implementation of a vision of excellence for the sector;
- A circular and green economy offers:
 - room for new tourism niches
 - Enables better performance
 - Contributes towards higher-value added
 - Improved networking on brand modelling
 - Creates a competing edge and long-term benefits for all

Thank you

Contact details:

email address:

moira.pisani@gov.mt

Contact number:

00356 2291 5035

Website:

<http://tourism.gov.mt>