

Developing sustainable tourism on the Mediterranean island of Malta

Elisa Pekkala



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Author Elisa Pekkala	
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<p>This Bachelor's thesis examined sustainable tourism development in the Mediterranean island state of Malta. The purpose of the study was to investigate how sustainable tourism could be applied in Malta. In practice, the following questions were studied: impacts generated by tourism, actions that have been already taken to minimize negative impacts of tourism, as well as ideas for improving sustainable tourism in Malta.</p> <p>The study included a theory section and an empirical section. The theoretical framework introduced first Malta as a tourist destination. Additionally, the history of tourism development and assumed tourism impacts in Malta were examined. Moreover, sustainable tourism, carrying capacity, and island tourism were illuminated from theory to practice by an initial examination of the conceptual framework followed by a discussion of sustainable tourism strategies applied in Malta.</p> <p>The methodological approach of the study was qualitative research and data were mainly collected by means of structured interviews. Each representative was interviewed individually via e-mail or Facebook as information channel. The interviews were conducted between November and December 2014 and each respondent had three weeks' to share their insights and experiences. The number of the received interviews was 14.</p> <p>The research problem of the study was to explore tourism-related problems in Malta and to discover solutions to solve these. Both, the theory and the interviews indicated that Malta has several concerns to consider when discussing the country's tourism development. Key findings of the study and the interviews revealed that Malta has for too long focused on tourism numbers to the detriment of the socio-cultural and environmental well-being. Instead of creating tourism products satisfying solely tourists and businesses, Malta should put the emphasis on benefitting locals and the environment. The author together with the interviewees determined that keys to successful sustainable tourism in Malta could be actualized by practices related to visitor management, marketing, land use, transport, education, and community participation.</p>	
Keywords sustainable tourism, Malta, tourism impacts, island tourism, carrying capacity	

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1 Introduction

Mediterranean islands have for decades attracted travellers from all over the world. At the same time these islands have faced the consequences that tourism has generated. Some of the impacts have been beneficial, however, unfortunately tourism has brought along also some devastating changes. Pursuing economic prosperity has traditionally overrun the environmental and socio-cultural well-being in the tourism industry. This has led particularly small island destinations to exceed their carrying capacity. Sustainable tourism is commonly facing the challenge of how to apply its principles from theory to practice. Therefore, the objective of this study was to explore tourism-related impacts and potential sustainable tourism strategies in the Mediterranean island state of Malta. The research problem was to explore how Malta could improve its sustainable tourism development in the future. Even though this thesis deals with Malta's tourism, in the end it can be used as a guideline for other Mediterranean islands struggling with similar kinds of problems caused by mass tourism.

The commissioner of this thesis is the Institute for Tourism, Travel and Culture, teaching tourism studies at tertiary level at the University of Malta. Since 1995, when the Institute was established, it has mainly been responsible for training tourism students. However, over the years the members of the Institute for Tourism, Travel and Culture have been active in research and have assisted the Ministry of Tourism and Ministry for Culture in developing sustainable tourism product in Malta. (University of Malta 2014a.) That is why the author thought this commissioning agreement would be beneficial for both parties, for the commissioner and the author. Due to the commissioner and the thesis subject placed outside of Finland, it was natural to choose English as the language of the thesis. Otherwise this thesis and especially its research would lose its significance and would not be able to benefit the destination it is aimed for. English is also a necessary language in terms of possible further studies.

The author of this thesis has herself lived five months in Malta while completing her exchange studies from February to June 2014 at the University of Malta. According to her observations, Malta is still in the beginning of moving towards sustainability. To improve, there is a need for acknowledging the opinions of local people living and sharing their life with travellers. On the other hand, exploring sustainable strategies used in other countries, such as Nordic Countries, could provide ideas for Malta's further tourism development. This thesis topic aroused during the class of Sustainable Tourism at the University of Malta while listening to the concerns the teachers and local pupils expressed for Malta's tourism. The idea for topic grew during the author's stay while observing sustainable development and the tourism industry in Malta and comparing it to her own home coun-

try of Finland. As an experienced traveller, the author has perceived concerns of carrying capacity already before travelling in Malta for example on the island destinations of Santorini in Greece, Bali in Indonesia, and Suomenlinna in Finland. This is why island tourism generally felt familiar topic for the author.

The purpose of the study was to focus on tourism-related problems in Malta and find solutions to solve these. The study was conducted between November and December 2014 by means of qualitative research method that is commonly employed to understand and interpret phenomena and human activity. The most essential methods for data collection included the structured research interviews meaning that the interview questions were carefully planned in advance. Additionally, the own observations of the author were used for data collection and for composing future suggestions. The focus group consisting of locals, temporary residents, and travellers, was carefully chosen to give results from three different angles. Furthermore, all of the respondents indicated somehow exceptional interest for sustainable lifestyle why it was possible to receive motivated answers for the interview questions. The number of the received interviews was 14.

The concepts of sustainable tourism and carrying capacity are often appearing in this thesis. To make the reading experience more comfortable and fluent for the reader, it is necessary to explain the essential terms briefly already here. Sustainable tourism is a form of tourism that wants tourists, the tourism industry, and host communities to benefit economically, environmentally, and socio-culturally from tourism as much as possible but without compromising the future generation's quality of life. Thus, sustainable tourism strives to minimize the negative impacts of tourism and maximize the positive ones. In turn, carrying capacity expresses the limits of how many tourists a certain area can accommodate before the negative impacts of tourism start to occur. Islands often have their own isolated boundaries that set tighter limits for their carrying capacity compared to the mainland destinations.

This thesis starts by an introduction of Malta as a tourist destination. Afterwards it examines the economic, environmental, socio-cultural, and political impacts of tourism generally and when taking place in Malta. The following chapter focuses on the characteristics of sustainable tourism, carrying capacity, and island tourism. Finally, sustainable tourism strategies potential or implemented in Malta are considered. The empirical part includes the qualitative study that provides the meaning for this thesis by aiming to find solutions for Malta and other Mediterranean island destinations to cherish their countries as lively habitats as well as appealing attractions.

2 Tourist destination Malta

The Maltese archipelago comprises mainly of three inhabited islands: Malta, Gozo and Comino occupying together an area of 316 square kilometres and having population of 421,364 (2012). The group of islands lie in the centre of the Mediterranean between Europe and Africa, 93km south of Sicily and 290km east of Tunisia. The Maltese archipelago can be observed more closely in Figure 1. (Garwood & al. 2011, 605; MTA 2014, 4.)

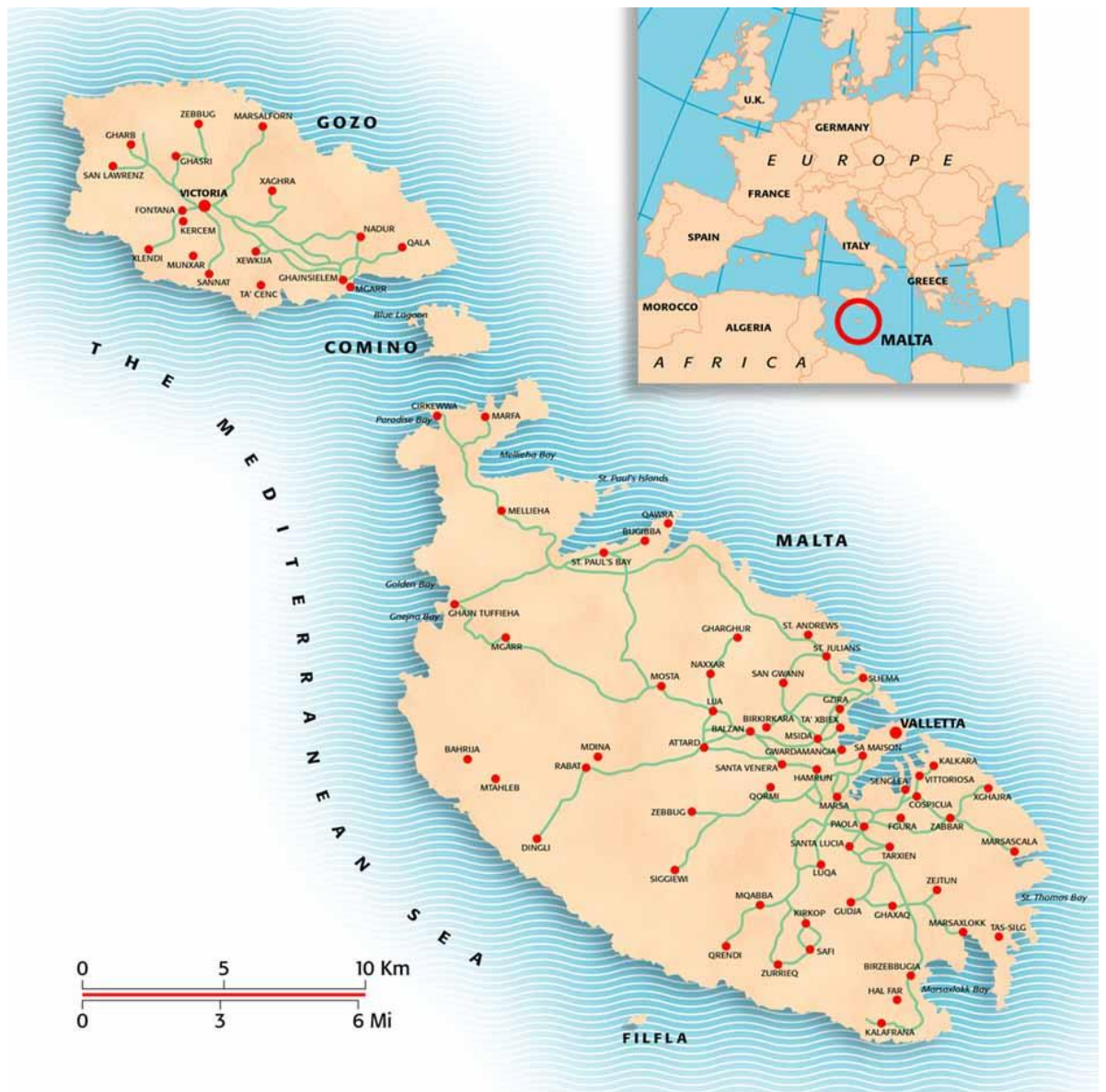


Figure 1. The Maltese archipelago (Mappery 2014)

Malta is a historically rich and geographically unique travel destination providing sun, sea, and an interesting mixture of culture heritage for travellers (Blasi 2013, 2-3). The islands are formed by soft, golden limestone that is also largely used as a building material giving the islands their own dominant shade of honey-colour (Figure 2). Due to the rugged scenery with sparse vegetation, landscape can be described as sun-bleached since there are only few trees and barely any surface water or rivers in Malta. (Garwood & al. 2011, 605.) Even Malta's coastline tends to be rocky and the few sandy beaches of the islands are generally small and crowded, yet picturesque (Blasi 2013, 27). Nevertheless, blue Mediterranean is sparkling all around the islands, and during the early spring Malta is blooming due to green vegetation and colourful flowers (Figure 2). However, blazing sun makes flora to change its colour to sun-dried yellow already in June. (Blasi 2013, 16.)



Figure 2. Left up **Ancient capital of Valletta**, Right up **Modern district of St Julians**, Left down **Springlike view in Malta**, Right down **Blue Lagoon in Comino** (Pekkala 1.4.2014)

Malta is the largest and the most densely populated of the three islands, representing at the same time the cultural, administrative, and commercial centre of the country (Visit Malta 2014a). The island of Malta is a versatile, even contradictory blend of history and present, cities and countryside, beaches and cliffs, and temples and casinos (Blasi 2013, 4-5). In Malta, travellers can explore the impressive fortified capital city of Valletta (Figure 2) built by the Knights of St John (Garwood & al. 2011, 592). On the other hand, the modern tourist districts of St Julians and Sliema (Figure 2) are also located in Malta providing a large selection of restaurants, hotels, shopping facilities, and nightlife for travellers (Blasi 2013, 59).

Malta's little-sister Gozo offers more peaceful and rural environment compared to the bustle of the urbanized main island. In Gozo, there is living less than one-tenth of the country's over 400 000 inhabitants, thus about 30 000 Gozitans. That consequently means, there is much more greenery and space in Gozo. (Blasi 2013, 107; MTA 2014, 4.) Comino, as an almost empty island, having a permanent population of four, one hotel, and very few other buildings, might think to be an abandoned chunk of limestone in the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, due to the Blue Lagoon (Figure 2) this stony formation of caves and cliffs is Malta's most visited natural attractions mobbed with tourists and locals day-tripping there during the hot summer months. (Blasi 2013, 126; Garwood & al. 2011, 602.) Despite Malta's small size, as a melting pot of the European and Arabic cultures, this destination craves for far deeper exploration than it often receives from the package crowds seeking for the best beaches and wildest party life of Malta (Garwood & al. 2011, 589).

Malta's history stretches as far as 5000 BC when there was the first evidence of human occupation on the islands. Nevertheless, between 3600 BC and 2500 BC was the significant period when the first megalithic temples of the islands were built, representing today the oldest surviving free-standing structures in the world, even older than the Egyptian Pyramids. (Blasi 2013, 144; Garwood & al. 2011, 603-604.) Malta's strategic location between Europe and Africa has lead the country being a desired target in its history. Thus, Malta has been conquered by the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, Byzantines, North African Arabs, Normans, Spanish, Sicilians, Knights of St John, French, and lastly by the British Rule that lasted more than 100 years before Malta gained its independence. (Blasi 2013, 159; Garwood & al. 2011, 605; Visit Malta 2014b.)

The Knights of the Order of St John, who were placed on the island in 1530, were the one who defeated the huge Ottoman attack in the Great Siege in 1565 and became therefore hailed as the saviours of all Europe (Garwood & al. 2011, 604). During the First World War Malta was mostly used as a military hospital. In contrast, the Second World War made Malta the most bombed place on the earth and country suffered from five month's day-and-night bombing in 1942. (Blasi 2013, 149; Gallagher 2011, 33; Garwood & al. 2011, 603-604.) Finally, the British Empire granted the independence for Malta in 1964 (Blasi 2013, 152). After all, the biggest influencers that can still be seen in the architecture, tasted in the cuisine, and heard in the Maltese language, have been the Arabs, Knights, Italians, and British. Inevitably, the turbulent history of Malta makes it today historically and culturally, an attractive tourist destination. (Garwood & al. 2011, 589.) Thus, nowadays Malta's population triples annually due to the travellers who arrive to the islands mostly during the peak season between June and September, as can be seen in Figure 3 (MTA 2014, 4-5).

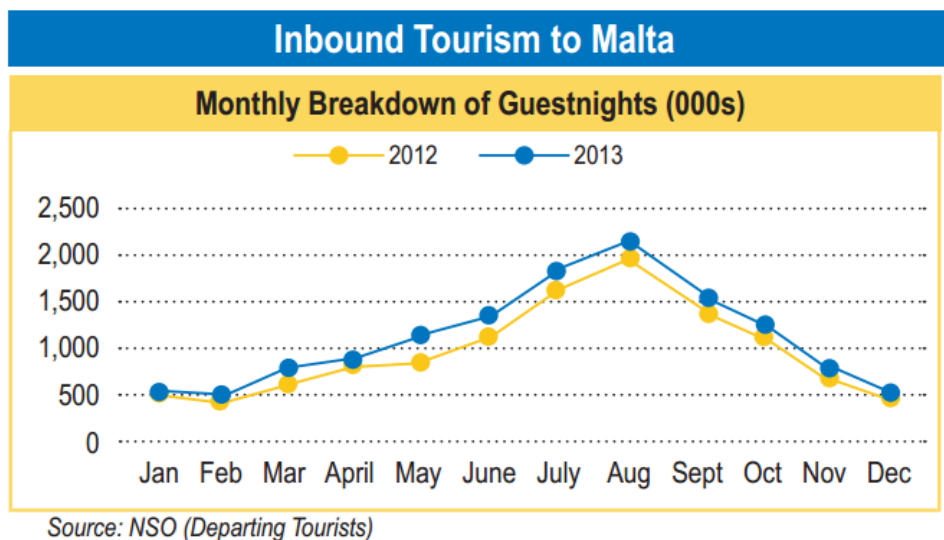


Figure 3. Monthly breakdown of guest nights in Malta (MTA 2014)

Naturally, this can only imply that the country's tourism development and land use has continued unabated and often to the detriment of the environment and culture. Due to the three tiny islands, Malta is already suffering under the pressure of its own population since even though Malta is the smallest state in the EU it is among the most densely populated countries in the world with 1323 people per square kilometre. For instance, the Netherlands, the second most populous country in the EU, has 498 people per square kilometre whereas Finland has only 18 people per square kilometre. (Blasi 2013, 142, 159; Worldbank 2014a.) Receiving over one million tourists annually on the islands has not happened without consequences. Lack of protection, increased problems with pollution, and serious shortage of the fresh water has brought the country to the turning point to start to seek solutions for developing tourism sustainable. (Garwood & al. 2011, 604-605.)

2.1 Tourism in Malta

The background of Malta's tourism extends to the time when Malta was a British colony. Consequently, the islands became a tourist destination for the British already in 1955. When Malta gained its independence from Britain in 1964, the number of tourist arrivals was 38 400. (Lockhart 1997, 146.) That feels relatively humble compared to the number of today's inbound tourists that in 2013 was 1,582,153 (MTA 2014, 5). Malta's tourism followed the typical feature on the Mediterranean of particularly rapid growth between the 1960's and the 1980's, collapse of tourist arrivals during the 1980's, and the slow recovery after the 1990's. As a result of fast tourist development, Malta, along with other similar Mediterranean destinations, faced the challenge of radical landscape change due to a sudden demand in accommodation, transportation, roads, and other facilities. Spe-

cifically, coastal areas and islands faced pressures for providing enough services and accessibility for tourists. During the boom years of the 1960's, tourism became the fastest growing industry in Malta leaving behind, for instance, manufacturing and government services. As evidence, tourist arrivals increased from 48,000 to 186,000 and number of hotels from 38 to 101 solely between 1965 and 1969. In 1980 Malta was already attracting almost 730,000 visitors and concentrated on providing low-cost holidays tailored for the mass markets. (Lockhart 1997, 145-146.)

Presumably, the growth could not continue endlessly, especially because there were some essential weaknesses evident already since the early stages of Malta's tourism development. Firstly, since almost four out of five arrivals were the British tourists, Malta became heavily dependent on British visitors. Secondly, seasonality caused pressures for the water supply and sewage disposal during the peak summer months and in turn resulted in unemployment in winters. Malta's reputation as a low-cost destination with lower-grade hotels created a poor image of Malta among other Mediterranean competitors. Even though investing in the bed capacity was well responded by building more hotels, there was missing variation in the accommodation types suitable for different kind of income groups. In addition, the hotel construction concentrated too much on the major resort districts creating impersonal unattractive enclaves instead of spreading tourism more evenly around the islands. (Lockhart 1997, 146-148.)

Consequently, the late 80's became the time of planning and setting long-term strategies for the future tourism where the diversification of the tourist markets, tourist activities, and seasonality became fundamental objectives. The aim was to spread the arrivals more equally during the year, upgrade the accommodation capacity, and re-posit Malta's tourism product to higher-quality and special-interest tourism so that it would attract also other European markets than British. In the 1990's the most remarkable feature were tourist arrivals, which passed the one million mark for the first time. (Lockhart 1997, 146-147.)

During 2000's inbound tourism to Malta has continued its slow but stable growth. Malta has created important reports concerning sustainable tourism development and strategies for planning and managing tourism. For instance Malta National Report 2002, Malta's Tourism Policy 2007-2011, Tourism Policy for the Maltese Islands 2012-2016 and A Sustainable Development Strategy for the Maltese Islands 2007-2016 prove that Malta has taken sustainable tourism management part of its tourism development plans. (Malta National Report 2012, 5; Ministry for Tourism and Culture 2006, 3; Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment 2012, 6; MTA 2014, 5; NCS 2006, 5.)

Considering today's tourism in Malta, the British still remain the main source market of travellers implying that 28.7% of the all visitors in 2013 came from United Kingdom. However, Italy, Germany, France, and Scandinavia are well following behind as can be examined in Table 4. Air traffic seems to dominate tourist arrivals since most of the visitors, more accurately 97.2%, travelled to Malta by air when only 2.8% arrived by sea in 2013. When examining the airlines, 43.7% used the national airline of Air Malta whereas the low-cost carrier Ryanair took the second place with the rate of 27.4%. Malta's total accommodation capacity in 2013 was 1971 hotels including both serviced and self-catering options. This indicates improvement in the variability of accommodation selection from 5-star hotels to farmhouses. (Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment 2012, 7; MTA 2014, 6-7, 10.)

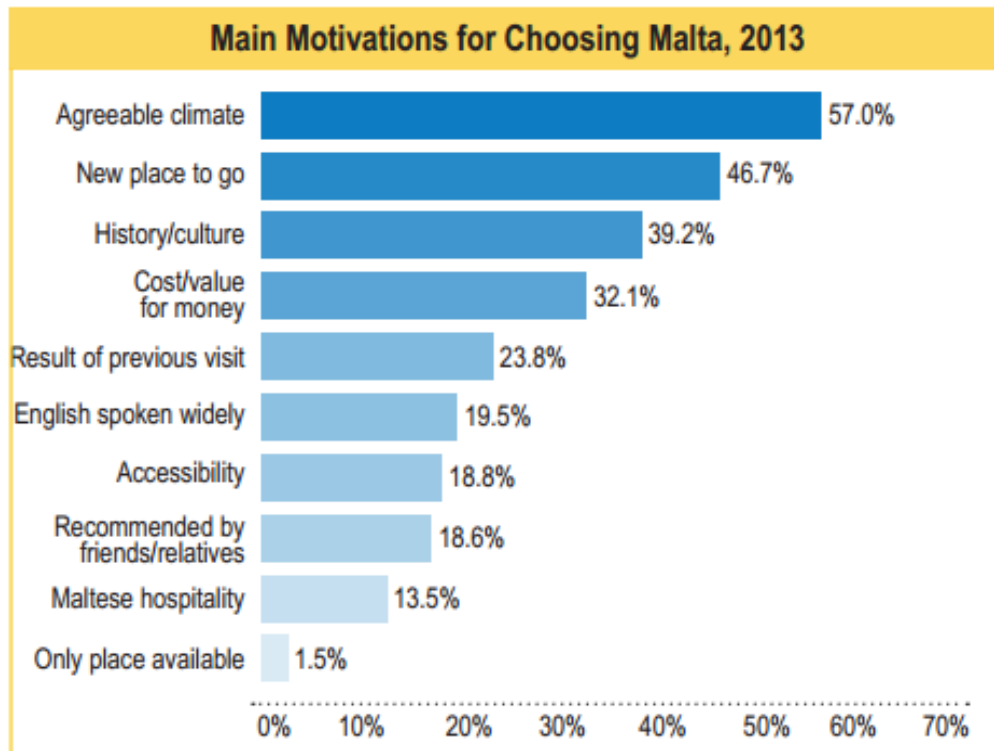
Table 4. Main source markets for inbound tourism in Malta (MTA 2014)

Tourism Indicators by Main Source Market				
	2011	2012	2013	Change 2013/12
Inbound Tourists				
Austria	19,647	19,827	25,739	29.8%
Belgium	31,742	27,279	28,948	6.1%
France	103,629	107,893	116,533	8.0%
Germany	134,306	137,500	147,110	7.0%
Ireland	26,886	27,731	30,224	9.0%
Italy	201,774	202,200	233,777	15.6%
Libya	6,273	17,217	34,621	101.1%
Netherlands	38,897	39,191	41,486	5.9%
Russia	24,191	31,563	40,048	26.9%
Scandinavia	93,783	97,363	105,068	7.9%
Spain	63,088	60,223	53,278	-11.5%
Switzerland	25,046	25,758	28,702	11.4%
United Kingdom	438,783	441,275	454,659	3.0%
USA	16,499	18,027	19,502	8.2%
Other	190,475	190,368	222,457	16.9%
Total tourists	1,415,018	1,443,414	1,582,153	9.6%

When examining today's profile of tourists, spending holiday in a Mediterranean climate with hot summers and mild winters is still distinctly the main purpose and motivation to visit Malta (Figure 5). However, cultural activities such as sightseeing and exploring cultural sites as well as sport activities including swimming, hiking, and diving are increasing their popularity and fronting the most prominent segments of tourist activities in Malta. (Blasi 2013, 12; MTA 2014, 11-12.) In addition to these, other significant tourism segments are English language learning, business travel, and cruise tourism (Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment 2012, 24-32; MTA 2014, 12-13).

Tourist Arrivals by Purpose of Visit				
	2011	2012	2013	Change 2013/12
Holiday	1,184,841	1,221,008	1,341,044	9.8%
Business and professional	117,708	115,195	118,049	2.5%
Other	112,470	107,212	123,060	14.8%
Total	1,415,018	1,443,414	1,582,153	9.6%

Source: NSO (Departing Tourists)



Source: MTA Market Profile 2013

Figure 5. The purpose and motivations to visit Malta (MTA 2014)

Although seasonality is likely to remain a major problem in Malta, seasonal spread has improved thanks to marketing niche interests, and creating visitor attractions and cultural events open year-round. Malta's tourism industry is today also less dependent on tour operator business due to popularity of independent travelling that passed the tour operator traffic since 2008. This is partly because of the low-cost carriers that have started to replace the unavoidable drop in charter traffic. However, because of the straining volume of tourists, three times bigger than Malta's own population, Malta is still exploring how to provide good quality without compromising its own carrying capacity. (Lockhart 1997, 145, 152; Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment 2012, 7, 9-10; MTA 2014, 4-5.)

2.2 The economic impacts of tourism in Malta

Tourism does not happen in a vacuum but instead it is a complex, dynamic, and open phenomenon generating impacts and being exposed to different kind of effects itself. Moreover, these influences do not solely happen inside the boundaries of the tourism system, but they extend far outside so that the external sectors and systems interact mutually with tourism. The impact of tourism is traditionally divided into the three categories: economic, environmental, and socio-cultural. In addition to these, government and political decision-making have an influence on a country's tourism development. (Weaver 2006, 5-7, 21.) Both positive and negative aspects of the impacts are considered more closely in the following chapters. To clarify the multidimensional part of the tourism impacts, the author has created summarizing tables for the economic, environmental, socio-cultural, and political dimensions affecting in Malta after every chapter of the impacts (Tables 6, 8, 9 & 10).

The economic impact is generally regarded as the most beneficial tourism effect for the host community. Tourism commonly generates employment and better job opportunities, increasing the additional personal incomes and quality of life among locals. Additionally, higher tax revenues, foreign exchange earnings, and sales growing have a positive impact on the general economic development and living standards at the destination. This in turn stimulates public spending, investment, and entrepreneurship. Opening local businesses and seeing them operate profitably, thanks to tourism, enhances work motivation and encourages ever more entrepreneurship. This decreases unemployment and the number of unskilled labour due to need of training the staff. Moreover, tourism may positively influence on the standards of infrastructure and the satisfaction of locals and tourists when roads, plumbing, and services such as retail stores, public transportation systems, and healthcare, face improvements. (Uysal, Perdue & Sirgy 2012, 2, 428, 432.) Tourism can also help regenerating urban areas, developing rural regions and diversifying the local economies so that the destination is not dependent only on few economic sectors (Swarbrooke 2002, 62).

In relation to the economic benefits, the Multiplier Effect is often mentioned. It implies that tourism does not only generate direct but also indirect revenues to the external sectors (Weaver 2006, 5). The Multiplier Effect indicates how the money spent by tourist rolls through the several layers of the local economy (Swarbrooke 2002, 60). An example of this would be when some other local business, not directly related on tourism, profits by responding to the tourist demand, for instance a farmer that starts to cultivate more products for a restaurant because of the demand created by tourism. The farmer might even need to recruit extra labour or buy more fertilizer. Thus, when the farmer us-

es money for the fertilizer and for paying the wages he benefits the fertilizer producer and the employees who further use their income to purchase other goods and services and benefit other businesses. The core is that these revenues would not exist without the demand resulting from tourism. (Weaver 2006, 21.) According to sustainable tourism, the aim is to maximize the tourist spending and minimize the leakages that often plunder tourism profits from the local economy to the external owned enterprises (Swarbrooke 2002, 60).

However, the economic impacts are not only positive. Instead, they might bring along some negative consequences, for instance increased cost of living. This makes tax base, goods, services, land, and housing unobtainable for local consumers. Likewise, changes in the wages can be either positive or negative. (Uysal & al. 2012, 2, 428, 432.) Tourism is largely denounced to be a low-wage, seasonal, and part-time field where the seasonality creates problems because of the periods of under-capacity and over-capacity instead of stable income. This has a significant effect, especially in the less-developed countries that are over-dependent on tourism revenues. (Swarbrooke 2002, 61; Weaver 2006, 7.) Sometimes tourism becomes such a powerful business that it displaces former traditional livelihoods for example agriculture, fishing, or handicrafts because of the new work prospects from the tourism service industry. This may increase leakages due to the need of importing more groceries from abroad. (Apostolopoulos & Gayle 2002, 19; Mason 2008, 58; WTO 2004, 14.)

The revenues from the tourism industry might be substantial. At the same time there is an objective for that the more competitive destinations become, the more they need to use earnings for marketing and investments to stay competitive. Alternatively, this money could have been spent in other things, such as health and education, which would benefit more people than for instance building expensive infrastructure for tourism use. (Swarbrooke 2002, 61, 64; Weaver 2006, 7.) Moreover, economic revenues do not always spread evenly between local businesses. Instead, the multinational chains or private-owned enterprises may gain the biggest profits. This easily causes leakages to the countries and enterprises that may have little commitment to the destination and who often already rule the economic market power. (Swarbrooke 2002, 65-66.)

No matter how positive and sustainable the tourism growth looks, there is always a risk of economic devastation. Emerging competitors from other destinations may worsen the future prospects. On the other hand, there is the fact that tourism markets are generally sensitive to the external impacts. The political and environmental instability, such as terrorism, wars, depressions, or environmental catastrophes, puts the destinations at risk.

This is why the destinations should avoid becoming economically too dependent on the tourism industry. (Weaver 2006, 7, 22.)

When discussing sustainable tourism, the economic dimension is often given less attention than the socio-environmental issues. Yet, it cannot be denied that tourism provides great potential for the destinations to improve their economic development. (Swarbrooke 2002, 59.) Largely due to tourism, in recent decades also Malta has achieved considerable prosperity (Garwood & al. 2011, 604). Another factor that has stabilized the country's economy has been the EU membership in 2004 and adopting the euro as a national currency in 2008. This has generated more inbound investments and improved diversification of the local economy. (Blasi 2013, 153.)

Tourism in Malta is one of the main economic drivers and a significant contributor to the growth on the market service sector such as trades, transport, and communications (Malta National Report 2002, 16). In 2013, the tourism industry accounted directly for 13.6% of Malta's GDP and 14.8% of the employment. However, the Multiplier Effect in Malta is high, implying that many of the employees are working within a field that benefits indirectly from tourism, such as catering, manufacturing, transport, wholesale, retail, recreation, and entertainment. When these indirect impacts were taken into account, the total percentages in 2013 increased to 25.5% for the GDP and 26.4% for the employment. (Malta National Report 2002, 16; Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment 2012, 118; WTTC 2014, 1.) Malta's tourist expenditures in 2013 surpassed €1.44 billion indicating how important tourism earnings are for the economy of Malta (MTA 2014, 4).

Better seasonal spread of tourist arrivals has relieved the unbalance of regular incomes that the seasonal tourism industry easily causes (Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment 2012, 9). The numbers between full time and part time jobs indicates that at least accommodation provides more full time jobs than part time jobs while food and beverage still leans more towards offering part time work (MTA 2014, 4). Regarding infrastructure, a higher share of independent travellers visiting Malta has initiated improvement in the public transport system including buses, ferries, taxis, air traffic, roads, and signage that provide benefits both for tourists and locals (Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment 2012, 44-50).

Tourism development has also helped in the viability of rural areas, especially in Gozo, in terms of providing employment and diversifying the economy. Gozo has enjoyed its international reputation of eco-island and model of sustainability whereas farm tourism business has benefited the local livelihood of agriculture. (Ministry for Tourism, Culture

and the Environment 2012, 78, 87.) Concerning urban areas, especially the walled cities of Valletta, Mdina and Birgu have enjoyed high standards of regeneration and conservation projects partly thanks to tourism (Ministry for Tourism and Culture 2006, 45).

Since Malta is one of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), it suffers from some typical economic constraints that restrict country's possibilities to practice large scale production or gain unlimited incomes. As an island state, Malta also has high reliance on foreign trade and imports, particularly energy, industrial supplies, and consumer goods. In turn, dependence on Malta's narrow exports increases the risk of economic subsistence and insufficient diversification. The country's exports of goods are dominated by electronics, chemicals, printing, and medical equipment, whereas exports of services consist mainly of tourism, transportation, and financial services. Malta's imports and exports happen mostly inside the European Union. The dependence makes country's open economy heavily susceptible to the global economic situations. Finally, Malta's insularity leads often to high transport costs and complicates transactions with the rest of the world. In spite of its economic vulnerabilities, the Maltese enjoy a good standard of living with low unemployment (6.4% in 2011), low inflation (2.7% in 2011), high income per capita, and good standards of health and education. (Blasi 2013, 142-143; Malta National Report 2002, 15, 17, 27.)

Table 6. The economic impacts of tourism in Malta

The economic impacts of tourism in Malta	
Positive economic impacts:	Negative economic impacts:
+ Employment generation	- Increased cost of living
+ Higher personal income	- Leakages
+ General economic development	- Seasonal or part-time work
+ The Multiplier Effect	- Unstable, low incomes
+ Standards of infrastructure	- Threat to traditional livelihoods
+ Living standards	- Investing tourism instead of other sectors
+ Quality of life	- Economic risks: competitors, terrorism, depressions, wars, environmental
+ Satisfaction of tourists and locals	catastrophes
+ Investing	- Dependency on tourism incomes
+ Entrepreneurship	
+ Staff training	
+ Regeneration of urban areas	
+ Development of rural areas	
+ Diversification of economy	

2.3 The environmental impacts of tourism in Malta

To interpret the environmental impacts of tourism, one needs to first understanding the concept of the environment. Swarbrooke (2002, 49-54) examines the environment from five different aspects: the natural resources, natural environment, wildlife, farmed environment, and built environment that all are affected one way or another by tourism. Natural resources such as water, climate, land, and clean air are mutually used among residents and tourists. However, resources are often scarce and may wear out under the pressure of large-scale tourism. Providing tourism facilities, for instance swimming pools or golf courses, may extort water from the local community. The cruise industry and sewage practices might pollute seas while tourism infrastructure may conquer the ranges of vegetation or wildlife and ruin the landscapes. (Swarbrooke 2002, 49-50.)

The natural environment, comprising the natural landscapes of mountains, seas, lakes, rivers, caves, beaches, and forests, are threatened by human activity. Tourism is just one industry among other businesses such as agriculture, forestry, mining, and quarrying that have an effect on the natural environment. Tourism generally has a damaging impact on the natural environment, generating erosion, pollution, and littering. Also wildlife, comprising of mammals, reptiles, birds, insects, marine life, and flora may face disruption, changes, and even destruction due to tourism. The exploitation of animals might occur because of the activities and entertainment where tourists are invited to attend such as zoos, hunting, fishing, carriage, animal-fights or circuses. Nevertheless, there can sometimes also be beneficial effects on the environment. For instance, tourism may raise awareness of the environmental issues among locals and tourists whereas the nature and wildlife conservation might sometimes get financial initiatives resulting from a need to preserve areas and resources valuable from the tourism point of view. (Swarbrooke 2002, 50-52; Uysal & al. 2012, 432-433.)

The farmed environment can cover a range of agricultural systems of crop-growing areas, fruit plantations, man-made forests, cattle ranches, and fish farms. Tourism generally has a negative impact on the farmed environment since tourists for example may tread on the cultivation lands or cause a risk of woodland fire. Moreover, infrastructure development might deplete the farmland or water that is required for agriculture. Tourism can also tempt younger generations to give up traditional livelihood of farming and choose instead a tourism-related job. However, farm-tourism provides relief for the farmers because tourists using farms as their accommodation have a chance to improve the viability of this traditional livelihood. (Swarbrooke 2002, 50, 52.)

The built environment, encompassing individual buildings, small-scale settlements of villages, large-scale settlements of cities and towns, and transport-infrastructure of airports and roads, may meet positive and negative impacts resulting from tourism. Firstly, tourism development requires building infrastructure and superstructure before it can operate sufficiently. Infrastructure is generally implying the structures of roads, airports, sewage, water, and electricity systems whereas superstructure consists of the services focused especially on tourists such as hotels, restaurants, tourist offices, and retail businesses. Often development, restoration, and preservation projects for buildings and sites get initiatives with the help of tourism. Additionally, tourism can arouse totally new architectural styles and upgrade existing infrastructure that enhances the beauty and functionality of an area. On the other hand, tourism may overload infrastructure whereas tourism-generated air pollution and erosion from foot and vehicle traffic may damage historic buildings and sites. In addition to air pollution, there is also noise-pollution resulting from tourist transportation and activities that disturb residents, wildlife, and tourists. Finally, over-building may negatively change landscapes, create contrasts between tourist and traditional structures, and occupy land from the natural habitats and host population. (Cook, Yale & Marqua 2006, 370-371; Swarbrooke 2002, 50, 53-54.)

Regarding the negative environmental impacts, Uysal & al. (2012, 2, 432-433) briefly list some typical consequences of tourism, such as, pollution, destruction, landscape change, and overcrowding. Vehicles, particularly airplanes and private cars, cause air pollution and traffic congestions. Growth of waste water discharge contaminates waters, whereas wildlife and plants are destructed resulting from tourist activities such as golfing, diving, and cruising. Furthermore, overbuilding and crowdedness change the natural landscapes of the destinations permanently. (Uysal & al. 2012, 2, 432-433.) Weaver (2006, 8) has reached similar conclusions and blames tourism for the congestion and contamination of the natural environment, such as forests, lakes, and beaches, due to pressure created by tourism-related construction, increased waste generation, and different activities targeted for tourists. Moreover, construction and waste volume does not only result from tourists, but also because of the growing number of labour living at the destination to work for the tourism industry. (Weaver 2006, 8.)

Major environmental concerns in Malta can be listed as follows: the pressure of population, shortage of fresh water, waste management, fragile coastal and marine ecosystems, biological diversity, lack of protection for natural areas, land use, air quality, and pollution (Blasi 2013, 143; Garwood & al. 2011, 605; Malta National Report 2002, 22-24). These concerns do not only occur in local level but also international tourism has a direct negative impact to all these environmental issues that if not taken care of, transform easily into socio-cultural and economic troubles (NCSO 2006, 45; WTO 2004, 26).

Natural fresh water in Malta is a very scarce and limited resource. Two major sources for potable water are aquifers and desalinated water, which is seawater purified by osmosis plants. This process is not only expensive but also consumes a high amount of electricity. Likewise, it may have an effect on marine ecology due to the brine discharges. Some households utilise rainwater that can be collected between September and April when the rainfall is sufficient enough. When examining the water consumption, in 2001 tourists covered 8% of the total use when the households took the highest place with 64%. (Garwood & al. 2011, 605; Malta National Report 2002, 23, 33-34.)

One of the most problematic issues in Malta has been the management of solid and liquid waste. A small territory with a high population density and voluminous inbound tourism generate challenges in processing both domestic and industrial waste. Accordingly, almost all solid waste used to dispose with minimal control in the landfills of Malta and Gozo when most of the liquid effluent was directed, untreated, into the ocean. Consequently, this generated significant environmental and health threats. Fortunately, the concerns were noticed and the government created better strategies for the waste management. (Malta National Report 2002, 23-24, 41-42.) Today Malta has for example commissioned liquid waste plants and committed to treat all wastewater before discharging it to sea (Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment 2012, 5; NCS D 2006, 20, 24).

The marine and coastal environment surrounding the Maltese archipelago easily suffers from discharges, pollution, and erosion. This generates risk for the sea environment that has crucial importance in Malta, not only in association to tourism and recreation but also in potable water, aquaculture, and marine ecosystems. (Malta National Report 2002, 23, 36.) Due to Malta's insularity and size, the rare species and their habitats are easily threatened because of human activities. Particularly construction, tourism, manufacturing, and transport have produced pressure for sustainable land use in Malta. Today, the present landscape is almost entirely shaped by humans, leaving very few areas for the natural species and habitat left. Demand for tourism infrastructure has principally changed and conquered fragile coastal areas as can be seen from the map of accommodation distribution that is still representing the up-to-date situation (Figure 7). The map indicates that the areas of St Julians, Sliema and St Paul's Bay, including suburban areas of Quawra and Bugibba, formulate the major hotel clusters whereas Marsascala, Mellieha, Xlendi and Marsalforn represent the minor resorts. (Lockhart 1997, 148-149; Malta National Report 2002, 24, 44, 46, 50; The Malta Independent 2011a.) Also the popular activities of diving by tourists and bird hunting hobby of the locals, exposes the Maltese biodiversity under threat (Blasi 2013, 24, 161).

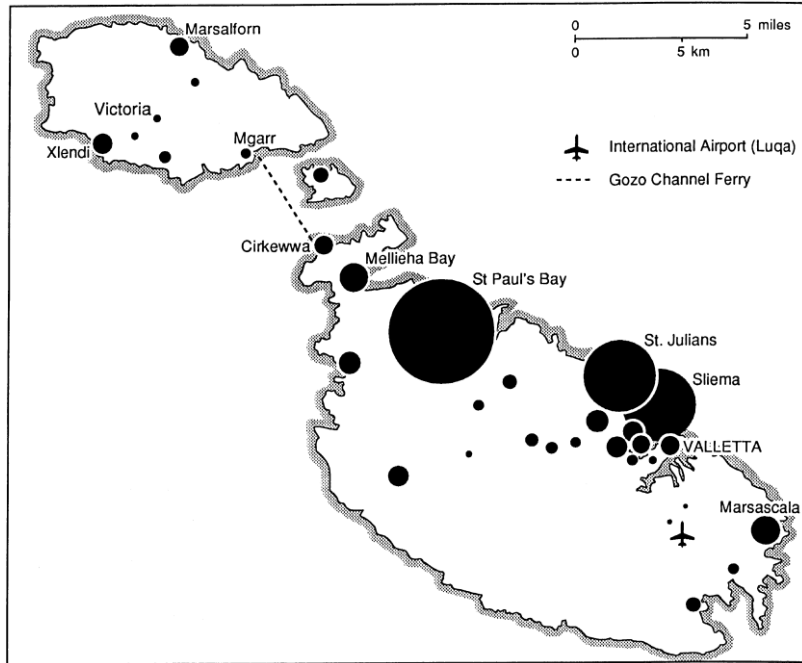


Figure 7. Accommodation distribution in Malta (Lockhart 1997)

Finally, the air quality suffering from increased generation of energy, traffic, manufacturing, and building activities has led the country to having significant problems with air and noise pollution. The fossil oils that are used and burned for the electricity generation and transport are significant contributors for air pollutants. In addition to health effects, air pollutants cause damage for the valuable and rich architectural heritage of the country. Distinctly, the high dependency of private cars has deleterious impacts on air-quality and land use in Malta. The number of motor vehicles per 1000 people in 2011 was 709 that place Malta in the worldwide TOP10 of the countries having most motor vehicles per capita. Consequently, congestion, noise pollution, air pollution, and occasional road accidents are the unfortunate part of the experience in Malta. (Blasi 2013, 143; Malta National Report 2002, 23, 30-31, 49; Worldbank 2014b.)

According to MTA (2014, 12) the most popular sport activities for tourists in Malta in 2013 included swimming (47.7%), hiking (47.3%), and diving (6.9%) whereas cultural activities consisted of visiting sights (84.8%), historical sites (76.5%), and churches (65.8%). Moreover, Apostolopoulos & Gayle (2002, 250) claim that today's tourists are increasingly looking for an escape from the problems of everyday life indicating to traffic jams, parking problems, noise and other typical issues in the urban environment. Declining quality of the natural and built environment in Malta has already been manifested in the dissatisfaction of travellers (Apostolopoulos & Gayle 2002, 85). Complaints have concerned for example the lack of greenery, noise and dust from construction, and quality of traffic and transportation (The Malta Independent 2011b; Times of Malta 2014a). Thus, the insufficient protection and incompetent environmental management does not only risk the quality of life among the residents but the whole tourism industry of Malta.

Table 8. The environmental impacts of tourism in Malta

The environmental impacts of tourism in Malta	
Positive environmental impacts:	Negative environmental impacts:
+ Initiatives for environmental protection	- Shortage of natural resources: water, land, and clean air
+ Initiatives for protecting built environment	- Contamination of water, nature, and air
+ Benefices for farmed environment by farm tourism	- Waste generation: solid and liquid
+ Growth of environmental education	- Littering
+ Growth of environmental awareness	- Air pollution threatening natural environment, health, and architecture
	- Noise pollution from tourist activities and transportation
	- Erosion of land and attractions
	- Over-building conquering natural environments, agricultural lands, and residential areas
	- Overcrowding of natural environments
	- Disturbance of wildlife
	- Exploitation of animals
	- Threat to biodiversity: rare species and marine environment

2.4 The socio-cultural impacts of tourism in Malta

When tourism is seen as an action that creates interaction between visitors and host population, it requires consideration in the terms of society and culture. Society can be described as a community, nation or group of people having common traditions, activities, and interests. In turn, culture represents the practices in the society such as customary beliefs, social roles, values, behavioural patterns, knowledge, habits, and material objects that are inherited from generation to generation. The tourism impacts on society can be either positive or negative. Since tourism means that the visitors from other cultures enter a society, it is almost inevitable that tourism has an influence on the society by changing its indigenous culture especially if there is a large contrast between the receiving and visiting culture. (Cook & al. 2006, 372; Mason 2008, 57-58.) The elements of culture at the destinations, such as traditions, languages, handicrafts, gastronomy, art and music, history, local livelihoods, architecture, religions, and dress style, have prominent role in the tourism attractiveness and competitiveness of the regions. Thus, it is fundamental to guard them from the negative anthropocentric impacts that tourism causes. (Ritchie & Crouch 2005, 115-116.)

Considering the positive socio-cultural impacts the visitors from a wide variety of cultures make, both the host community and visitors learn about the differences and similarities of their habits. It can expand the ways of thinking and hereby increase the tolerance among different cultures. (Cook & al. 2006, 373.) Thus, this cross-cultural direct communication between the guests and hosts can even be related to contributing to world peace (Weaver 2006, 6). In many cases, the growth of tourism leads generally to improvement in the living standards as well as gender balance in the labour market. The tourism industry does not only create employment but it also gives more choices for the women and young people for training, educating and building up one's career due to industry's ability to provide both skilled and unskilled employment. (Cook & al. 2006, 373; WTO 2004, 36.)

Other socio-cultural benefits might include a growing interest for maintaining and regenerating the traditions and cultural activities to keep the destination appealing for tourists. Cultural elements such as original language, gastronomy, or livelihoods, for instance farming and handicrafts, can be suddenly seen as an effective way for the destinations to stand out from the competitors. (Cook & al. 2006, 373; Mason 2008, 58.) Additional parks, recreation facilities, and cultural activities, such as events, exhibits, and other entertainment, improve the cultural enhancement, cultural identity, and emotional well-being from the standpoint of residents and tourist experience (Uysal & al. 2012, 432). Simultaneously, growing tourism can arouse incentive to conserve natural or cultural sites by supporting urban restoration and maintenance or establishing nature parks (Weaver 2006, 6).

Although there are several socio-cultural benefits that tourism can offer, the challenge more often is how to satisfy the curiosity of the visitors without disturbing the host's rights and daily routines (Honey 2008, 102). Social carrying capacity is a good term to label the number of visitors the destination can receive without substantial damage to its culture. Locals of the tourist destinations are forced to share the facilities of the area with the visitors. This may diminish the authenticity of the area as well as lead to overcrowding of public facilities such as churches, restaurants, grocery stores, public transportation, local festivals, or natural areas. Another impediment growing tourism can cause, especially in rural areas, is the Demonstration Effect, which means the local residents may start to see visitors as uniformly wealthy compared to the host population. This might lead to mounting envy and inferiority complex, but on the other hand increasing idolization and materialism among locals who wants to start to imitate tourist's lifestyles. Moreover, visitors from other cultures may bring along unfamiliar behaviour that especially younger generations are willing to copy. This may result in resentment and loss of cultural identity

within the host culture. (Cook & al. 2006, 376-377; Mason 2008, 37; Swarbrooke 2002, 74.)

When considering the positive effect of intercultural interaction, there is an argument that the relationships between the hosts and guest often are short term, transitory, formalized and business-related. Tourists usually spend their time rather with other tourists than with locals. Moreover, due to differences in wealth, the relationships are often unequal. Frustration over the congestion might partly increase conflicts and social pressure between the hosts and guests. All this proves that the assumption of building deeper relationships and communication is rather superficial than genuine and likely to promote misunderstandings and collisions rather than harmony and world peace. (Swarbrooke 2002, 73; Weaver 2006, 7-8.)

Furthermore, tourism can influence on the original language at the destination. English is commonly used when communicating in the tourism field, thus the native tongues might lose their value and be replaced by English. In addition, tourism can cause acculturation when two cultures come into contact, exchange ideas and produce varying levels of convergence. This can lead to the reduction in the diversity of the global cultures. (Cook & al. 2006, 377; Mason 2008, 59.) There is also a danger of commodification of the local products and services such as traditional crafts and art forms that may become modified to meet the desires of tourists (Swarbrooke 2002, 72; Weaver 2006, 8).

Crime may become a serious societal problem due to successful tourism. This results from the increased number of potential victims, growing envy of the apparent wealth and leisure time of tourists, as well as carefree attitude of tourists. Other unfortunate social consequences that sometimes occur because of tourism are moral decay by promiscuity, prostitution, and alcohol or drug use. Travelling provides opportunity for tourists to escape from the daily life's constraints. That can incite tourists to forget their obligation to act in a responsible way. Disrespectful behaviour leads easily to the loss of dignity of locals as they still are often forced to behave in servile manner to serve tourists. Moreover, tourists should always remember that the opportunity to travel is not obvious for everyone but still beyond the reach of many people in the world. (Cook & al. 2006, 377; Swarbrooke 2002, 71-72.)

Finally, the negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism can be considered by George Doxey's theory "Irridex" about four irritation levels that locals may feel with the influx of tourists. When tourists first visit the destination there is a stage of "Euphoria" where locals welcome tourists eagerly recognizing the economic boom tourism will generate. Over a time, as tourist numbers grow, attitudes will move to the stage of "Apathy" where

locals start to take tourism for granted and the contacts with tourists start to convert into being business-like. Stage “Annoyance” develops when locals start to see the down-sides of sharing their home area with tourists and the final boiling point “Antagonism” is the stage where tourists are viewed as a root in causing the area’s problems. Measuring the socio-cultural impacts is much more challenging than the economic and environmental dimensions due to their invisible and intangible nature. Nevertheless, even they happen slowly, they usually leave permanent and irreversible marks in the host cultures. (Cook & al. 2006, 380-381; Mason 2008, 63; Swarbrooke 2002, 69.)

Malta as a Roman Catholic country, 98% of the population in 2013, still has a strong feeling of traditions, family values, and conservatism. As an example, divorce only became legal in 2011 while abortion stays still unlawful. The number of 359 Catholic churches on the island is a proof that The Roman Catholic Church is playing a major role in the quotidian life of the Maltese even its power is slowly decreasing due to younger generations. Still, churches are in a significant part of the traditional ceremonies such as Sunday masses, christenings, weddings, funerals, and annual Easter, Christmas and village festivities. Sundays still represent for the days when most of the businesses stay closed and families gather together for a long lunch. (Blasi 2013, 159-161, 166; Garwood etc. 2011, 604; MTA 2014, 4.)

It can be argued, that these kinds of cultural factors dominating in Malta makes it vulnerable for the tourist streams mostly arriving from the westernized cultures (MTA 2014, 6). Even if tourism has reduced Malta’s insularity and connected the islands to other countries, it has also made Malta exposed to cultural and social change (Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment 2012, 17). Particularly overcrowding of the small islands during the peak season, has sacrificed the privacy of the inhabitants. For example the day-tripping activity in the historical town of Mdina has generated negative feedback from the residents concerning about intrusive, littering, and often indecently dressed tourists that conquer the residential zones. (Apostolopoulos & Gayle 2002, 82.) Overcrowding of the beaches and cultural sites has diminished recreation possibilities of the residents. In addition, large-scale tourism has strained island’s infrastructure generating traffic jams and power- and water-cuts that cause serious stress and frustration for the everyday life of the residents. (NCSD 2006, 45; The Malta Independent 2011b.)

Considering the positive socio-cultural impacts that tourism has brought to Malta, the promotion of arts and crafts, and improved awareness of cultural heritage, can be mentioned. Thanks to tourism demand, some of the traditional handicrafts, such as lacemaking, filigree work, and glassblowing have revived in Malta. In addition, the appreciation of historical heritage and architecture has increased initiating several conservation and re-

generation projects in culturally important heritage sites of Malta. (Briguglio & Briguglio 1996, 7; Uysal & al. 2012, 344.) For example the agency of Heritage Malta has established for managing and conserving the government owned attractions and museums including UNESCO World Heritage Sites (Ministry for Tourism and Culture 2006, 45). Also the public consciousness of sustainability has started to increase partly because it has been included in the educational programmes of school systems from primary level to university studies (NCSD 2006, 53).

The traditional, family-orientated society, where the women are expected to stay home to take care of their family, has resulted in a relatively low rate of female employment in Malta compared to other EU members. Moreover, in spite of the possible high education, second jobs, and working from home in menial tasks is commonly playing a part amongst male and female. (Blasi 2013, 160-161.) In 2013 the employment rate of female reached only 47.0% while for male it was 74.1% (NSO 2014, 47). Although tourism provides an opportunity for increasing female participation in the labour market, Malta's employment in the tourism sector is still significantly dominated by men. For instance, in 2013 the share of having full-time job in hotels and restaurants was 68.9% for male and only 31.1% for female. Nevertheless, even if the change is slow, female employment grows annually and Malta's government is paying attention to promoting equality and eliminating discrimination ever further. (NCSD 2006, 48; NSO 2014, 39, 47.)

The Maltese society still has a strong class division as a legacy from British and other temporary powers that ruled the island. It generates tension and inferiority complex between the citizens. For example, English is an official language on the island but often kept as a language of the elite because the wealthier residents tend to attend English schools and use more and better English in their everyday life. Nevertheless, almost everyone is bilingual in Malta and speaks also the other official language of Maltese. The Maltese language together with the Maltese cuisine is a unique mixture from different cultures: Italian, French, British, and Arabs. (Blasi 2013, 154, 159.) There has been polemic about tourism, globalization, and English language threatening the minority language of Maltese. However, in the article of Times of Malta (2010) Dr Farrugia argues that the biggest threat to the Maltese language is not foreigners but local people themselves. He continues that speaking Maltese should not be something to be ashamed or regarded as a language of lower class but a national heritage to be proud of. (Times of Malta 2010a.)

Another socio-cultural issue, causing racial tensions and density pressures in Malta, is the illegal immigration from the sub-Saharan regions (Blasi 2013, 143). The problem has worsened after 2008 when Malta joined the EU since Malta has become migrants' gate-

way from Africa to the European Union. Each week sinking boat loaded with exhausted travellers arrive to the shores of Malta. As evidence, during this decade Malta received over 17 000 undocumented migrants. The Maltese government has argued that the small island state simply does not have enough resources for the boatloads of refugees and country has called help from the EU. The EU in turn has judged Malta's push back strategy of sending immigrants back to Africa by aeroplanes, without giving them an opportunity to make asylum claims first. Also inhuman treatment of the immigrants and conditions of the detentions centres has been heavily criticized. Detention centres are used for housing the illegal immigrants while their asylum claims are processed, a procedure that may last as long as 18 months. (The Guardian 2013; The Telegraph 2013.) According to Malta Today (2014a) this controversial issue has aroused protests among the Maltese. Lastly in September 2014 crowds of Maltese were marching against illegal immigration and multicultural society in the streets of Valletta. The future will show what kind of solutions the EU and Malta's government find for solving this unfortunate crisis.

Table 9. The socio-cultural impacts of tourism in Malta

The socio-cultural impacts of tourism in Malta	
Positive socio-cultural impacts:	Negative socio-cultural impacts:
+ Cross-cultural interaction	- Overcrowding of public and recreational facilities
+ Cultural awareness and tolerance	- Congestion: social pressure, conflicts, frustration
+ Cultural pride	- Loss of privacy of residents
+ Appreciation of traditions and cultures	- Superficial and business-related interaction
+ Appreciation of cultural heritage	- The Demonstration Effect
+ Incentives to conserve natural and cultural sites	- Diminishment of the authenticity
+ Reviving of cultural activities and elements	- Commodification of culture
+ Additional recreation facilities	- Cultural degradation
+ Gender balance in the labour market	- Loss of cultural identity
+ Better career opportunities also for young and un-skilled labour	- Acculturation
+ Decrease of islands' insularity	- Threat to minor languages
	- Crime
	- Moral decay: promiscuity, prostitution, alcohol, or drug abuse
	- Disrespectful behaviour: clothing, littering, noise
	- Illegal immigration

2.5 The political impacts of tourism in Malta

In addition to the three dimensions of the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural impacts, there is also the political power of governments affecting destination's tourism development. Shortly, the main role the government usually has in tourism development is to be in charge of regulating and marketing the country's tourism. To encourage and on the other hand restrict tourism, local governments set the policies, rules, taxes, and for instance environmental safeguards for the tourism investors. By taxing, government shifts part of the tax burden from locals to tourists. Furthermore, governments aid tourism development by financing different projects and investments concerning, for instance; infrastructure and promotion. In general, politics can be described as decision-making defining how the decisions are made, who are involved in the process and how the decisions are implemented. (Cook & al. 2006, 345, 347, 377; Mason 2008, 121.) Good governance practices involve building and fostering relationships between public sector, private sector, and other stakeholders including tourism operators, local organizations, and international unions such as EU and UNWTO (Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment 2012, 109).

Many governments have national tourism organizations NTOs that are in charge of promoting tourism and collecting data information on the tourism industry. Governments are willing to fund these activities because they provide an opportunity for the destinations to strengthen their success and growth in tourism markets. Collected visitor and industry information provides useful data to predict and develop tourism in the future. Regarding destination marketing, tourism businesses are rarely able to finance such advertising campaigns that are possible with the help of government agencies. Moreover, government agencies do not only promote individual tourism businesses but also entire destinations, having a remarkable role in building the destination images. With a strong destination brand, areas are able to reinforce positive images, correct the negative ones, create new images, and distinct from the competitors to tempt more visitors. (Cook & al. 2006, 347-348.)

Planning is another major function operated by government. Planning requires predicting the future, setting objectives, and implementing strategies to attain these objectives. Planners need to constantly guard, modify, and change the plans as well as enhance the cooperation between different tourism sectors to improve success. Planning can concern the infrastructure, promotional campaigns, organizing international events such as Olympics or fairs, or formulating destination policies for future tourism development. In addition to competitiveness and economic profitability, governments need to make long-term plans and take sustainability into account. By maintaining the quality of natural and

cultural resources, the destinations can ensure future success in the tourism industry. (Cook & al. 2006, 346, 351-352; Ritchie & Crouch 2005, 151-152.)

Regarding Malta, the main party responsible for branding and marketing country is Malta Tourism Authority MTA that also maintains the official tourism portal VisitMalta.com and have separate research units accountable for collecting data and generating statistical information from various sources (Malta Tourism Authority 2014a; Ministry for Tourism and Culture 2006, 3, 32). In turn, planning for sustainable tourism development and land use is mainly under responsibility of the Ministry for Tourism and The Malta Environment & Planning Authority (MEPA). The Ministry for Tourism operates under the government administration and is in charge of enhancing the co-operation between principal stakeholders of the industry. It has created twice a comprehensive national Tourism Policy for the Maltese Islands for the years 2007-2011 and 2012-2016 that both aim to set objectives, plans, and strategies on how to cherish the country's competitiveness and sustainability. In addition, the Ministry for Tourism enables the missions of Malta Tourism Authority by funding marketing and its other necessary duties. (Gov.mt 2014; MEPA 2014a; Ministry for Tourism and Culture 2006, 32, 39; Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment 2012, 109.)

In 1964, when Malta became independent, the country was for the first time ruled by the native Maltese and not by an outside power (Blasi 2013, 153). Today Malta has a liberal parliamentary democracy with President as a Head of State and regular elections based on universal suffrage (Malta National Report 2002, 12). Mediterranean administrative system may not always be the most effective one but at least democracy as a form of government creates a stable base for future sustainable development (Apostolopoulos & al. 2001, 253; Ritchie & Crouch 2005, 47). Another factor that may support sustainable development is the local interest and passion for politics and current issues of the country. According to Blasi (2013, 160) as well as the author's observations, local people are active discussing politics and expressing their opinions. Moreover, the voter turnout in Malta is among the highest in the world being 93% in parliamentary elections of 2013 compared for example to Finland's rate of 67%. The local activity encourages interference in the concerns and aspirations to find remedial strategies for them. (Blasi 2013, 160; IDEA 2011a; IDEA 2011b.)

Table 10. The political impacts of tourism in Malta

The political impacts of tourism in Malta	
Positive political impacts:	Negative political impacts:
+ Marketing destination	- Ineffective administrative system
+ Planning future tourism	- Ineffective decision-making
+ Collecting statistical data	- More talk than action
+ Predicting future tourism	- Inactive local participation
+ Regulating tourism	
+ Enhancing co-operation between stakeholders	
+ Financing projects and investments	
+ Democracy as a form of government	
+ President as a head of state	
+ Local interest to politics and current issues	
+ Local passion to discuss and express opinions	

3 Sustainable tourism, carrying capacity and island tourism

This chapter explains the characteristics of sustainable tourism, carrying capacity, and island-based tourism, focusing especially on the challenges island tourism commonly faces. The author saw it essential to clarify and understand the pure conceptual meaning of these three terms because of the thesis subject that composes around these concepts. This theoretical chapter is followed by more practical part where the potential strategies for sustainable tourism are applied on the island destination of Malta.

3.1 The characteristics of sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism that is also associated with the concepts of responsible tourism, alternative tourism, and ecotourism, has its origins as a countermove against mass tourism. Mass tourism has understood to easily compromise destination's natural, cultural, and economic resources. Mass orientation, where the tourism products are designed to satisfy large amounts of people doing similar things at the same time, has long been a trend in the coastal areas and islands of the Mediterranean. Tourism there has primarily orientated towards recreation and sea. Yet, these kinds of packages do not correspond anymore to a sustainable standpoint, neither from the demand aspect. Instead, a need to create alternative tourism products has emerged. The essence of sustainable tourism is to benefit, in long-term, the environment, locals, and travellers. However, sustainability emphasizes that the destinations should not only concentrate on increasing visitor numbers and maximizing the short-run economic benefits because that inexorably leads to uncontrollable tourism and compromises the future generation's quality of life. (Apostolopoulos, Loukissas & Leontidou 2001, xv-xvi, 242-243; Honey 2008, 31; Swarbrooke 2002, 13-14.)

Ritchie & Crouch (2005, 44–49) describe sustainable tourism by the four dimensions: ecological, economic, socio-cultural, and political sustainability. Ecological sustainability implies understanding the value of the nature and environment as a habitat and travelling destination. The environmentally damaging impacts caused by tourism are not overlooked. Instead, the tourism field is perceived to have both a responsibility and opportunity to encourage, train, and invite preservation and conservation projects at the destination. Moreover, ecological sustainability requires the destinations to create their own unique policies, plans, and objectives to control the negative ecological impacts resulting from tourism. (Ritchie & Crouch 2005, 44-45.)

Economic sustainability seeks to improve the quality of life of local people and create the basis for their basic needs such as aliment, habitation, and healthcare. In order that res-

idents would have motivation to provide quality and sustainable tourism products, must first be ensured that their own personal well-being and subsistence are guaranteed. Before that it cannot be expected that locals would be ready to look after the environmental welfare. The revenues and the benefits resulting from tourism should be spread evenly between as many locals and local enterprises as possible instead of the multinational companies. Furthermore, selecting labour amongst local people, training them, and guarding their job security and rights, such as regular and equal wages, benefits and working hours, is vital in order to improve economic sustainability at the destination. In the tourism field particularly seasonality generates challenges for maintaining the regular employment conditions. If the local residents perceive tourism rather weighting them and benefitting outsiders, often already wealthier countries than the destination itself, the ground for sustainable tourism is difficult to build. (Ritchie & Crouch 2005, 46.)

Along with the ecological and economic well-being, also socio-cultural sustainability holds a significant role, especially in the tourism field where different cultures meet and interact with each other. The bigger the cultural difference is between the traveller and the host country, the stronger is the mutual influence between the cultures. Cherishing and conserving the vitality of own, unique culture heritage strengthens the feeling of togetherness, makes habitat meaningful, and thus improves the quality of life among locals. Simultaneously, encountering and learning about cultural differences works as a motivator appealing to tourists. When examining socio-cultural sustainability the solutions that aspire to minimize negative socio-cultural impacts, such as increased crime or stress from tourist crowds, can be defined as socially and culturally sustainable tourism. (Cook & al. 2006, 377; Mason 2008, 57-58; Ritchie & Crouch 2005, 47.)

Political sustainability is generally ignored when determining sustainable tourism. Even if the political power often is as much as a final authority to decide how ecological, economic, and socio-cultural sustainability can be implemented at the destination. As a comparison, in countries ruled by a totalitarian regime the interest towards sustainable development is rarely as self-evident as in democratic states where the success of the politicians and other decision-makers is based on the votes given by the citizens. In that case, the aspiration of the decision-makers is to listen appeared concerns and strive to solve the problems resulting for instance from uncontrollably growing tourism. (Ritchie & Crouch 2005, 47.)

Considering other concepts related to sustainable tourism, alternative tourism can be explained as specialized tourism where tourists travel due to their unconventional interest. This may concern for instance sport tourism, health tourism, marine tourism, cultural tourism, agro-tourism, or ecotourism. (Apostolopoulos & al. 2001, 9.) The early forerun-

ners for alternative tourism are claimed to be pilgrimages and the Grand Tour that developed religious tourism and educational tourism. Anyhow, today alternative tourism is specifically arising as an option to mass tourism. (Weaver 2006, 9, 38-39.) Each destination has a possibility to create regional and national alternatives which to promote such as diving or farm tourism in Gozo. Because of the personal passions and motivations, alternative tourism is usually targeted to the individuals or at least to a smaller group of people than traditional mass tourism packages. The Mediterranean destinations are particularly suitable to differentiate their tourism products because of their rich and varying cultural and natural environments. (Apostolopoulos & al. 2001, 243-244.) In turn, responsible tourism concentrates on the rights and responsibilities of tourists, host community, government, and the tourism industry. These can include for instance tourist's right to travel in safe without concern of crime, discrimination, or cheating by local businesses or travel advertisement. On the other hand tourists have their responsibilities. Travellers should avoid taking part in illegal activities or harming the environment but instead respect the cultural norms of behaviour and boycott local businesses with poor working conditions. (Swarbrooke 2002, 143-144.)

Finally, Honey (2008, 6) has briefly defined ecotourism as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people". In other words "it should practice the principles of low-impact, educational, and ecologically and culturally sensitive travel that benefits local communities and the host country" (Honey 2008, 71). Ecotourism often includes the following criteria; first of all, real ecotourism strives to minimize the negative impacts caused by tourism. It contributes tourism to happen because of the nature itself and due to learning from the nature and cultures. In addition, ecotourism encourages local people participation and ensures that the natives benefit from tourism. Moreover, it respects local cultures, supports human rights and democratic progression at the destination, as well as provides financial aid for the different kind of conservation projects. (Honey 2008, 29-31.) Even though the concept of ecotourism is often associated being just a niche within nature travel and environmental preservation, it can and should be able to summarize also the more extensive and universal term of sustainable tourism (Honey 2008, 28). In the end, the mutual challenge for all these variations of sustainable tourism is how to combine their principles from theory to practice and how to promote sustainability instead of transitory trend as a way of life (Ritchie & Crouch 2005, 44).

3.2 The characteristics of carrying capacity

The concept of carrying capacity is often appearing when referring to sustainable tourism. This is because carrying capacity can be used in visitor management to assess the

limits for how many tourists an area can handle before the negative impacts of tourism start to occur. Also for carrying capacity there are several different dimensions that can be used for explaining its significance. Firstly, physical capacity describes simply the number of tourists a place can accommodate physically, e.g. how many people could be packed on a beach or a national park. Secondly, economic capacity is the number of tourists a destination can receive before the local population starts to suffer from the negative economic impacts such as increased cost level of housing and groceries. When socio-cultural capacity is the sum of people beyond which cultural degradation starts to appear, environmental capacity measures the limits when the environmental damages, such as erosion or disturbance of wildlife, start to play a part. Perceptual capacity is the number of people a place can accommodate before the tourism experience becomes affected. Finally, infrastructure capacity tells the volume of visitors an area can welcome before the infrastructure becomes unable to operate properly, implying everything from the congestion of the roads and airports, to the problems in sewage and water supply. (Cook & al. 2006, 367-368; Swarbrooke 2002, 29, 261-262.)

The idea of carrying capacity may sound simple. However, the practical aspect of carrying capacity can be criticized since if the number of capacity is possible to calculate, how could these limits put into practise? Are the destinations able to close up when the tourist limit is reached? What kind of booking system would then be suitable for the limited tourist streams? And what would be the costs of reducing tourist volumes in terms of income and jobs? (Swarbrooke 2002, 29, 261-262.) In practice, carrying capacity usually leads to restricting accessibility. Restrictions may concern the entire destinations but they can also be related to sights, attractions, roads, or entrance fees so that the certain parts or visiting at a certain time becomes prohibited from tourists. (Weaver 2006, 94.)

Also measuring capacity is not easy, particularly under socio-cultural and perceptual capacities that often have the feature of subjective view. Human beings are not homogeneous but they have their own personal limitations and expectations when the places are too crowded to generate trouble. The tourism impacts often are rather slow than sudden processes when predicting them makes calculating challenging. Moreover, the type of the destinations and the level of their fragility vary together with the target groups which the destinations are attracting. Each culture, ecosystem, geography, and economy is different. That confronts measurement and application of the capacities meaning that carrying capacity can never be the same between the places. However, carrying capacity is a useful tool to define the guidelines for the further visitor management. (Swarbrooke 2002, 29, 261-262.) Still, it is essential to understand that the numbers are not the only answer to the visitor management, but more importantly, control the activities, behaviours, and equipment that are allowed in a certain time in a particular place (Honey 2008,

109). Controlling enables sustainable tourism management since tourism, as an unregulated action, includes always the seed of its own devastation (Weaver 2006, 8).

3.3 The challenges of island tourism

Geographical isolation of island destinations can be regarded at the same time as a blessing and an obstacle for their sustainable tourism development. Limited accessibility and cultural isolation may add the sense of excitement and work as an attraction factor for tourists to choose the island destination over the mainland. However, limited carrying capacity of the small areas puts the natural and socio-cultural environment easily under pressure. Compared to mainland destinations, the eco-systems and island environments are often more sensitive to the impacts of large-scale tourism. (Swarbrooke 2002, 193; Uysal & al. 2012, 447). Still, island tourism is often having the character of sun-lust and mass markets that puts the environment, especially the fragile coastlines, under extensive use (Apostolopoulos & Gayle 2002, 22). Even though island tourism faces similar challenges regarding sustainability as the mainland, its closed system and small boundaries are the reasons for the highlighted need of planning and managing tourism (Swarbrooke 2002, 193).

Some typical internal or external problems the island destinations face in the tourism industry can be underlined, such as overcrowding during the peak seasons, supply problems, accessibility problems, and transportation costs. A large number of tourists in a small area often generate shortage of resources such as fresh water. The strain towards infrastructure may affect the proper functioning of the transport, power, sewage, and telecommunication systems, whereas congestion generally challenges the everyday-life and cultural identity of locals. Additionally, seasonal overcrowding raises the demand for food supply and importing goods adding at the same time the risk for increased price level and the degree of leakages. Islands commonly suffer from higher prices because of the transport costs and their own limited resources that create need for importing. Thus, the volume of tourists may cause pressure to provide enough goods and services to meet the needs of tourists, even though in the local scale islands would be self-sufficient. (Apostolopoulos & Gayle 2002, 22-23; Swarbrooke 2002, 193-195; Uysal & al. 2012, 447, 449; WTO 2004, 11.)

Accessibility to islands is usually determined by limited or even seasonal air or ferry services. Lack of direct and easy connections may discourage tourists who are seeking for convenience. On the other hand, fear of flying or poor ferry services may be apt to banish tourists, not to mention the travelling costs that often are higher compared to the mainland. Accessibility problems are not always only negative but they might make the

island destinations more peaceful and thus preserve their attractiveness and uniqueness. Nevertheless, high travelling expenses and poor connections does not only concern tourists but also residents who need to travel to the mainland for business or leisure reasons. Furthermore, small island airports often face the capacity challenges providing poor quality experience for tourists. Islands that are easily accessible from the mainland or from the bigger neighbouring islands have to sustain the day visitor phenomenon. For example in Malta, most visitors stay in the main island of Malta but are encouraged to make day-trips to Gozo and Comino which for one's part end up gaining relatively small revenue from the low-spending day visitors. This keeps the economic development of smaller islands stagnant while the day tripper crowds may reduce the attractiveness of the daytrip destination in the eyes of residents as well as tourists. (Swarbrooke 2002, 195-197; Uysal & al. 2012, 449.)

Dependency makes the island destinations more vulnerable to any universal changes such as political conflicts, fuel prices, or depressions that easily reflect to the tourism industry. Reliance on the tourism incomes, imported goods, external tour operators, transport companies, and certain markets, such as the British tourists, are distinctive issues in island tourism and challenge for sustainable tourism development. Other challenges on the islands are limited financial, natural, and skilled human resources. In short, this makes economic success dependent on the exogenous factors and generates easily monopoly powers that discourages local entrepreneurship, causes leakages, and reduces the local power over decision-making. Finally, islands are in the forefront to undergo the external threat of sea-level rise caused by global climate change. (Apostolopoulos & Gayle 2002, 17, 19-20, 22, 24; Swarbrooke 2002, 196; Uysal & al. 2012, 449.)

In conclusion, the island destinations have their advantages as well as disadvantages. Attractive location, unique culture, and natural beauty together with good weather conditions allure tourists sometimes more than other geographical locations. Despite of the strengths, the weaknesses have more crucial role when developing sustainable tourism on the island destinations. (Apostolopoulos & Gayle 2002, 275-276.) From an economic point of view, the small size of local markets and narrow recourses make the island destinations vulnerable for the competition and economic risks. From an environmental standpoint, isolation from continental areas often leads to diversified small-sized ecosystems that are fragile for the disturbance. Finally, from a socio-cultural aspect, the island communities often have distinctive cultural characteristics and traditional values that make them delicate for the tourism interaction. In terms of this, islands, more than any other type of area, should create efficient strategies for sustainable tourism development. (Apostolopoulos & Gayle 2002, 131-132.)

4 Strategies for sustainable tourism in Malta

Sustainable tourism denotes that the negative impacts of tourism are not overlooked but rather recognized to create preventive strategies for them. Nevertheless, even if finding the concerns may be easy, putting them into practice is usually the most challenging part of sustainable tourism. (WTO 2004, 81.) Generally examined, WTO (2004, 11) underlines that sustainable island tourism development depends on a country's ability to manage its natural, cultural, human, and economic resources. In turn, Apostolopoulos & Gayle (2002, 284-286) emphasize that the success is reliant on management capabilities and innovativeness in finding alternatives and solutions when the quality of resources or tourism products has declined. In addition, tourism cannot be planned and managed in isolation but it needs to include inter-regional and international cooperation and commitment. Sustainable tourism development should involve all key players of the tourism industry, including host population, tourism operators, tourists, governments, and other stakeholders. (Mason 2008, 113-114; WTO 2004, 65, 82.) Apostolopoulos & Gayle (2002, 27) summarize that the keys to successful sustainable tourism development are: "Coordination of policies, proactive planning, acceptance of limitations on growth, education of all parties involved and commitment to a long-term viewpoint."

When considering the practical solutions for developing sustainable tourism, Apostolopoulos & al. (2001, 246-247) define three useful objectives that the Mediterranean destinations should recognize, including redistribution of tourist flows from coastal areas to inland, promoting off-season, and supporting alternative modes of transport. Only a handful of the Mediterranean islands has utilized inland instead of coastal areas, even if the inland would provide wealth of historical or natural attractions (Apostolopoulos & Gayle 2002, 78). For attracting visitors, Apostolopoulos & al. (2001, 250-251) suggest the action of day tripping where tourists are transported to visit inland villages. Local food, products, and attractions would be included in the visit. Consequently, this would in time lead to a better balance in tourist and income distribution. Urban tourism is also less dependent on seasonality, and thus more suitable for year-round activity compared to coastal tourism. Instead of private cars or large buses alternative modes of transport, such as walking, biking, riding, or minibuses, should be promoted. Another activity proposed is cultural-ecological event arranged by the local community. In addition to cultural presentations, such as dancing or handicrafts, the education of natural and cultural preservation, would be included in the program. This would widen the general knowledge of sustainability among tourists as well as locals. Marketing alternative forms of tourism is also mentioned, regarding eco-, agro-, cultural, and athletic tourism. (Apostolopoulos & al. 2001, 250-251, 255.)

To clarify the suggestions of Apostolopoulos & al. (2001) and Apostolopoulos & Gayle (2002), the general strategies for sustainable tourism could be visitor management, land use, marketing, transport, education, and community participation. All these practices, comprehensively explained in this chapter, could and should be applicable also in Malta. When reading the reports of tourism strategies and policies formulated for Malta, can be noticed that the country has already extensively recognized the downsides tourism generates in theory. According to The Malta Independent article (2011b) and the author's observations, what are still needed more are tangible actions for sustainable lifestyle. That is why this chapter examines potential and already partly employed sustainable tourism strategies on the island destination of Malta. Essentially, this chapter acts as an introduction to the empirical part, where the objective is to discover where Malta still could improve for enhancing sustainable tourism development in the country.

4.1 Visitor management

Visitor management is a part of comprehensive destination management that indicates strategies to regulate and educate visitors. Visitor management is usually implemented by controlling visitor numbers or modifying visitor behaviour. The purpose is to avoid over-capacity in popular and environmentally or culturally sensitive areas or sites. In practice, visitor regulation may denote procedures, such as allowing access only to less sensitive areas, restricting the number of visitors by pricing policies or by setting quantitative limits, restricting the time or period visitors may spend in the sensitive areas, or allowing only a certain type of transportation in the area. For one's part, visitor behaviour may be modified by signs, marketing, or educating visitors before and during the visit. Systems for visitor management should be at the same time protective and allowing, ensuring personal touch and high-quality tourist experience for travellers. (Mason 2008, 136-138, 149; Ritchie & Crouch 2005, 214-215; Weaver 2006, 175.) Marketing, transport, and education are discussed more widely later in this chapter while here is concentrated mainly on the aspect of visitor regulation.

Management of visitor numbers and visitor flows can be implemented by setting visitation caps. Visitation caps are necessary if the current or additional visitor number compromises carrying capacity of a given area over a given period. Anyhow, the limits can be fixed or flexible meaning that the caps are valid through year or for example eased shortly during popular event at the destination. Quotas, group size limits, and user fees are common vehicles to achieve visitation caps. Quotas are formal restrictions limiting number of visitors in a certain place over a certain time of the year, month, day, or season. The meaning of the quotas is to ensure high quality tourist experience and avoid over-capacity that might endanger the environmental and socio-cultural well-being.

Higher quotas are especially required in the protected areas, such as national parks, where the entrance may be controlled also by entrance fees and number of entry points. In some countries, quotas can be set to limit even the annual visitor numbers. In the democratic states this is rarely applied. However, the countries with border controls may sometimes implement annual quotas for political or sustainable reasons. Limitations on group-size can be used for restricting over demand in the specific attractions or sites such as temples or hiking routes. Another tool for managing protected areas and popular attractions, are user fees. Increasing the prices until the desired level of visitation reduction is achieved or setting higher fees for tourists than citizens can be examples of fee manipulation. On the other hand, increasing entrance fees may be possible without remarkable effect on demand if part of the income is promoted to direct for instance to conservation projects. In addition to entry costs, fee manipulation can be used in parking activities. In order to discourage private motoring, governments may also set service limits and prohibit parking spaces in certain areas. (Weaver 2006, 174-177.)

Redistributing and diverting visitor flows provide alternative for direct visitor restricting. Redistribution can happen through dispersal or concentration activities. Tourists can be for example encouraged to visiting new regions at the destination such as inland over coastal areas. Instead of visiting one famous attraction, such as a cathedral, can be designed a walking trail in which the cathedral is just one site among others. On the other hand, tourist flows can be guided by concentration. Concentration means that tourism activities are positioned in a small area leaving other regions free from disturbance. (Weaver 2006, 178.) Author's example of concentration in Malta is the party town of Paceville where most of the island's entertaining but evidently disturbing activity of night-life is concentrated. Finally, redistribution may happen through time or pricing. Periodic closure or limitations in visiting time may provide natural and cultural recovery for sensitive areas and sites whereas price manipulation and reduced prices can be used in accommodation business to allure visitors to travel during off-season. (Weaver 2006, 180.)

When trying to find the information about visitor management practices in Malta, regulation of visitor numbers does not seem to be a substantial part of Malta's tourism policy. Also the author's previous experiences verify same, since no quantitative restrictions for any site in Malta were to be found. The article in Times of Malta (2008) speaks out that visitor management, especially in the cultural sites, seems to be very sporadic in Malta and there are hardly any guidelines or manuals available on visitor management policies. The article emphasizes that when the tourism resources are becoming heavily congested, like in Malta, controlling visitor access and visitor flows should be essentially taken as management tools. This is because visitor management may have a strong impact on site's conservation level but also on visitor experience. (Times of Malta 2008.)



Figure 11. Crowded Comino in August 2014 (Times of Malta 2014b)

According to the author, the primary site demanding visitor regulation in Malta is the Blue Lagoon in Comino (Figure 11). It is estimated that the tiny beach of Comino receives as much as 4000 daily visitors during the summer months. Presumably, summer days of tourists and locals are far away from relaxing when people are crammed under the deckchairs placed just some centimetres from each other as Figure 7 indicates. However, the only thing the government seems to pay attention to is limiting the number of sunbeds. Malta Tourism Authority set before a limit that no more than 70 sunbeds were allowed to settle up in the Blue Lagoon. Now the two operators renting deckchairs are no longer being limited by the number of units but there is predefined area for the chairs. Also boats are no longer allowed to anchor in front of Cominotto, the minuscule neighbour island of Comino, and setting up deckchairs on Cominotto is forbidden. Comino is noted to be a place simply so popular that there is nothing to do for limiting the influx of people. (Times of Malta 2010b; Times of Malta 2014a.) The following chapter provides information on Malta's land use and presents for example the maps of the nature and marine protected areas in Malta (Appendix 1). The maps indicate that Comino is located in both protection areas. That makes the author wonder what environmental preservation actually signifies in Malta.

4.2 Land use

Sustainable land use can be implemented through zoning, districting, and development standards. Zoning means that the specific areas are demarcated for different types of activities such as residential, tourism-related, or protection purpose. Instead, districting indicates areas with special attributes that are noted to be worth for preservation. Districts may concern urban surroundings or rural landscapes that are conserved with prac-

tices of renewal, maintenance, or access control. Examples of zones and districts can be national parks, old cities, Chinatowns, and other colonial areas that often fascinate tourists and provide recreational facilities for the local residents. (Weaver 2006, 162, 166-167.) In turn, development standards are legal restrictions to regulate the physical or measurable levels of development at the destination. The principle of development standards is to ensure the satisfaction of the communities and tourists but simultaneously preserve the country's cultural and natural heritage. Development standards commonly concern building practises, and in the context of tourism, they can be associated to the accommodation infrastructure. The norms of development standards may obligate builders to consider restrictions in size, density, height, setbacks, building standards, landscaping, signage, and noise regulation. (Weaver 2006, 158-161, 167.)

To examine development standards in further detail, the purpose of height restrictions is to preserve the natural and cultural landscapes, especially in the rural settings or in the areas where the original architecture is low. In the Caribbean, many destinations have regulations for the beachfront hotels so that the height is allowed to be at most three storeys. This is to allow the natural view scape of coconut palms to surround the hotels buildings. In the urban settings, the height restrictions are used for example in Prague to preserve the medieval skyline of towers. On the other hand, there are destinations such as Miami Beach where the sense of place is closely related to the beach hotel towers and thus height restrictions are not required. Continuing to other development standards, setbacks are the minimum distances to landscape features. In tourism, they are commonly used for restricting distances between hotel buildings and beach line. For one's part, building standards are used for cherishing cultural heritage by using traditional architecture style, design, materials, and colours. Building standards may also include preserving of natural heritage by taking energy efficiency and waste management into account when building the structures. Standards of landscaping aspire to the site softening and naturalization of the spaces left over from the construction by planting trees and other vegetation. Landscaping can also mean maintenance and fostering of the environment for example in the forms of drainage projects or retention of tree cover in the erosion exposed areas. Finally, noise regulations may concern tourism-related vehicles such as air crafts, tour buses, and jet skis but also other factors generating disturbance such as concerts, nightlife, and theme parks. (Weaver 2006, 159-161, 167.)

Concerning Malta's land use in bed distribution, the accommodation sector as a whole still suffers from the legacy of mass tourism and construction boom. On the main island accommodation clusters are mainly concentrated unsustainably on fragile coastal areas. However, the pattern in Gozo is rather different and better since the hotels and farmhouses are scattered more evenly on the island. (Lockhart 1997, 148-149; NCSD 2006,

29.) Today the negative impacts of over-development and over-urbanisation are taken better into account, to not endanger the attractiveness and carrying capacity of natural areas (NCSD 2006, 28). Also part of Malta's hotels and farmhouses have received ECO Certification label that obligates accommodation companies to operate under sustainable criteria's, concerning for instance waste management, energy, water, building practices, green areas, and noise. The number of ECO certificated hotels is today 23 but the development is going to more positive direction since five hotels are at the moment in the application stage and several more have expressed their interest for the scheme. (Malta Tourism Authority 2014b.)

Malta's landscape consists of urban, rural, and coastal areas. The country has started to seek ways to increase quality of life through planning and zone management. Malta has identified its main tourism zones in seven different areas: 1. Valletta & Three Cities, 2. Mdina, Rabat & Dingli, 3. Sliema, St Julians, Paceville, 4. Bugibba, Qawra, St Paul's Bay, 5. Gozo, 6. Coastal areas, and 7. Rural areas and villages. Other key tourist areas are Malta International Airport, Valletta Sea Terminal, and Ferry Terminals between Malta and Gozo. The tourism zones are both touristic areas but at the same time in residential use. In these zones Malta has engaged to provide particular attention for maintaining and upgrading cleanness, waste management, landscaping, signage, and restrictions, concerning for example construction practices, noise regulation, and littering. (Ministry for Tourism and Culture 2006, 39, 45, 48-51.)

Along with the tourism zones, Malta has designated its nature and marine protected areas (Appendix 1), whereas most of the cultural districts and sites are protected by Heritage Malta. These areas and sites are told to enjoy specific management, regulation, and control measurements. (MEPA 2014b; Ministry for Tourism and Culture 2006, 45; University of Malta 2014b.) The fragile flora of Malta and fauna should also not only be preserved but presented to the public in a way that would support a greater understanding and appreciation of nature. Regarding Malta's tourism zones, rural areas hold a specific role in redistributing tourists from most visited areas to the countryside. This would support fairer income distribution, increase rural employment, and provide relief for the most popular tourism zones. The use of rural zones are planned to strengthen by providing and marketing rural activities, such as countryside walks, lace-making, honey production, oil making, and other traditional chores. (Ministry for Tourism and Culture 2006, 45, 48-49.) Marketing and promoting as a visitor management tools are introduced more widely in the following chapter.

4.3 Marketing

Marketing can be another effective tool for visitor management and steering sustainable tourism development at the destination. In practice, advertising can be focused only for a certain type of visitors or it may be concentrated on the niche markets, alternative destinations, or off-season to spread the tourist load more evenly. (Mason 2008, 137.) Moreover, Weaver (2006, 187) mentions the power of target marketing and demarketing, where the target marketing aims to attract specific market segments, for example high-spending quality tourists or well-educated eco-tourists, that are likely to take green values into account when travelling. As an opposite, demarketing is used for discouraging certain segments of customers such as low-spending mass tourists, party-tourists, or seasonal tourists. Indirect demarketing can be utilized when controlling visitor flows and segments by practices of price increasing, reduction of overall promotion, and elimination of tourism products that attract unwanted visitors. (Weaver 2006, 187.)

Malta has received criticism for its obsession with numbers when it comes to tourism. Instead of breaking tourist records, selling country as a low-cost destination, and luring mass markets, Malta could invest in marketing to update its tourism product. (Lockhart 1997, 146; Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment 2012, 69; The Malta Independent 2011a.) An interesting article in Times of Malta (2012) speaks out the truth that Malta has for years tried to be something that it is not and hidden what it actually could offer for tourists. For long time tourism has focused on attracting leisure tourists seeking for sun and sea. However, regarding the minuscule beaches of Malta and the Mediterranean climate that does not provide year-round beach weather, Malta's tourism is based on the heavy burden of seasonality. (Times of Malta 2012.) In addition, sun and sea is far away regarding to uniqueness and distinctiveness that today's tourists are ever more looking for when travelling (Malta Today 2014b).

Also the article of The Malta Independent (2011b) editorializes that Malta's beauty does not lie solely in sun and sea, but in its historical and archaeological legacy, rural landscape in spring, views from cliffs and hills, marine environment, terraced fields of countryside, and tasty local cuisine. These are exactly the same thoughts that the author experienced during five months when living in the pretty village of Hal Lija, seeing the bloom of spring time, tasting several local delicacies, and wondering around different hiking routes on the islands. By promoting authentic attractions, countryside, and villages outside of the tourist areas, Malta could renew its reputation, receive healthier income distribution, and reduce seasonal pressure. Almost every Maltese village has its own Baroque church why religious tourism could be promoted, whereas cultural events and lo-

cal delicacies provided in the villages, could attract more cultural visitors in the country. (Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment 2012, 59; Times of Malta 2012.)

Cultural tourism, religious tourism, food tourism, and rural tourism can all be called niche markets that are realized to provide keys for the destinations to stimulate demand for shoulder months, receive fairer distribution of income, and build new tourism images (Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment 2012, 86). Although the era of hotel complexes and summer holiday packages may not be passed totally, yet mass-tourism has been challenged by alternative tourism that provides seasonal relief for the destinations. That is why promoting niche-markets has become popular strategy of sustainable visitor management. Niche-markets also follow today's trend regarding the travellers who favour smaller scale and diversity for the mass-tourism products. (Apostolopoulos & al. 2001, 241-242.)

Niche markets presented for Malta, are divided in the tourism segments of sports, MICE, cruise tourism, culture, English language learning, ecotourism, rural tourism, and health tourism. Emerging niche markets are listed as photography tourism, birding, architecture tourism, arts, religious tourism, and wedding tourism. Each of these small-scale sectors provides a possibility to promote winter season and spread tourist arrivals and incomes more evenly on the islands. To examine the niches more closely, Malta's mild winters would make the destination ideal for sport tourism activities such as hiking, climbing, cycling, diving, yachting, and geo-caching. MICE tourism of meetings, incentives, conferences, and events could be supported by Malta's unique locations and architecture hosting business events, whereas Malta's natural and cultural activities would provide incentives for the business visitors. MICE tourists are also known to have the highest spending capacity why it makes the segment wanted among the tourist destinations. Considering the niche of English Language Teaching, Malta is a well-known destination of English language courses attracting mainly younger students in the summer months. However, this sector could be widened for a year-round product and advertising could be focused also on mature customers. Rural and ecotourism have been principally the niches of Gozo providing support for the rural areas and agricultural farms producing local food. Another year-round niche mentioned is the city-holidays in the capital of Valletta. (Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment 2012, 24-33, 69, 86-89; NCSD 2006, 45.)

The niche of cultural tourism requires wider examination. Cultural tourism is a form of tourism where the cultural heritage is transformed into products that can be consumed by tourists. It includes tangible heritage, such as buildings, archaeological sites, and museums, but also intangible heritage such as cultural practices and representations that may appear for example in forms of music, dance, handicrafts, and rituals. Regarding in-

tangible heritage, public festivals and events open to everyone are experienced as the most popular tourism products because they have less feeling of commodification. Cultural tourism is seen to have a positive impact on residents' quality of life due to improved economic development, recreation opportunities, and conservation projects. Among the communities cultural tourism may even enhance the cultural identity, national pride, and feeling of belonging. In addition, it may widen cultural understanding, increase valuing of minority cultures, and add the connection to place by sense of shared history. However, before the cultural resources are transformed into active part of tourism it should be remembered that cultural heritage belongs to the destination community. Too much emphasis on tourism needs causes easily risk of commodification or exploitation of the local community. On the other hand, if the demand of tourists is ignored tourism product may fail due to not being alluring enough to the audience. (Uysal & al. 2012, 341-344, 348-350.) Culture is finally understood to be the key asset of the Maltese Islands. Fortification cities, temples, churches, and distinctive architecture combined with wide calendar of all year-round events, such as theatres, opera season, religious traditions, and village festivals, provide an important niche of cultural tourism for Malta. (Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment 2012, 28-29.)

In terms of target marketing and sustainability, it is essential to understand the concept of quality tourist. For example, when the main island of Malta started to promote quality and invest in luxury hotels for attracting higher-spending tourists, it was noticed that upgrading tourism products does not automatically represent sustainability. Instead, luxury-oriented resorts often attract elite tourists that expect services, such as swimming pools, gardens, golf courses, and other facilities that consume scarce water and energy resources. Furthermore, to ensure the expectations in quality-level, hotels often need to belong to foreign hotel chains. This easily leads to higher leakages from local enterprises and destabilises economic sustainability. (Apostolopoulos & Gayle 2002, 84.) Thus, better quality tourist does not always imply a tourist who only spends more money but a tourist that comes from spread of countries, uses year-round niche offerings, and respects the cultural and natural environments (Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment 2012, 18, 20).

When planning the destination marketing, needs to consider that the world of travel has changed. Because the majority of Europeans are experienced travellers living in urban areas demand for new areas, individualised tourism products, and rural-, nature- and activity-based trips has increased. Also the previous pattern of long annual holidays is replaced with several shorter holidays why continuous advertising and being present year-round in the market is vital for the destination competitiveness. Regarding advertising channels, compared to traditional media the Internet provides today more targetable and

cost effective option for year-round advertising. To create coherent tourism products, year-round marketing needs to be combined with year-round connectivity and effective inner transportation system that in terms of sustainability, is discoursed in the following chapter. (Malta Today 2014b; Ministry for Tourism and Culture 2006, 28; Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment 2012, 26, 69-71.)

4.4 Transport

Because all tourism requires transport, it is impossible to make transport systems wholly sustainable or green. However, the destinations can adopt some actions to improve sustainability in their transport systems. Transport management may include different levels of regulations, concerning for example emission limits or car-free zones. Fiscal incentives and pricing mechanisms can be used for favouring green transport forms, whereas new technologies may help to create less-discharging vehicles. Governments have an essential role as a financier, regulator, and tax authority of local transport system. Regarding tourism-related transport, air travel is unfortunately the most environmentally unfriendly forms of transport. Thanks to the new technologies, aircrafts are becoming more ecologically friendly vehicles. However, the technological benefits may be overthrown because of the airline liberalization in Europe and falling prices of the global air transport. Enormous volume of air traffic has led to over-crowding of airspace and airports, and consequently increased fuel consumption and emissions. (Swarbrooke 2002, 288-294.)

Regarding private cars and public transport, private cars are largely regarded as a more convenient option than public transport. To maximize the competitiveness and attraction of public transport, price-mechanisms and controlling access are suggested. For example, if private motoring is cheaper than public transport, it cannot be expected that it would increase its popularity. Also the routes and timetables have to be carefully planned to respond to the demand. Sharing knowledge about the negative impacts of private motoring can be used for tourists and locals to encourage favouring alternative transport forms, whereas combining special interests to transport, such as health or sport, may inspire some people to choose bicycles or walking instead of cars. (Swarbrooke 2002, 288-294.) A workable public transport system provides alternative for private motoring, reduces emissions, and helps socially residents and tourists by offering cheap and efficient mode of transport (The Malta Independent 2011b).

Since Malta is an island state, air and sea traffic is in a crucial role to execute tourism. That is why the author saw more essential to concentrate here on land-based traffic that particularly in Malta should be included in the starting points of sustainable development.

The public transport reform, launched in 2011, was a huge step for Malta on the path of sustainability. The reform concerned bus connections that were redesigned by increasing routes and time schedules. This provided more accessibility around the islands and connected better for example the airport and the main touristic zones. The bus rates were increased remaining still among the cheapest in Europe. According to the author, one-way ticket at € 1,30 and day-ticket at € 1,50 in 2014, felt almost like free and surely supports the attraction of public transport. Also the traditional yellow buses were replaced by modern air-conditioned vehicles. This partly reduced the charm of Malta because these well-known yellow beauties disappeared from the street view. However, the reform can be contributed to providing cleaner, more efficient, and more user and environmental friendly bus services. Additionally, the old buses have not completely been discarded but recycled as a souvenir shops and tour buses for short distances. (Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment 2012, 35, 46.)

In spite of the improvements in public transport system there is still the reality that the country of Malta is among top users of private cars. Despite having the shortest distances in the EU, Eurobarometer survey reveals that 70% of the Maltese use private car daily, 21% uses public transport, and only 7% usually walks. The same average percentages in the EU were 54% for private motoring, 19% for public transport, and 14% for walking. Additionally, 8% mentioned using bicycle in the EU. The Maltese have announced that they do not use public transport due to lack of inadequate routes, punctuality, and frequency. (Times of Malta 2014c.) In addition, as much as one third of tourists have claimed to be dissatisfied with general transport services in Malta including public transport (Times of Malta 2014d).

However, 82% of the Maltese have mentioned traffic congestion to be the biggest daily headache compared to other EU where the percentage was 60% (Times of Malta 2014c). Regarding transport systems in Malta, Maltese public transport is constantly blamed for being fiasco and the Maltese government is continuously promising more improvements in the services and supporting infrastructure of roads, signage, and parking. Still, there is hardly a report or article comprehensively taking a stance on the effects of private motoring on the proper functioning of bus traffic. (Ministry for Tourism and Culture 2006, 43; Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment 2012, 44-50; The Malta Independent 2011b.)

Pedestrianizing city cores, where the social impact of congestion and emissions are greatest, are gradually understood to increase the satisfaction and safety of tourists and the residents (NCSD 2006, 32; Times of Malta 2012). According to the author's observations, pedestrianizing has best actualized in the walled cities of Valletta and Mdina that

provide rare peace of car-free zones in Malta. Due to Malta's flat landscape and short distances, alternative modes of transport, including walking and biking, could be promoted more for tourists and locals. Currently, these could especially implemented in Gozo and countryside where the disturbing traffic load is less dominant. (Garwood 2011, 605; Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment 2012, 48, 86.)

NCSD's report (2006, 16, 31-32) of A Sustainable Development Strategy for the Maltese Islands provides a more practical approach when discussing about the Maltese transport policy and air quality. The growth in private car ownership and restricting of overall vehicle use, by high-quality public transport system and traffic management measures, are mentioned. Furthermore, providing use of alternative fuels, such as biodiesel, is proposed. However, because of the congested narrow streets, the primary object should be decreasing the over-dependence on private cars to allow public transport work more efficiently. Introducing road network, bus lanes, and traffic lights giving priority to buses are suggested. In turn, directing heavy traffic away from residential zones would ensure traffic calming and road safety for pedestrians and cyclists, whereas promoting sustainable transport systems and arranging educational campaigns for alternative transport modes could reduce private car use. Green travel plans could be promoted and adopted especially with employers, schools, and hospitals in order to reduce peak hour traffic congestion. Promotion should be focused also for tourists but firstly the transport systems need to be improved on at local level. (NCSD 2006, 16, 31-32.) Education and promotion as a tool for sustainable development is discussed better in the following chapter.

4.5 Education

Education that promotes sustainable behaviour should be provided for all stakeholders related to the tourism industry. This chapter primarily focuses on the education targeted to tourists and the local residents. Education may take several forms and places. It may appear as a written sign in a museum, brochure in a hotel room, video on the Internet, or oral lecture by a tour guide. Moreover, information content and style of presentation may vary in terms of formality and interactivity. Nevertheless, the main reason education is used in tourism planning and management is to share knowledge and change people's behaviour. In the case of sustainable tourism, educational processes should not only be the ways to transfer information but rather motivate and create values, empathy, and understanding for the environment and cultures. Emotional education programmes usually have a better chance to make people change their behaviour and attitudes. (Mason 2008, 210-212, 219; Weaver 2006, 181, 186-187.)

Instead of directly regulating or forcing education, indirect approach might influence better on desired behaviour. Indirect education emphasizes soft intervention in the forms of persuasion and interpretation. Hard interventions are necessary to minimize intentional illegal behaviour such as vandalism but when it comes to changing uninformed or careless behaviour, moderate approach is generally more effective. Another way winning people's mind is to invest in positive motivators such as humour, confidence, and using of commonalities for example in the gender or age of the audience. Education should also be as short and compact as possible, since the natural feature of human beings is lack of patience and motivation to adopt too extensive amounts of information. Instead of signs or web-page attachments, more lasting impress is usually made by human contact where the personalities and mutual communication are present. (Weaver 2006, 181-182, 184, 186-187.)

In the article of The Malta Independent (2011b) the reporter asks: "Where are the educational campaigns to explain the importance of sustainability and what it actually means". The writer doubts that in addition to the public even the Maltese politicians and the government are uncertain about what sustainability actually signifies and how it realistically could be implemented. In the end is summarized that before changing the way to look sustainability it cannot have its positive impacts in Malta. (The Malta Independent 2011b.) Education for appreciating Malta's natural and cultural heritage is understood to be an essential part of sustainable development. However, sustainable education is still under reform in Malta. Even the environmental education is today adopted part of school programmes, from primary level to university, the approach for importance of sustainable lifestyle still needs to be improved. Sustainable education is a lifelong process, thus it should start as early age as possible and continue through life time. It should involve all members of society and people of all ages. In addition to educational and governmental sector, NGOs and local media of television, newspapers, and radio should work in cooperation to provide the environmental education more accessible to the public. (Malta National Report 2002, 56-58, 76-77; NCSD 2006, 52-54.)

By emphasizing the positive effects that sustainable lifestyle has on quality of life and human welfare it could gain more motivated audience (Malta National Report 2002, 77; NCSD 2006, 36). Education for the values of sustainability often increases the chance for people's commitment to tangible actions. In addition, through better education people will be more empowered for participating in decision-making processes. (Malta National Report 2002, 58; NCSD 2006, 52.) The importance of community participation in sustainable tourism development is examined more closely in the following chapter.

4.6 Community participation

According to Uysal & al. (2012, 547-548, 551-552), community participation has a crucial role in planning tourism, particularly when it comes to sustainability. To begin with, all those who may be affected or affect by tourism should be involved in planning processes. In the case of tourism planning, the local residents have usually the most critical role in experiencing the tourism impacts. It can also be argued that the host communities are forced to share their resources with tourists, why locals should have a right to be key players in the processes of planning and managing tourism. By community involvement it can be ensured that the traditional cultural lifestyles and values remain respected but also prevent the overexploitation of the resources. The local expertise may provide silent knowledge and innovative ideas that leads to better decisions and more successful plans. Furthermore, community participation may increase the local commitment to the process and thus contribute implementation of the plans. Community participation can even have an effect on tourism satisfaction since the residents who are informed and familiar with the tourism decisions, are likely to have more favourable attitude and more hospitable behaviour for tourists. (Mason 2008, 119-120; Uysal & al. 2012, 547-548, 551-552.)

Thus, tourism developers should encourage community participation in tourism planning to avoid the communities to feel powerless in influencing tourism development. Both men and women should be involved in decision-making processes and their ideas, expectations, and concerns should be heard and taken into account when formulating the future plans. What is also essential to remember is that community participation requires assistance and training of locals in advance to generate appropriate decisions. (Ritchie & Crouch 2005, 51; Uysal & al. 2012, 548.) The timing of community involvement should happen on as early stage as possible before starting the decision-making processes (Swarbrooke 2002, 127). Although involving the host communities does not always ensure successful decisions and it may have an impact on the efficiency of planning process, for sustainable tourism development the community participation is mandatory (Mason 2008, 167, 176).

Malta has also taken community participation as part of its sustainable policies. In the National Report (2002, 57) is written that the opportunities for public participation in decision-making have increased. However, education for sustainability, especially for adults, should still be provided more so that the communities would receive necessary skills for interpreting given data, organising themselves into effective groups, and participating actively in decision-making. The meaning and importance of active participation in

sustainable development should be promoted among civil society. (National Report 2002, 57-58, 77.)

Also NCSD's report (2006, 55) emphasizes the significance of public participation and access to information. Yet, there is still a number of challenges concerning current situation. Given information is still in too scientific form for public to clearly understand why sustainability is important. In addition, the information does not always reach the right people who would be motivated to use it. Formal participation of lay public remains still low and most of the participants represent the particular members of government departments. The need for sustainable development should be raised more by information channels of local media and politicians. Strengthening the capacity of local councils would encourage participation since the local councils provide a link between public and government. Emphasis from the environmental issues should be widened also in the cultural values for motivating the communities to participate more for the common well. Community participation would provide opportunity for public to have an influence on future tourism development so that a satisfactory balance between the cultural, environmental, and economic consensus of sustainable tourism would be reached as best as possible. (NCSD 2006, 55-57, 65-66.) Community participation is also emphasised in this thesis by the research where most of the participants have chosen among the Maltese to hear their concerns about sustainable tourism development in Malta. To clarify the multidimensional chapter of the strategies, the author has created a summarizing table for the sustainable tourism strategies potential to implement in Malta (Table 12). The table can be found from the following two pages.

Naturally, this chapter does not introduce all sustainable strategies possible or necessary to use in Malta. For example cruise tourism, air traffic, and marine environment got less attention because all the parts belonging to sustainable tourism were impossible to be covered in one thesis. When considering sustainability as a whole system and not only sustainable tourism, there is still more issues to take into account. Nevertheless, the purpose of this chapter was to provide a starting point for Malta for continuing its sustainable tourism development. These are also solutions that sustainable tourism literature provided and what the author saw essential to take along when combining personal observations with tourism literature and other references about Malta. In the following chapter the theoretical framework is followed by the empirical part where sustainable tourism development in Malta is explored in further detail. The examination was based on the research where local Maltese, international temporary residents, and Finnish travellers provided ideas for Malta to develop sustainable tourism better in the country.

Table 12. Strategies for sustainable tourism in Malta

Strategies for sustainable tourism in Malta
Visitor management
Visitor regulation:
❖ Visitation caps: quotas, group size limits, fee manipulation
❖ Redistribution: dispersal, concentration, time, price manipulation
Modifying visitor behaviour:
❖ Education
❖ Marketing
❖ Signage
Land use
❖ Zoning: tourism zones, residential zones, protected zones, rural zones
❖ Districting: preservation of urban districts and rural landscapes
❖ Development standards/building practices: restrictions in size, density, height, setbacks, building standards, landscaping, signage, and noise regulation
Marketing
❖ Target marketing: quality tourists, eco-tourists, high-spending tourists, cultural tourists
❖ Demarketing: mass tourists, low-spending tourists, seasonal tourists
❖ Niche marketing: sport tourism, MICE, cultural tourism, English language learning, ecotourism, rural tourism, urban tourism, religious tourism
❖ Marketing alternative areas: rural villages, inland, authentic attractions
❖ Marketing off-season
Transport
❖ Private motoring: traffic management measures, alternative fuels
❖ Public transport system: inexpensive, efficient, routes, timetables, technology
❖ Providing priority for public transport: bus lanes, bus routes, traffic lights
❖ Providing priority for alternative transport: pedestrianizing, traffic calming, redirecting heavy traffic, designing biking and walking routes
❖ Promotional and educational campaigns: public transport, alternative transport, walking, biking, health, sport
Education
❖ Sharing knowledge and changing behaviours
❖ Emotional education: creating motivation, values, empathy, understanding, appreciation
❖ Indirect education: soft intervention, persuasion, interpretation
❖ Using positive motivators: humour, confidence, human contact
❖ Short and compact information
❖ Education topics: sustainable lifestyle, sustainable tourism, environmental and cultural well-being, appreciation for natural and cultural sites
❖ Education channels: schools, government, NGOs, media, tourism operators
❖ Education forms: lectures, signs, advertisements, brochures, web, campaigns

Community participation
❖ Promoting the importance of active participation in decision-making
❖ Providing education, assistance, training, understandable information
❖ Strengthening the capacity of local councils
❖ Involving both men and women
❖ Hearing the ideas, expectations, and concerns of locals before formulating the future tourism plans

5 Methods and data collection

The empirical part of this thesis consists of qualitative research and structured interviews that were chosen as the main methods to execute data collection for the study. The progress and phases of the study are introduced in this chapter by presenting the research methods, data collection methods, focus group, validity, reliability, and the arguments why these methods and choices were regarded suitable for the study. The study was concerning possibilities to improve sustainable tourism in Malta and it was conducted between November and December 2014. The emphasis of the study was to focus on tourism-related problems in Malta and find solutions to solve those. From the basis of the study the ideas were compiled to develop tourism towards a more sustainable level in Malta.

5.1 Research and data collection methods

The methodological approach of this study was qualitative for the reason that it gives the best approach for comprehensively understanding and interpreting social phenomena, human communication, and human activity. The purpose of a qualitative study is often to find and reveal facts of real life rather than verify already existing claims. (Hirsijärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 161, 163.) It answers to the questions why, how and what kind of (Heikkilä 2008, 17). Qualitative research often focuses on the future and it is used as a method to develop, improve, or renew the research target (Pitkäranta 2014, 9). Choosing a qualitative approach to this study can be argued through the facts mentioned above. It was particularly essential, that the study would reveal new facts and ideas that could be applied in real life. Because the emphasis of the study was to examine tourism-related problems, qualitative method provided deeper approach to investigate and reveal the troublesome issues. Moreover, most of the interview questions were looking for the answers to the questions like “what kind of” or “how” (Appendices 2 & 3).

The most essential method for the data collection included structured research interviews, signifying that the interview questions were carefully planned in advance and the order of the questions was the same for everyone. Structured interview is particularly suitable when the interviewees are relatively identical among each other. (Metsämuuronen 2006, 114.) All of the respondents had connections both to tourism and sustainability, justifying the structured questions suitable for data collection. In addition, all of the interviews were conducted by e-mail or Facebook why adapting or changing the questions during the interviews was not possible. Nevertheless, the interviewees were able to answer openly, ask for adjustment, and reserve explanations from the author during their answering process. Moreover, there was possibility to ask specifications to the answers

by e-mail or Facebook when needed. The interview forms were sent 28th November 2014 as an attached document by email or Facebook message to all 17 potential respondents. The focus group had three weeks' time to take part in the study and the interview questions were sent in English or in Finnish depending on the nationality of the respondent (Appendices 2 & 3). The number of the received interviews was 14.

Another method for collecting the data was observation that the author did during her five-month's exchange studies from February to June 2014 in Malta. Observation implies that the target of the study is observed through the senses and notes are written down (Metsämuuronen 2006, 116). When the interviews and surveys tell what people think, feel, and believe, observing reveals what is truly happening and are people acting as they are claiming to act (Hirsijärvi & al. 2009, 212). Observation was used in chapter "4 Strategies for Sustainable Tourism in Malta" since finding enough references and examples concerning Malta was at time challenging. The author's experiences were also utilized in the chapter "7 Suggestions for the future" to confirm the results collected from the theoretical and empirical part. In all, everything written in this thesis is supported by the author's views on matter.

5.2 Focus group

Because qualitative research aims to understand a certain phenomenon, it is crucial that the target persons are well acquainted and experienced with the research subject (Pitkäranta 2014, 98). That is why the focus group of this qualitative study was carefully chosen among three different aspects: locals, temporary residents, and travellers (Table 13). The local Maltese that took part in the study were all teaching, studying, or working in the tourism sector in their country. The interviewed temporary residents were exchange students who had lived in Malta from five months up to three years. Most of the temporary residents were studying tourism and took part in the course of Sustainable Tourism at the University of Malta during spring 2014. Finally, the travellers represented Finnish persons who visited Malta during spring 2014 for one to two weeks. All of the respondents indicated either active participation in the classes, exceptional interest for sustainability in their lifestyle, or both that was another reason to choose them to the focus group. Thus, it was possible to receive motivated as well as professional responses for the interview questions.

Table 13. Focus group of the study

Focus group
1. L1, UK, teacher of sustainable tourism at the University of Malta
2. L2, Malta, local student of tourism at the University of Malta
3. L3, Malta, local student of tourism at the University of Malta
4. L4, Malta, local student of tourism at the University of Malta
5. L5, Malta, local student of tourism at the University of Malta
6. L6, Malta, local working in the tourism sector
7. TR1, USA, exchange student of tourism at the University of Malta
8. TR2, Germany, exchange student of tourism at the University of Malta
9. TR3, Finland, exchange student of tourism at the University of Malta
10. TR4, Hong Kong, full-time student at the University of Malta
11. T1, Finland, traveller
12. T2, Finland, traveller
13. T3, Finland, traveller
14. T4, Finland, traveller
L=local, TR=temporary resident, T=traveller

Apostolopoulos & Gayle (2002, 289-290) suggest that the research methods should extend to concern cross-sectionally different stakeholders of the tourism industry. The purpose of this thesis was to enhance the local participation, international cooperation, as well as to seek cross-cultural know-how in order to find solutions for further sustainable tourism development in Malta. Additionally, the objective was to examine the roles and opinions of different stakeholders in the tourism industry including tourists, locals, tourism companies, and the government. Variable nations and ages among the focus group brought richness to the answers and viewpoints. The respondents were between 19-63 years old and represented the countries of Malta, Finland, USA, UK, Hong Kong, and Germany. Initially, the objective was to gain answers at least from 10 interviewees to ensure results from all three aspects of locals, temporary residents, and travellers. The total number of the interviewees was 17, whereas the number of received answers was 14. Hereby, the response rate turned out to be 82.4% and thus the objectives exceeded the expectations. To examine the division of the answers, six of the interview forms were received from local Maltese, four from temporary residents, and four from travellers, which indicates balance in the sample.

5.3 Validity and reliability

The concepts of validity and reliability are traditionally used for measuring the overall level of veracity and accuracy of the research. The term of validity denotes if the study is

truly measuring these factors that it was intended to measure. In turn, reliability refers to the repeatability of the research. In other words, are two different interviewers able to receive the same results in two different research time frames. (Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2008, 186; Metsämuuronen 2006, 56.) Validity is hard to survey subsequently while reliability can be examined even after the research is ready. Because validity can be ensured only beforehand, it makes careful planning and well-premeditated data collection essential. In the aspect of validity, a representative sample, high response rate, specification of the focus group, and questions that are measuring the right issue, affect positively validity. (Heikkilä 2008, 30, 187.) Before sending the questions, researcher needs to take into account that respondents may understand the questions in an entirely different manner than what was the intension of the research. That is why planning and testing the questions carefully beforehand is worthwhile. The researcher may also face lack of adequate answers especially if the questionnaires are conducted by post or e-mail. That is why reminding, usually twice, is vital to raise the response rate. (Hirsijärvi & al. 2009, 196, 204, 231-232.)

The researcher should set the specific objectives for the research to examine the right things. If the measurable concepts and variables are not clearly defined the measurement results cannot be valid. Regarding reliability, the results may not be coincidental but they have to be repeatable with similar conclusions. In addition to accuracy and criticality, researcher needs to choose suitable research methods and have skills to interpret the results. Experienced researcher also knows that the lack of adequate answers can be prevented by choosing sample that is large enough. (Heikkilä 2008, 29-30.) Achieving validity and reliability in a qualitative study is often more complex than in a quantitative study. This is because qualitative study usually aims to describe human activity or cultural phenomena that cannot have two similar explanation or conclusion. Thus, to strengthen the qualitative research's validity it is important to give a specific and truthful review of the research progress and explain its phases such as interview time, place, focus group, conditions, distraction, or incorrect interpretation. Moreover, giving reasons where the interpretations and conclusions are established supports validity. (Hirsijärvi & al. 2009, 232-233.)

Regarding the validity of this study, the specification of the focus group, representative sample, motivating, and reminding were the main reasons for receiving such high response rate. The author formulated the focus group carefully from people she already knew at least in some level and chose oversized sample on purpose. Enough time was provided for the interviewees to answer due to the qualitative and written nature of the research. Also the interview timing was taken into account. The research interviews were sent in November 2014 to obtain the answers before the Christmas holidays. This is how

the adequate response rate was ensured. Even if the interviews were collected before the theoretical section was completely ready, the author did not read the results until the theoretical framework was completed. Three days prior to sending the forms, an information letter on the upcoming research was sent by email or by Facebook depending which was the best way to reach the respondents. Thus the approximate number of answers was already mapped out. In this case, 17 of the 17 respondents reacted positively to the preview letter. There were also two reminders to the respondents to send their answers affecting positively on the response rate.

Concerning the interview questions, they were carefully planned and formulated before sending the interview forms. Accordingly, the questions were checked by five people outside of the focus group to make sure that they were understandable and correct. All of the pre-adjusters were carefully chosen since they had previous experience of doing research, and good skills in English and Finnish grammar. Along to these pre-adjustments the questions were modified into being as clear and explicit as possible before using them for the interviews. The questions were not formulated in one day but during three months while the author prepared the theory section of the thesis. This indicates that the author strived to find right answers for the right research problem.

Nevertheless, the author can find some areas where the validity and reliability could have been better in this study. Even if choosing the right research methods was clear since the beginning, setting the research problem was not as self-evident. Due to large thesis topic, it was rather composed during the writing process and left the author slightly uncertain whether the questions in the end measured the right things and were compatible with the theoretical part. Even if the timing of the study was considered, it was mostly allocated for December that it usually the busiest time of the year because of Christmas and end of school semesters. This might have resulted some respondents not engaging profoundly while writing their answers. Also, even though the age distribution of the focus group was wide, most of the opinions were received from the respondents under thirty years old. This resulted that the older generations were not equally represented in the results. However, the response rate turned out to be high and the author was positively surprised how comprehensive and motivated the answers were. In addition, the results repeated strongly the theory section indicating that the questions were measuring right things and the study was required. Due to the qualitative approach of the study it cannot be ensured that the results and conclusions would be similar if this study was conducted another time with another focus group. This is why the author strived to give a truthful review of the research process and its phases to strengthen the overall validity and reliability of the research.

6 Analysis of the results

Hirsijärvi & al. (2009, 224) separate the analysis of the results into two different methods: explaining that is mostly used when interpreting statistics, and understanding that is more common when examining qualitative analysis. Research is not ready when the results are analysed but the results should also be interpreted meaning that the author considers the results of the analysis and makes own conclusions of those (Hirsijärvi & al. 2009, 229). This chapter introduces the results collected for developing sustainable tourism in Malta. The analysis of the results was conducted by examining the 10 questions (Appendices 2 & 3) of the 14 received interview forms. Regarding the answers, six of the interview forms were received from local Maltese, four from international temporary residents, and four from Finnish travellers. The answers were discussed question by question and the differences and similarities between the perspectives of locals (L), international temporary residents (TR), and travellers (T) were compared. Even if the research was qualitative it was possible and necessary to create also some clarifying statistics of the results. The results are illustrated as histograms in Figure 14 and 15.

6.1 Tourism-related problems in Malta

The question number 1 investigated problems that the focus group had noticed tourism to cause in Malta. The issues were supposed to be something that had affected the locals' and temporary residents' everyday life, or alternatively to the tourism experience of the travellers. The aroused problems were so repetitive that to explain and clarify the results, it was possible to create a figure of the most prominent concerns in Malta. The focus group announced that the most notable tourism-related problems in Malta included: congestion (71%), traffic (64%), waste & littering (43%), over development (29%), disrespectful behaviour (29%), noise (21%), pressure on resources and sites (21%), air quality (21%), and lack of public convenience (14%). The frequency of these problems was measured in percentage and can be examined more closely in Figure 14.

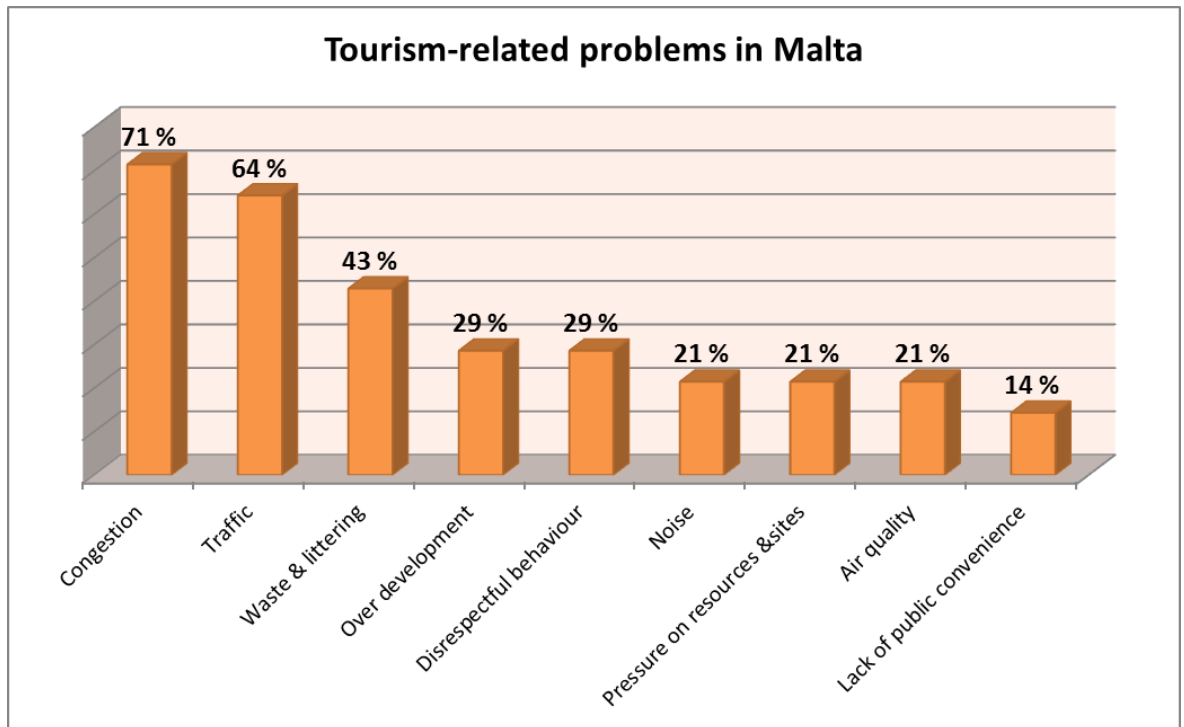


Figure 14. Tourism-related problems in Malta

The most frequent problem among the answers was definitely congestion (71%). Tourism was experienced to cause overcrowding, particularly during the peak season, in Comino, Mdina, St Julians, beaches, roads, buses, sites, and entertainment areas like Paceville. “Comino is advertised as paradise but in summer it is anything but relaxing”, commented L5. The second worst problem, mentioned in more than half of the answers, was traffic (64%). L3 wrote that sometimes tourists who rent cars cause conflicts on the roads, because of the left side traffic, narrow roads, and one way streets easily confusing tourists. Also L4 told that car rentals are very popular among tourists, which increases the already problematic issue of traffic. In addition to road traffic, tourism was said to cause voluminous cruise and pedestrian congestion in Malta. Presumably, temporary residents and travellers experienced local car traffic to be immense, chaotic, dangerous, and aimless. The public transportation system was noticed to be overcrowded and below capacity while the continuous traffic jams made travelling inconvenient, especially between tourist sites and tourist areas.

The third problem related to tourism was announced to be waste and littering (43%). This problem was mostly stated by the temporary residents and travellers since only one of the locals L1 mentioned waste or littering in the first interview question. According to the answers, tourists were experienced to generate more waste and leave behind rubbish, such as cans, bottles and plastic cups, particularly on the beaches and in the party town of Paceville. The fourth problem of over-development and property construction in the coastal areas was noted by 29% of the respondents. “Incongruous ugly over devel-

opment of coastal strip”, denoted L1, whereas L5 wrote that: “Sliema got beaten up so bad that now days one does not really recognise where he is, as the Maltese character in the buildings has almost disappeared.” TR4 argued that the hotels and resorts are generally built on the coastline where they sometimes may even have own private beaches. This has resulted businesses to conquer with natural areas and prevented the local residents to use those for the recreation. Moreover, T2 remarked that more and more luxurious and bigger hotels are built in Malta but regardless of the history and architectural heritage.

Disrespectful behaviour, mentioned in 29% of the answers, was experienced to be growing within tourist arrivals in terms of increased theft on beaches and shops, as well as an increased number of fights in Paceville. High tourist numbers were also told to generate more noise that 21% of the focus group found disturbing. Noise was told to ruin relaxing days on the beaches and resulting Malta’s traffic and party life to become even more loud and stressful. Pressure on the limited resources and premature wearing of the natural and cultural sites was mentioned by 21% of the respondents. Generally, tourism was blamed to endanger the whole carrying capacity of the island. Nevertheless, TR3 added that the concentration of tourists in relatively small areas in Malta may sometimes guard the integrity of other areas. Air quality was discussed among the temporary residents (21%) who wrote that hence traffic and high number of cars the air felt polluted and heavy with smog. Finally, TR4 and T1 (14%) told that lack of public convenience generated hygienic problems and led visitors to have unappreciated feelings in Malta.

In addition to problems mentioned above, the socio-cultural dimension of tourism received attention. L5 argued that since Malta has isolated tourists only in specific areas, this has led to a division between tourists and locals. Tourists are not integrated with the local community but conversely tourist influence is let to dictate the locals. The main problem that L5 found was that Malta has developed tourism as an industry meaning that everything is built and created to satisfy tourists. This is happening to the detriment of locals who at the same time feel like losing their cultural values and pride. Commercialization was experienced also in terms of food culture that T4 and L5 told to be impersonal and touristic. L5 wrote that the food served in Malta is mostly British, which is Malta’s biggest market, and because of that Maltese food is rarely option in the local restaurants. T3 also argued that some of the sites were excessively filled up with vendor stands which diminished the dignity of the site. Other singular problem noted by T2 was unreasonable use of plastic when packaging purchases for example in the souvenir shops. In turn, TR3 mentioned jellyfishes that were experienced to prevent swimming in Malta. TR3 wrote that tuna fish aquaculture should be regulated due to food given to tu-

na fishes is believed to allure also jellyfishes to eat and come to near shores. Finally, TR2 commented that Malta seems to be economically too dependent on tourism.

6.2 Solutions for tourism-related problems in Malta

The question number 2 was looking for suggestions to solve the tourism-related problems founded in the first question. To clarify the results it was again possible to formulate a figure from the suggested solutions. As can be seen from Figure 15, improving public transport system was the most frequent answer among the focus group (50%). Other solutions presented were: carrying capacity assessment (43%), waste management (36%), using development standards (29%), limiting private motoring (21%), education (21%), increasing security & safety (21%), setting visitor quotas (14%), and improving public environments (14%). To revise, the problems found in the first question included: congestion, traffic, waste & littering, over development, disrespectful behaviour, noise, pressure on resources and sites, air quality, and lack of public convenience. In addition to these, there was socio-cultural dimension, excessive use of plastic, the issue of jellyfishes, and economic dependence on tourism discoursed in the answers.

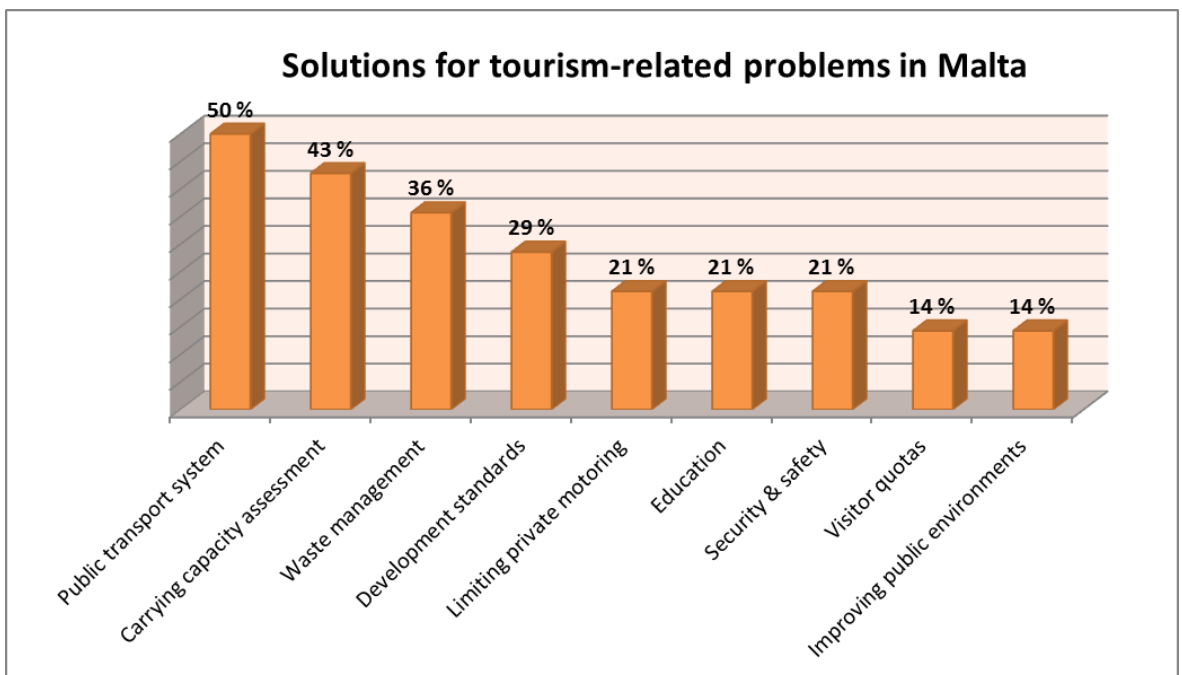


Figure 15. Solutions for tourism-related problems in Malta

The solutions to relief congestion, consequential noise, and pressure on resources and sites, were carrying capacity assessment (43%) and setting of visitor quotas (14%). Firstly, for Mdina was requested better understanding and organization from all stakeholders. Mdina tours were asked to be scattered more diversely at different times of the day especially during the high season to not surpass the social carrying capacity of the residents or hinder the touristic experience. Another attraction in need of capacity as-

assessment was Comino. The need for additional planning and policies were asked to set not only because of tourists, but also due to the aberrant number of boats on the small area. To avoid evolving of congestion and touristic enclaves, such as Sliema and Bugibba, paying attention to carrying capacity and scattering small, local hotels around the whole island was suggested. Also carrying capacity of the over-crowded beaches was recommended to be noted. The solution given for this was to start promoting other attractions than the beaches to evenly redistribute the tourist crowds.

More regulation was asked in order to control generally carrying capacity of the tourist sites. TR4 suggested direct limiting of visitor numbers entering in the tourist sites, whereas TR3 insisted quotas to be used for the entire country. Visitor quotas, that were told being utilized also for example in the Azores, could be the keys for protecting carrying capacity and resources of Malta. At the same time Malta could be branded as an exclusive destination and the prices could be raised. According to TR3, it would probably allure better behaving and higher-spending visitors to the country. Moreover, for reducing the number of tourists without losing the revenues, L5 propounded attracting more cultural tourists to the country.

The problems of traffic and air quality were suggested to solve by improving public transport system (50%) and limiting private motoring (21%). More efficient public transport system appeared in half of the answers and improvements were needed particularly in timetables, frequency, routes, and promotion of bus system. Also better management of roads, bridges, signage, and infrastructure for pedestrians and bicycles were called for. In addition to the basic bus transport system, electronic busses and tram system were proposed. In addition to public transport, limiting private motoring was discussed among TR4, T1, and T2. Additionally, T1 wrote that the public transport is already working very well thus the only thing in need of attention is the private motoring. Moreover, T2 suggested restricting of private motoring and reducing car stock by introducing higher car and fuel taxes, and by setting limits for the maximum engine power allowed.

Better waste management (36%) was requested because of the additional tourism-related waste and littering. The basis for the waste management was suggested to be created with waste-separation schemes; including bio-waste, energy waste, bio-energy waste, recyclable waste, and reusable waste. Building of waste incinerator or exporting wastes to the nearest countries that have waste incinerators was given as a solution to reduce country-specific waste amounts. Moreover, providing more bins, prohibiting discharges, giving up of excessive use of plastic, introducing textile bags, and educating people for the benefits of waste management were added as an essential part of the ef-

efficient waste management system. T1 even had a vision that Malta could become a pioneer island of exemplary waste management in the Mediterranean. Regarding image building, TR3 also proposed utilizing of eco-certificates, such as Green Key and Green Office, to modify Malta's destination image greener and more ecological.

Over-development was insisted to be controlled by better enforcement of planning regulations and development standards (29%). Development standards in hotel construction were announced to taken better into account in size by building smaller-scale hotels, in density by scattering hotels more evenly around the island, in setbacks to not allow hotels and resorts to occupy coastal areas, and in building standards to appreciate Malta's architectural heritage. Education and informing (21%) were mentioned among the answers as general ways to decrease all tourism-related problems effecting for example on heritage protection, waste management, and people's careless behaviour. Additional improvements in the security and safety (21%) were told to be needed for the historical sites and because of disrespectful behaviour generally. Efficient police forces and disciplinary actions of fines were asked to be implemented for people who steal or cause a fight. However, T4 reminded that tourists should carry their responsibility on behaving well, since anyone who is travelling should be ready to appreciate local cultures and behave respectfully at the destination. Improving public environments (14%) was suggested in terms of environmental design and lack of adequate existence or cleanness of public convenience in Malta.

In addition to suggestions explained above, the focus group presented solutions for the issues of socio-cultural dimension, problem of jellyfishes, and economic dependence on tourism. To change tourism from industry and quantity to local-scale business and quality needs to be concentrated on local produce instead of importing goods. L5 continued that this would enhance authenticity of the products, create more jobs, and make sure that the revenues would stay in the original country. In turn, to avoid jellyfish of conquering Malta's beaches, TR3 suggested giving up of tuna fish aquaculture and instead providing more organic fish stocks in the restaurants. Promoting high-class sea products could also be part of Malta's new image building as an exclusive destination. Finally, to reduce the excessive dependence on tourism industry, concentrating and creating also other economic sectors was recommended by TR2 and T3.

6.3 Attitude and actions for sustainable tourism in Malta

The question number 3 examined how the general attitude for values of sustainability is in Malta today. Only T1 found attitude for sustainability being particularly positive in Malta. Instead, all locals, all temporary residents, and rest of the travellers experienced that

the general attitude is rather negative and careless. The most radical expressions to describe the attitude were: “a joke”, “all talk little action”, and “general sense of apathy about sustainability”. Only dimension of sustainable tourism where Malta was perceived to indicate success was economic sustainability in terms of making profits and maximizing revenues. Otherwise, sustainable development was observed being in its initial stage and the answers indicated that the Maltese are not serious or aware enough about sustainability. However, L2 and L6 noted that the younger generations and tourism industry have started to realise its importance during the past few years. Needs to also underline that the attitude was not told to be ignorant only because of disregard but also due to general unawareness about what sustainability actually means. In addition, TR4 thought that Malta could have high potential for sustainability because of its small size easier to manage, regarding for instance waste management, and sunny weather that could provide utilization of solar energy.

The question number 4 inquired what kind of actions Malta has taken to improve sustainable tourism. Even if most of the answers had separate views, there were some actions founded from more than one paper. These issues concerned marketing shoulder months, promoting niche markets and alternatives, and having emphasis on sustainable development in Malta’s tourism policy. Also improvements in the public transport system and partial introduction of electric busses were noted. However, T1 underlined that even though the public transport system was excellent and inexpensive it would work better if the private traffic would not be as voluminous as it is. Also the accommodation sector got attention because of the green hotel scenes that are today more common in Malta, regulations that does not allow hotels anymore to dump sewage and waste into the sea, and hotel upgrading projects that have been made to attract higher spending tourists to the country. Other singular development steps were beach and environment cleaning, conserving the cultural site of Hagar Qim and Mnajdra Temples, providing more recycle bins in residential areas, raising public awareness, pedestrianizing part of Valletta, and urban regeneration projects experienced for instance in Bugibba and Qawra. Also EU funded projects regarding infrastructure support, capacity building, and enhancement schemes were mentioned. T3 and T4 did not find any issues regarding sustainable tourism development in Malta and even though everyone else found some improvements, L2 and L5 also added that still not much have been done for developing sustainable tourism in Malta. L5 summarized: “We look too much on the quantitative matters rather than a holistic picture which would result in qualitative outcome.”

6.4 Solutions for sustainable tourism abroad

The question number 5 explored what kind of practical solutions for sustainable tourism the respondents had observed in other countries. The practices were supposed to be applicable also in Malta. Almost every paper introduced different kind of ideas for sustainable tourism or generally for sustainable development. For example, free public transport for locals in the Azores, tourism eco-tax on the Balearic Islands, beach entry-fee on the Italian island of Lido, biosphere reserves in Germany, effective public transport system and trams in Norway and Sweden, and bicycle traffic in Holland were stood out to be applicable in Malta. Tourism eco-taxes were said to provide huge contribution for the environment conservation and because they generally are very cheap, around 1 euro, tourists do not mind for paying those. Regarding the beach entry-fees, they were told to be around 5 euros without sunbed and umbrella, and 10 euros with the equipment. Price was including one shower and one restroom visit to control water consumption, and fees collected were used for keeping the beach environment clean. In turn, UNESCO Biosphere reserves were explained to be scenic nature protected areas where tourism is operating in terms of recreation, eco-hotels, eco-friendly transport, and nature conservation projects where tourists can donate.

Other general observations from abroad concerned recycling, use of green energy, cultural and natural conservation, cleanness and accessibility of cultural sites, overall regulation, eco-certificates, and promoting winter season more for MICE tourists. Especially building practices received attention, since capacity building, environmental enhancement, improving public spaces, environmental design, tree-planting, height restrictions, and limits in over-building were suggested to take better into account in Malta. L6 told that some areas, like Bugibba, have been ruined simply because of the number of buildings built in the area.

L5 emphasized that Calvia in Mallorca would be the number one place for Malta to learn from sustainable tourism. L5 had also experienced that in Sweden socio-cultural sustainability was taken better into account by creating products rather for locals than tourists. This provided better contribution for locals and more authentic experiences for tourists. In England L5 met policies where the hotels and restaurants tried to work with the regional food producers as much as possible. This was at the same time a marketing tool for the businesses but it also helped local trades not to die out, decreased transport emissions, and provided freshest possible products with the regional characteristics for the consumers. L5 also suggested creation of a national biking system in Malta: "In Holland the number of bicycle riders I saw was amazing, not just for leisure, but for the daily life. Maybe it is time to create a national plan to promote such as system locally."

Still, the interview form of the T1 requires wider examination. The practices were mostly based on Finland and excellent ideas for Malta in terms of waste management were offered. Firstly, recycling system and intentional reduction of waste was emphasized to be learned already early in the childhood. Teaching should be provided both in homes and schools. Moreover, replacing plastic bags by textile bags and creating fine system for littering were suggested as simple ways to contribute waste management. To encourage locals and especially new generations for recycling, colourful or even animal shaped garbage bins in the public spaces were introduced. Instead of littering, “feeding” the animal bins would make waste management fun for children and could help changing people’s behaviour. Another idea given was motivating households by annual competitions where the best ideas for reducing waste and improving sustainability in general would be awarded. This could create initiatives for more sustainable lifestyle and improve general awareness of sustainability. The Finnish Association for Nature Conservation (FANC) also organizes every year a competition of “the most useless good of a year”. The purpose of the competition is to raise public awareness and wake public to think about their consuming habits. For instance, non-refundable bottles, city jeeps, and scented garbage bags have awarded in Finland for being the most pointless innovations of a year. The ideas for useless goods are collected by public votes and suggestions on the Internet. This competition could offer new perspectives for consume and advertise centralized cultures around the world.

6.5 Responsibilities of tourists

The question number 6 was looking for issues tourists should take better into account when travelling to Malta in terms of improving sustainable tourism or generally sustainable development in Malta. Most of the answers were corresponding to each other having highlight in cultural respect, public transport, fresh water consumption, and local products. Regarding socio-cultural sustainability, the focus group agreed that tourists should have higher appreciation and understanding of Malta’s culture and traditions. For example, dressing appropriately in churches, enjoying party scene within reason, and following the Maltese law was mentioned. The privacy of residents was experienced to be endangered especially in the silent city of Mdina where littering and shouting tourists were told to disturb everyday life of residents. “It’s not the first time when tourists knock on resident’s doors in Mdina to explore the houses”, noted L4. Almost half of the answers repeated the need of respectful behaviour in terms of noise or littering. Also social and friendly attitude for intercultural exchange was taken up in two of the answers.

Instead, environmental sustainability and nature protection was noted by emphasizing tourist’s responsibility to favour public transport and other alternative modes of transport,

such as walking and biking, always when possible. Renting cars, motor-bikes, or jet skis was recommended to be avoided, along with unnecessary boat traffic and polluting tourist activities. Waste management was taken into account by encouraging tourists to recycle, avoid over-packed goods, and disposable dishes. Tourists should also try to bring along waste as less as possible when travelling to Malta. Water and energy consumption were advised to be regarded in hotels by wasting water as less as possible in shower, not changing the sheets and towels daily, and switching off the air-condition on when leaving from the hotel room. Also favouring eco-hotels, eco-destinations, and niche tourism were stated. Economic sustainability had emphasis on vast of answers since many interviewees mentioned that tourists should buy local products instead of imported goods and choose local-owned businesses instead of multinational companies. L5 reminded that giving feedback should be tourist's responsibility because it would enable better research on Malta's tourism product and marketing strategy, and lead improvements in future tourism product. The most different and sharpest suggestion for tourists was staycation meaning that tourists could alternatively spend their holidays at home or near home, instead of travelling abroad at all.

6.6 Responsibilities of locals

The question number 7 was looking for issues locals should take better into account in terms of improving sustainable tourism or generally sustainable development in Malta. The answers were able to be divided clearly in two: to the views of the locals, and to mostly identical perspectives of the temporary residents and travellers. The concerns that most of the locals found were that the Maltese should have more respectful behaviour and better hospitality for tourists. Additionally, they should respect their historical sites and give them the importance they deserve in terms of cleaning and maintaining sites better. According to the locals, also the Maltese environment should be protected better, not only for tourists but also for the local residents themselves. Stopping littering was mentioned by L1 and L5 referring for example to the cigarette butts that the Maltese should not throw around carelessly. However, only one local L1, not originally from Malta, mentioned that the Maltese should not rely on their cars so much. Moreover, L5 underlined that the Maltese should generally be more respectful in the actions they take.

Compared to the locals, the most distinct issue that over half of the temporary residents and travellers brought out was private motoring. To quote TR1: "Locals should take into account different methods of transportation, or perhaps even walking, to their destination. Malta is very small island and many things can be reached by foot if it is in the local village." The necessity of private cars was questioned and especially for the short distances the temporary residents and travellers suggested public transport, walking, bik-

ing, and even electric bicycles. Better waste management was repeated in the answers of TR3, T3 and T4 indicating need for recycling and too excessive use of disposable dishes. Respecting own culture and nature, stopping bird-hunting, and avoiding over-fishing were also mentioned. T2 underlined that only sustainable fish stocks should be utilized for protecting the diversity of the Mediterranean. Supporting local companies, avoiding imported goods, using local resources, and making more locally produced food were proposed for benefitting the local entrepreneurship, providing more authentic products for tourist, and reducing costs and emissions resulting from transportation.

T1 introduced nature-based slow tourism and utilizing of the local residents as guides. T1 explained that the local residents could offer small-scale walking tours in terms of visiting nature, sites, and local restaurants, but at the same time teaching tourists how to use of the public transport. Accordingly, the use of public transport would be in the main role when moving between the places why also the group sizes would be only between one to five people. T1 continued that this would provide intercultural communication, mutual joy, and encourage tourists to visit areas outside of the touristic districts. Finally, TR4 highlighted that the locals should participate in the public consultation of tourism planning. TR4 also suggested that the local university could be used as an observer to measure the degree of sustainability in the tourism sector as well as a provider of ideas for future improvements.

6.7 Responsibilities of tourism companies

The question number 8 was looking for issues tourism companies should take better into account in terms of improving sustainable tourism or generally sustainable development in Malta. Generally speaking, all of the answers emphasized the long term responsibilities where tourism companies should concentrate more instead of short term economic benefits. The findings can be divided into four main themes of marketing, tourist activities, cooperation partners, and education. Firstly, the way how tourism companies promote Malta, got attention since L2, TR1 and T4 announced that Malta should be marketed more as a cultural destination than a sea resort. They confirmed that this should happen in order to spread the tourist load throughout the year and to attract more quality than quantity to Malta. L5 asked for more creativeness and uniqueness when tourism companies are planning the tourism products. L5 reminded that the responsibility of the whole island may lie in the products they offer. In addition, TR2 mentioned that tourism companies should definitely provide more eco-products whereas T3 suggested additional promotion of Malta's natural attractions.

Another theme that emerged was tourist activities. When T3 told that tourism companies should offer only activities that are not harmful for the environment, T1 and T2 highlighted that tourism companies should stop offering or promoting rental cars, motor-bikes, or jet skis in Malta. L6 mentioned that tourism companies should take responsibility of the popular sites to not let them become so overcrowded that both tourists and locals cannot enjoy them. L6 also called for more respect towards the everyday life and traditions of the Maltese and gave example of the sightseeing trains transporting tourists. According to the observations of L6 the trains should be removed since they have no cultural link to Malta and among the residents they are experienced to be loud, disruptive, and annoying. Finally, L4 mentioned that tourism companies should invest in new transport technology of coaches, vans, and boats, which have been used for far too long and thus are no longer comfortable, efficient, or environmentally friendly.

The importance of cooperation partners was stated by TR1, T2, and T3 indicating that tourism companies should promote and cooperate with green hotels and restaurants offering local-grown or organic food. T1 and T3 also required tourism companies to be in charge of educating tourists already before they are travelling to Malta. To summarize their suggestions, environmental education should involve careful use of Malta's water resources, promotion for public transport, and information of how tourists could contribute sustainable tourism and nature protection in Malta.

Additionally, L1 and TR4 insisted that the policies concerning renewable energy, water consumption, water conservation, environmental plans, and investments in public spaces, should be included in the operational strategies of tourism companies. TR3 suggested for example eco-certificates for tourism companies to follow and measure their level of sustainability. Instead, T1 proposed that among tourism companies could be arranged competitions to reward those who have best progressed in sustainability. Also hospitality was experienced to need more improvements that tourism companies could contribute by training their employees better. Finally, L4 reported that exploitations of tourists should be reduced among tourism companies. L4 revealed that this is sometimes happening when negotiating boat transport prices between Malta and Comino. "It is important that tourist areas do not become a tourist trap", L4 added.

6.8 Responsibilities of the government

The question number 9 was looking for issues the government should take better into account in terms of improving sustainable tourism or generally sustainable development in Malta. Even though the answers consisted of several different themes, the mutual objectives appearing evenly among all interviewees was that firstly the government should

build base and provide adequate budget for sustainable development. The focus group referred for example to the creation of effective waste management infrastructure in terms of recycling system and waste incinerator. It would also include the government to invest in renewable energy sources such as solar energy, bio-energy, and wind-energy. Thirdly, the government should create new sustainable tourism policy and long-term plans that does not focus solely on economic sector. TR4 asked generally for more policies, legislation, and targets concerning sustainability, maybe together with the EU, in order to meet the targets and progress on the degree of sustainability.

Protecting natural, cultural, built, and undeveloped areas and sites were also mutually listed in the responsibilities of the government. This was demonstrated by designation of protection zones and setting legislation or even fine system for the environmental protection, waste reduction, discharges, and littering. L2 reminded that the government should guard that the relevant laws are also observed and not twisted. Also L1 wrote that the government should support and fund green policies and improvements on environmental quality regarding public spaces and reduction of pollution. Some of the respondents announced more governmental support for MTA, MEPA, and local enterprises such as restaurants that promote local food and culture in Malta. Finally, the government was expected to be in charge of educating host community and tourists about the benefits and responsibilities of sustainable tourism. TR3 underlined that the government should provide more information about Malta's scarce water resources, especially for tourists.

Interestingly, transport was examined clearly in two different standpoints. The locals insisted the government to invest in public transport and road network in order to reduce traffic and congestion. "Investment in new fleet of buses was very much appreciated, however their absurd inefficiency make public transport almost unusable", commented L4. Instead, the temporary residents and travellers suggested that the government should set direct restrictions regarding private motoring and number of cars as well as introduce more sustainable fuel sources. TR3 proposed that the government could present free or cheaper public transport tickets for the Maltese and create more routes supporting their daily work trips. Moreover, restricting tourist numbers in particular sites or generally on the island was mentioned by TR2, TR3, and T3. TR3 had a view that Malta could even be branded as a travelling destination of sustainable development why tourist quotas could support its image. TR3 also asked the government to require Green Key and Green Office certificates from country's hotels and other enterprises, and allow for example tax relives for those companies who have received the eco-certificates. In turn, TR4, T1, and T3 suggested eco-taxes to be collected by the government. Only TR4 highlighted the importance of community participation and local cooperation in the government's decision-making processes.

When considering more closely the answers of the locals can be found government's responsibility to limit over-development and additional hotel construction in Malta. When L6 indicated to large developments that very often spoil the sceneries for both residents and tourists, L3 reported that: "Malta does not need more hotels. The government should take into account that no more hotels should be built in Malta in natural or untouched places." Other theme discoursed by L1 and L5 was that the government should develop alternative and quality tourism markets and essentially understand the difference between specialized products versus mainstream markets.

Instead, T2 and T4 discussed about the government's responsibility to stop bird hunting and regulating aquaculture of tuna fish. The aquaculture of tuna fish was associated to the balance of marine ecosystem that may be endangered and have effect on the growth of jellyfish populations sometimes filling the Maltese shores and making swimming experience, if not impossible, at least extremely unpleasant. For scarce water resources, TR3 gave the suggestion that the rain water could be collected through sewerage system to the tanks. This would prevent flooding of the streets which is typical problem in Malta during heavy rain. Essentially it would also benefit farming and planting because collected rain water could be utilized for irrigation during the dry summer season of Malta.

6.9 Additional comments

The question number 10 was open for free word and possible additional comments the respondents still wanted to bring up. The comments varied from each other so that almost everyone who answered to this question had something different to say. To consider the answers of the locals, first of all, the Maltese stakeholders were emphasized that the Maltese tourism industry is at its mature stage why changing the concentration from quantity to quality would reduce negative environmental impacts, improve service standards, and thus affect positively tourist experience and economic results. However, L1 reminded that if Malta is going to diversify its tourism from mass to quality and niche, it will have to invest heavily in improving its tourism products, hospitality, and the environment, since high spending quality tourists also expect high quality tourist experiences. Regarding socio-cultural sustainability, L5 highlighted that tourism should be created because of enhancing the locals' quality of life rather than using it only as a political card to create jobs and economic weal. From L5's experience from the tourism industry, it seems that today it rather enslaves locals with poor working conditions. L3 mentioned that multiculturalism may be at the same time a nice thing but also generate conflicts in Malta. There was also local view from L4 that the concept of responsible tourism would provide more realistic form of development than sustainable tourism. Finally, L6 noted

that at least there has been significant improvement in sustainable tourism over the past 5-10 years that hopefully will continue.

Regarding the final points the travellers wanted to bring forth, T2 underlined that Malta's unique architecture heritage in the Mediterranean should be cherished by maintaining the buildings and providing grants and relieves for those who repair valuable private owned buildings. T1 wanted to remind that the illegal bird hunting in Malta should be prohibited through the enforcement of fines and rather use birds as a tourism advantage, since along with its indigenous species, Malta is also a passageway for several migratory bird species.

For one's part, the comments of the temporary residents pertained to the roles of residents, government and politics in sustainable tourism development. The final comment from TR4 was that: "At the end of the day, politics is the key to determine whether sustainable tourism development can be maintained or not. Since political obstacles inhibit the formulation and implementation of sustainable tourism development." TR3 emphasized that sustainable development does not start before locals and entrepreneurs are willing to understand that it supports their quality of life and success of businesses in long term. TR3 continued that the government should participate in sustainable development by sharing support and education. After creating this basis, tourists would step automatically into a world where sustainable tourism would be a natural and necessary part of their holiday. The author still wants to emphasize that the change for sustainability is not solely the responsibility of locals and the government but there is also tourists and tourism companies being in charge of sustainable tourism development. However, TR1's last comments can be used for summarizing the results analysed in this chapter: "Malta has some work to do".

7 Suggestions for the future

This chapter summarizes the concerns which Malta should take into account for developing sustainable tourism in the country. The suggestions and conclusions are based on the theoretical part, the empirical part, and the author's observations. The results did not reveal anything particularly surprising but rather strengthened the theory and the author's observations. However, the results provided several new ideas for Malta that would not turn out without this research. Since the results repeated strongly the potential sustainable tourism strategies introduced in the chapter 4, future suggestions were discussed under the same themes of: visitor management, marketing, land use, transport, education, and community participation. In addition, the emphasis was on tourists, locals, tourism companies, the government, and their responsibility to participate in sustainable tourism development.

7.1 Visitor management and marketing

Since the research clearly indicated congestion being the most distinct tourism-related problem in Malta, Malta should more effectively take visitor management as a part of its tourism policy. The focus group experienced congestion to happen particularly during summer season in Comino, Mdina, St Julians, beaches, roads, buses, sites, and Paceville. The focus group told tourist congestion to endanger the whole carrying capacity of the islands and lead to a premature wearing of natural and cultural sites. Additionally, Apostolopoulos & Gayle (2002) as well as the results indicated tourist crowds threaten the privacy of the residents especially in the medieval town of Mdina. There were both the theory and results repeating that Malta has for too long concentrated on quantity rather than quality when it comes to tourism numbers. Consequently, the theoretical part, empirical part, and the author's observations confirmed that visitor management in terms of regulating visitor numbers is very sporadic in Malta. However, Apostolopoulos & Gayle (2002) underlined that successful sustainable tourism essentially means the destinations are ready to accept limitations on growth. This should be a point where Malta could have attitude change.

The articles of The Malta Independent (2011a) and Times of Malta (2012) argued that Malta has for years marketed itself solely as a leisure destination of sun and sea, which has allured low-spending mass tourists to country and forced tourism to base on the heavy burden of seasonality. Fortunately, smaller-scale, specialized niche tourism has understood providing keys for the seasonality problems and image building. The results revealed that Malta's current tourism product is on its mature state why the government and tourism companies should indicate more creativeness and uniqueness while devel-

oping tourism products. As past has showed, the future of the whole island might lie in the products tourism companies and the government create. Tourism companies were required to have their responsibility to take care the sites do not become so overcrowded that both tourists and locals cannot enjoy them.

The pressure from seasonality tourism could be eased by visitor management and marketing. Controlling visitor flows and redistributing tourist crowds evenly around the islands could be actualized with different marketing practices. For example, creating niche markets could widen Malta's tourism product also for the winter-season, whereas promoting rural areas and local villages could provide better seasonal balance in terms of tourism incomes and tourist distribution. Indirect de-marketing regarding reduction of overall promotion could be necessary to consider under Comino, Mdina, summer season, beaches, and cheap alcohol. Additionally, fee manipulation discussed by Weaver (2006) could provide solution for promoting off-season. Setting lower prices for the winter season and higher prices for the summer season could stabilize the balance of seasonality.

Regarding the tourist crowds in Comino, the authorities indicated impassive attitude by claiming in the article of Times of Malta (2014a) that Comino is simply so popular there is nothing to do for limiting the influx of people. Limiting sunbeds clearly does not provide enough relief for Comino but instead setting up sunbeds should be prohibited completely. Also the results indicated need for restricting Comino's visitor numbers. According to Weaver (2006), visitor regulation, redistributing, and marketing would provide several tools also for Comino. To exemplify, promotion and boat traffic could be redistributed also to other beaches of Comino than just Blue Lagoon. Despite its beaches, Comino also represents something more, such as beautiful hiking destination that could be emphasized more in marketing. Essentially, the environmental well-being and quality visitor experience should be prioritized especially during the high season. This could be actualized by making carrying capacity assessment and setting higher entry fees and daily quotas for the tiny corner of the Blue Lagoon.

The results revealed that Malta could learn from the Azores and introduce annual visitor quotas, higher prices, and new exclusive and green destination image. Since Apostolopoulos & Gayle (2002) argued that quality tourists do not automatically represent sustainable tourism development the emphasis could rather be kept in the green image than the exclusive one. The results also insisted that Malta should be marketed rather as a cultural destination than a sea resort. Thus, for developing sustainable tourism Malta should start to modify its tourism product and destination image as an eco-cultural. The results strengthened the idea of the eco-cultural image. Eco-products, local products,

and especially local produced food with national characters were required to be offered more. In addition, walking, hiking, and natural attractions were asked to be emphasized when promoting tourist activities. Other ideas supporting sustainable tourism and green image of Malta were setting visitor quotas, increasing prices, creating effective waste management system, collecting eco-taxes, insisting hotels and other enterprises to obtain eco-certificates such as Green Key and Green Office, providing more organic fish stocks instead of tuna fish, and prohibiting bird-hunting. Flexible visitation caps explained by Weaver (2006) could provide alternative for the annual visitor quotas meaning that the visitor quotas would be used only during the peak season and eased during the off-season. However, the results also stressed the importance that if Malta is going to change its tourism product from quantity to quality first it needs to upgrade in its tourism products, environment, and hospitality.

7.2 Sustainable land use

Land use for Malta's hotel infrastructure had an essential role both in the theory and results. Since Malta's bed distribution is mainly concentrated on coastal areas and it is built regardless the Maltese architectural heritage the focus group confirmed that this has partly generated remarkably ugly over-development of the coastal strip. That is why the focus group insisted from the government more regulation and usage of development standards. The results required that only small, local hotels should be built and scattered evenly around Malta. Instead of creating more tourist enclaves, accommodation infrastructure should be directed more diversely also in inland and rural areas. The results also noted that the government should take into account that Malta does not necessarily need more hotels at all and at least no more hotels should be built on naturally fragile areas.

The author pondered solutions for the several resort areas already built on the islands. Since deconstruction did not sound reasonable idea, to involve resort hotels in sustainable development Weaver (2006) provided ideas by discussing about landscaping and building standards. Tree planting or using of beautiful ivy plants, such as bouganville, could be utilized for site-softening and naturalization of ugly, rough resort areas. Essentially, the plants should be local Mediterranean cultivars that are able to succeed over dry summers without additional irrigation. For one's part, building standards should be considered by rebuilding old hotel structures to respond today's standards in energy efficiency, water consumption, sewage control, and waste management. In addition, Maltese character could possibly be added to some hotel buildings by building or painting couple or more Maltese timber balconies on the walls.

The results insisted tourism companies to invest in renewable energy, water consumption management, water conservation, and environmental design. Also the importance of educating tourists more about Malta's scarce water resources appeared in the results. Another way for water-saving could be that the fresh water used in the hotels' swimming pools would be replaced with sea water when possible. The results presented that ECO certificates could be useful for the hotel industry to set objectives and measure their level of sustainability. Even the competitions between tourism-companies were suggested, to reward those that have best progressed in sustainability. Sustainable land use was examined also in terms of zoning and districting. Just like MEPA (2014b), Ministry for Tourism and Culture (2006), and University of Malta (2014b) indicated, Malta has identified its tourism zones, cultural sites, and nature-marine protected areas well. However, the focus group required the government to set clear legislation and restrictions to be observed in the areas.

7.3 Sustainable transport system

Transport was a topic where the opinions of locals differed most from the views of temporary residents and travellers. The empirical part repeated interestingly the same pattern that appeared already in the theoretical part. Locals seemed to insist improvements in the public transport system and expected tourists to use buses instead of renting cars. At the same time visitors complained about immense amount of private car traffic that complicated proper functioning of public transport and resulted air quality being heavy with smog. Even the article of Times of Malta (2014c) presented statistics that proved Malta being among top users of private cars despite having the shortest distances in the EU. That is why improving only public transport system would not be enough. According to the author's observations, Malta's public transport and bus drivers are under high pressure when trying to make the schedules and bus routes function among the private cars and tourist crowds. Thus, public transport or air quality cannot be improved in Malta, before limiting private motoring and giving priority to public and alternative transport is happening.

Times of Malta (2014c) also reported that as much as 82 % of the Maltese announced traffic being their biggest daily headache. However, it seems like the locals have not clearly understood the effects of private motoring but driving everywhere by private cars is more like a cultural norm. The author pondered reasons for this. According to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Environment (2012) the public transport reform was launched only in 2011. Probably before that, the public transport system was for ages so unreliable that the locals still might think it is not worth for using. Nevertheless, from the Nordic standpoint Maltese public transport system was surprisingly modern and only

things restricting it for operating properly were private motoring and tourist crowds. Another reason for private car culture might be the Maltese weather. Hot summer months and rainy winter time surely effect that choosing a car is often more convenient option. In addition, the author noticed Malta's whole road infrastructure seemed to be built for motor vehicles. Even Malta's only forest area of Buskett Gardens was mostly paved with asphalt, whereas the sidewalks of Malta, if even existing, were usually so narrow and poorly paved that hardly even pedestrians could use them, not to mention bikers.

Thus, because of the road infrastructure, at the moment alternative modes of transport can only happen on the narrow sidewalks or car roads. However, walking and biking amongst Maltese traffic is extremely inconvenient and stressing, firstly due to air quality full of emissions and secondly due to road safety. Before starting to invest heavily in sidewalk construction, traffic calming and re-planning of the route network should be introduced. Some of the roads should be allowed only for walking and biking, whereas others could be dedicated for motor traffic. Otherwise cannot be expected that the tourists or locals would start supporting walking or biking in Malta. The report of NCSD (2006) also argued that restricting overall vehicle use by high-quality public transport system and traffic management practices should be done. Directing heavy traffic away from the residential areas and introducing road network, bus lanes, and traffic lights giving priority to buses were suggested by NCSD (2006).

Among the results was a list of additional ideas for developing sustainable transport system in Malta. There were presented electric buses, electric bicycles, tram system, bio-diesel, car taxes, fuel taxes, limiting the maximum engine power allowance, and pedestrianizing areas. To promote bus system among the locals, free or cheaper bus tickets for the residents were suggested. Instead of connecting only touristic areas and sites, bus routes were insisted to support also locals' daily work trips. In addition to these, fee manipulation and restrictions in parking could be used for discouraging private motoring. Solely the government and locals were not expected to be in charge of transport problems. The focus group insisted that tourism companies should entirely give up providing polluting tourist activities of rental cars, motor-bikes, and jet skis when at the same time tourists were recommended to avoid these services. Tourism companies were asked also to invest in new technology of coaches, vans, and boats that are used for transporting tourists. Before starting to promote alternative modes of transport for tourists, Malta's transport system should be improved in the local level.

7.4 Education and community participation

Need for additional education regarding sustainability aroused both in the theoretical and empirical part. According to the research, the general attitude concerning values of sustainability was remarkable weak in Malta. However, there was still a small emphasis that the attitude was not careless only because of disregard but also because of general unawareness about what sustainability actually means. Also the article of The Malta Independent (2011b) called for educational campaigns to explain the importance and meaning of sustainable development. Maltese schools have already adopted environmental education part of their programmes why the younger generations have started to become more aware of sustainability. However, NCSD's report (2006) indicated that sustainable education is still under reform and the Maltese residents seem to lack adequate education for sustainability.

Understandable, since the education of the local people was only in its initial stage, there was not much mentioning about strategies how to educate tourists travelling to Malta. The results insisted the government and tourism companies to take more responsibility of educating tourists and locals. Presumably, the concerns to educate would mostly be the same for tourists and locals, just the information channels would differ. The promotional and educational campaigns focused for tourists and locals could be keys for generating better understanding and appreciation of Malta's limited capability regarding freshwater resources, energy generation, and waste management. Education for recycling, energy-saving, water-saving, littering, and private motoring could be the first steps where to start. The study also confirmed that the appreciation of natural, cultural, and historical heritage should be included in the education because of commonly occurring disrespectful behaviour from tourists and locals. Considering the results, reducing use of plastic would also be necessary in Malta. Firstly, since the tap water is ineligible for drinking in Malta and water bottles are not returnable, some kind of recycling system should be introduced for the water bottles. Secondly, travellers also noticed that using of plastic bags is still common in Malta. That is why promoting the textile bags among tourists and locals were suggested being the first very simple steps to take on the path of sustainability.

Regarding the education channels for tourists, the results stressed the importance of tourism companies to educate tourists already before they travel to Malta. That is why for example the national airline of Air Malta could start creating educational campaigns about sustainable tourism in Malta. Since most of the visitors arrive to Malta by Air Malta (MTA 2014), what could be better channel for educating tourists than an aeroplane where the people are usually bored and at the same time forced and willing to receive

any kind of informational stimulus. For changing careless behaviour Weaver (2006) suggested indirect, compact education instead of forcing the audience to accept loads of information at once. Mason (2008) also emphasized the importance of emotional campaigns meaning that by encompassing values and empathy to the topic would make people think deeper their own behaviour and more likely to change it.

Naturally, everyone would not assimilate the information in practice. However, the educational campaigns where the elements of empathy, emotions, or humour would be present could affect at least some tourists' behaviour. The information could be executed for example by a presentation of the stewards' or as a video material in the aeroplanes. According to the results, the emphasis in tourist education should be on Malta's scarce water and energy resources, waste management, public transport, and on promotion of local companies and products. Both Apostolopoulos & Gayle (2002) as well as the results verified that education for natural and cultural respect should also be highlighted since disrespectful behaviour concerning littering, inappropriately dressed, and noisy tourists were experienced to endanger the privacy and quality of life of the Maltese.

In the report of NCSA (2006) was written that locals' education for sustainable lifestyle should be provided by the educational and governmental sector but also in cooperation with the NGO's and local media. Education should be happened additionally inside the communities and families. Since the sustainable education has only begun during last ten years, at the moment the younger Maltese might know sustainability better than the adults. Also the results revealed that among the younger generation has aroused good will to start doing something tangible for sustainable development. That is why the education probably should firstly be focused for the adults and older age groups of locals. However, enhancing and improving the current education of younger generations would be crucial in terms of future sustainable development. In addition to Times of Malta (2014c), also the results strongly indicated local people's careless attitude for private motoring. The results from the temporary residents and travellers strengthened the idea that the education of the Maltese should primary concentrate on promoting alternative modes of transport. The author also noticed that the current trend of sporty and healthy lifestyle had slowly arrived in Malta why alternative modes of transport could raise their popularity particularly among the younger generations. Other educational topics for locals presented in the results were waste management, littering, plastic use, environmental conservation, and appreciation of Malta's historical heritage.

Community participation had not remarkable role among the results. However, two of the respondents agreed with Uysal & al. (2012) that locals are in critical role to experience the tourism impacts why they should have right to participate in tourism planning. Na-

tional Report (2002) as well as NCSD's report (2006) revealed that community participation remains still relatively low in Malta and thus the importance of active participation in sustainable development should be promoted more among the locals. One of the locals who participated to the research indicated that Malta's tourism industry is built to satisfy tourists to the detriment of locals who at the same time feel like losing their cultural values and pride. Involving communities in tourism planning could reduce the feeling of overexploitation. The author observed that the local studying tourism at the University of Malta were extremely passionate to participate when the conversation came to the tourism-related problems of Malta. For example, the topics of public transport reform, land use for hotel construction, and Malta's image as a cheap tourist destination evoked heated discussion among the pupils. This can presumably mean a positive sign for the future's more active community participation in Malta's tourism planning. Introduced suggestions for developing sustainable tourism in Malta are gathered into a table that can be found in the end of this chapter (Table 16).

When examining sustainable tourism strategies visitor management, marketing, land use, transport, education, and community participation turned out being worthwhile areas when comprehensively aiming to the consensus between economic, environmental, socio-cultural, and political sustainability. Each of these areas could have a positive impact on economic, environmental, and socio-cultural well-being in the destination. In addition, especially education and local participation could provide local know-how, lead to a better political decision-making in tourism planning, and thus contribute also political sustainability. Both, the theoretical part and empirical part of this thesis indicated that tourist destination Malta has several concerns to consider when discussing about tourism development. Need for sustainable tourism is not appearing only because of improving touristic experience but first of all due to contributing well-being of the locals and the environment that until now have received less attention. The change for sustainable development and sustainable tourism might feel an endless and worthless road. However, whether it is the question about tourists, locals, workers in tourism companies, or members of the government, in the end people only need to change their own attitude. People should also keep in mind that in long-term the effects of sustainable development and sustainable tourism will only be positive.

Table 16. Suggestions for developing sustainable tourism in Malta

Suggestions for developing sustainable tourism in Malta
Visitor management
❖ Visitation caps: annual visitor quotas, flexible visitor quotas for high season, visitor quotas for Comino
❖ Fee manipulation: higher prices for high season, lower prices for low season
Marketing
❖ Redistributing tourists: marketing niche-tourism, off-season, rural areas, local villages, cultural attractions
❖ Reduction of marketing: Comino, Mdina, summer season, beaches, cheap alcohol
❖ Eco-cultural destination image: small-scale tourism, specialized tourism, green tourism, cultural tourism, higher prices, visitor quotas, eco-products, local products, local/organic food, eco-taxes, eco-certificated hotels, waste management
Land use
❖ Zoning & districting: clear legislation and restrictions for tourism zones, cultural sites, and nature-marine protected areas
New hotel infrastructure:
❖ Building only small, local hotels
❖ Scattering hotels evenly in rural areas and inland instead of coastal areas and main touristic zones
❖ Respecting architectural heritage in building practices
❖ More regulation by development standards: size, density, height, setbacks, building standards, landscaping, signage, and noise regulation
❖ No more hotels on naturally fragile areas
❖ No more hotels at all
❖ Eco-certificates and competitions
Old hotel infrastructure:
❖ Building standards: rebuilding energy efficiency, water consumption, sewage, and waste management systems
❖ Building standards: using Maltese timber balconies to add Maltese character to the buildings
❖ Landscaping: tree-planting, ivy plants, Mediterranean plants
❖ Replacing fresh water with sea water in the swimming pools
❖ Eco-certificates and competitions
Transport
❖ Limiting private motoring: car taxes, fuel taxes, parking management, emission limits, engine power limits, car-free zones, alternative fuels
❖ Improving public transport: inexpensive, efficient, routes, timetables, technology, electric buses, tram system, free or cheaper bus tickets for the residents, more routes supporting daily work trips and connecting tourist sites
❖ Giving priority to the public transport: road network, bus lanes, traffic lights
❖ Giving priority to the alternative transport: routes for walking and biking, routes for motor vehicles, directing heavy traffic away from the residential areas
❖ Promoting alternative transport: biking, walking, electric bicycles, healthy and ecological lifestyle
❖ Giving up of polluting tourist activities: rental cars, motor-bikes, jet skis
❖ Investing in new technology: coaches, vans, boats used for transporting tourists

Education

- | |
|---|
| ❖ Educational topics for tourists and locals: water-saving, energy-saving, recycling, littering, plastic use, private motoring, appreciation of nature and cultures, importance of using local companies and products |
| ❖ Education channels for tourists: aeroplanes, hotels, other tourism companies |
| ❖ Education channels for locals: schools, government, NGO's, media, families |

Community participation

- | |
|---|
| ❖ Promoting the importance of community participation |
|---|

8 Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to find a topic which would be significant in terms of educating the author and providing added value to the research target. Because the author had lived in Malta for a longer period, perspective to the topic became wide. Even though the subject of sustainability might not be of urgent interest everywhere, however, in Malta the development towards sustainable tourism is only in its initial stage. While living in Malta, the author observed that sustainable tourism development is in an extremely crucial role for better appreciation of the cultural and environmental well-being in Malta. Instead of making tourism products satisfy solely tourists and businesses, the country should create something that would also be beneficial to locals and the environment. The objective of this study was to introduce tourism-related problems in Malta and discover solutions and alternatives for solving those. The author together with the interviewees determined that the keys to successful sustainable tourism in Malta could be actualized by practices related to visitor management, marketing, land use, transport, education, and community participation.

Writing this thesis was at the same time challenging and rewarding. Resulting from the author's own motivation and interest for Malta, sustainable tourism, as well as island tourism in general this thesis and particularly its theoretical part became relatively long. However, prior introducing the best sustainable tourism strategies for Malta, a thorough investigation of the background of Malta's tourism and sustainable tourism turned out to be necessary. The author also wanted to complement and widen her knowledge on sustainable tourism and tourism impacts that she already studied at the University of Malta. That is why there is a certain imbalance between the length of the presentation of the theoretical framework and empirical discussion.

Another point to consider in terms of length was that the definition of the subject was not sufficient. The author perceived several concerns that had to be included in the study thus it was difficult to choose one single perspective from sustainable tourism. In retrospect, if this study was to be rewritten, a feasible idea would be to write a sustainable tourism plan for Comino or concentrate only on environmental or socio-cultural dimension of sustainable tourism in Malta. These topics or for example comparing the differences of tourism development in Malta and Gozo could provide ideas for future research. The author also realized only during the thesis writing process how multidimensional the concept of sustainable tourism actually is and how challenging it is to apply it in Malta. Since an actual sustainable tourism plan has not yet been created in Malta, the author wanted to make this version as comprehensive as possible. Thus, readers are recommended to examine

more closely the tables where the main points of tourism impacts and tourism strategies are summarized (Tables 6, 8-10, 12 & 16).

The amount of literature on sustainable tourism was vast why choosing the best references generated challenges. In turn, the amount of source material for sustainable island tourism or sustainable tourism in Malta was relatively small which made writing challenging at times. However, the author was fortunate to have plenty of time to carefully examine all references found useful. Another challenge was the choice of language since here was no point writing the thesis in Finnish. The research and writing process improved the English skills of the author, however since it is not her native language, the readability and clarity of the text was slightly affected and correcting the wording demanded more time and patience.

Despite the challenges, the thesis writing process turned out to be very rewarding and educative since even though the topic was large, everything was encompassed as intended and a comprehensive view of the subject was achieved. The thesis process also led to further international contacts and it was positive to see how motivated the interviewees were for participating into the study. This thesis can provide new perspectives for sustainable tourism development, since the potential strategies and the results revealed several practical solutions for implementing sustainable tourism in Malta. Naturally, it cannot be expected that any country would be able to instantly apply all these suggestions. However, the purpose of this thesis was rather to assemble all essential information, thus enabling Malta to choose points step by step to focus on. From the Nordic standpoint, some of the views might be presented in a slightly emphatic way. However, it needs to be remembered that Malta is not a Nordic country but a Mediterranean country and without its slightly noisy and chaotic nature it would not be Malta. Finally, this thesis is dedicated to the beautiful pearl in the Mediterranean where the author wishes to return sooner or later.

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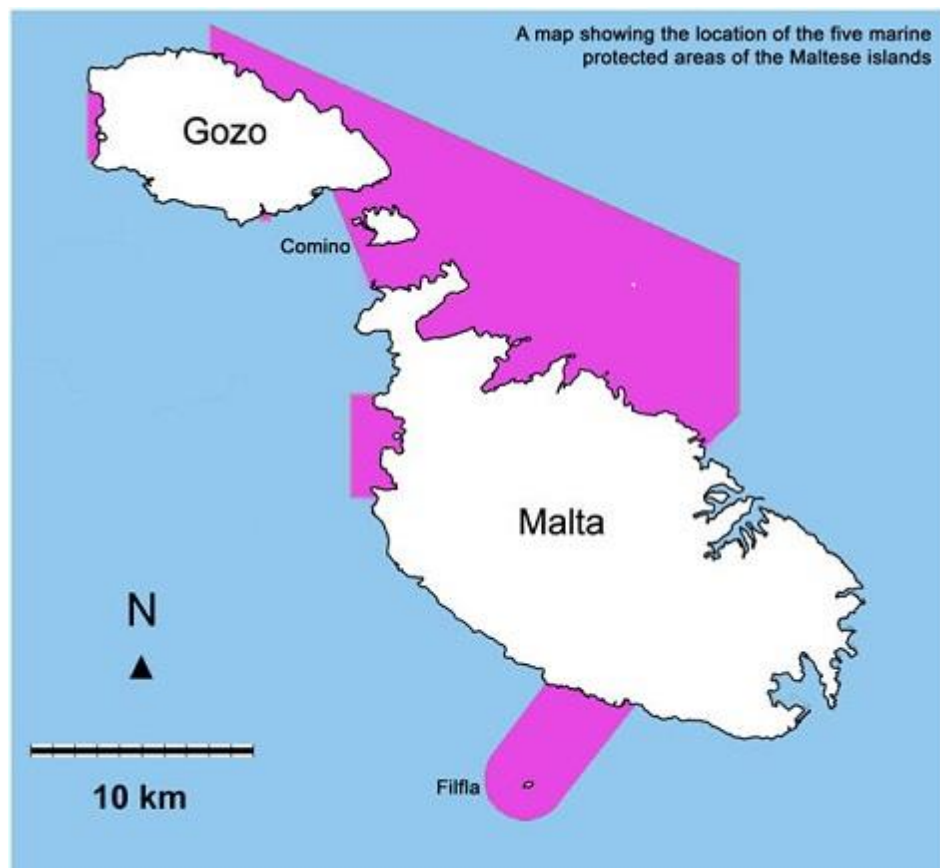
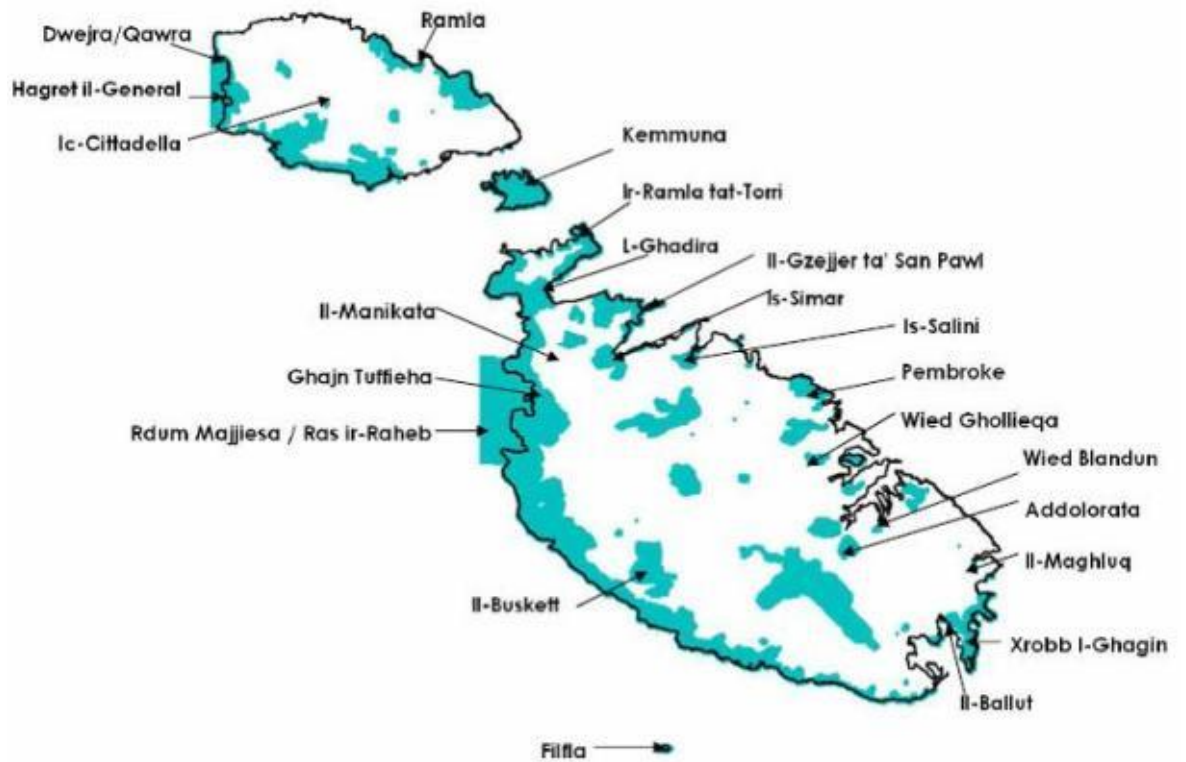
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Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1. The nature and marine protected areas in Malta

(MEPA 2014b; University of Malta 2014b.)



Research: Developing sustainable tourism on the Mediterranean island of Malta
Researcher: Elisa Pekkala, HAAGA HELIA University of Applied Sciences

This research is part of my thesis concerning sustainable tourism development in Malta. The aim of the research is to find practical solutions for improving sustainable tourism and solving problems caused by tourism in Malta. Please remember that when talking about sustainable tourism the tourism impacts include not only environmental issues but they might concern also socio-cultural and economic issues. Thank you for your help!

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What kind of problems have you noticed tourism to cause in Malta? Mention for instance 1-3 main issues that have affected somehow your everyday life or tourism experience in Malta.
2. What kind of solutions would you suggest to solve these potential problems?
3. What is the general attitude towards the values of sustainability in Malta?
4. What kind of actions has Malta taken to improve sustainability in tourism?
5. Have you noticed any practical solutions towards sustainable tourism in other countries that could apply also in Malta? What kind of solutions?
6. What issues should **tourists** take into account for improving sustainable tourism or generally sustainable development in Malta? What could be done better? Mention for instance 1-3 most important issues.
7. What issues should **locals** take into account for improving sustainable tourism or generally sustainable development in Malta? What could be done better? Mention for instance 1-3 most important issues.
8. What issues should **tourism companies** take into account for improving sustainable tourism or generally sustainable development in Malta? What could be done better? Mention for instance 1-3 most important issues.
9. What issues should **the government** take into account for improving sustainable tourism or generally sustainable development in Malta? What could be done better? Mention for instance 1-3 most important issues.
10. Is there anything else you would like to add or bring up?

Thank you for your time!

Tutkimus: Kestävän matkailun kehittäminen Maltalla

Tutkija: Elisa Pekkala, HAAGA HELIA Ammattikorkeakoulu

Tämä tutkimus on osa opinnäytetyötäni, joka koskee kestävän matkailun kehittämistä Maltan saarikohteessa. Tutkimuksella pyritään edistämään kestävä matkailua ja löytämään käytännön ideoita matkailusta aiheutuvien ongelmien ratkaisemiseksi Maltalla. Muistathan, että kestävästä matkailusta puhuttaessa matkailun vaikutukset voivat olla ympäristöllisten tekijöiden lisäksi myös sosiokulttuurisia ja taloudellisia. Kiitos avustasi!

TUTKIMUSKYSYMYKSET

1. Millaisia ongelmia olet havainnut matkailun aiheuttavan Maltalla? Mainitse esimerkiksi 1-3 asiaa, jotka ovat vaikuttaneet jollakin tapaa jokapäiväiseen elämääsi tai matkailukokemukseesi Maltalla.
2. Millaisia ratkaisuja ehdottaisit mahdollisten mainitsemiesi ongelmien ratkaisemiseksi?
3. Millainen asenne Maltalla on mielestäsi yleisesti kestävän kehityksen arvoja kohtaan?
4. Millaisin keinoin kestävä matkailua on pyritty edistämään Maltalla?
5. Oletko havainnut muissa maissa kestävä matkailuun tähtääviä toimintamalleja, joita olisi mahdollista soveltaa myös Maltalla? Millaisia toimintamalleja?
6. Mihin **matkailijoiden** tulisi kiinnittää huomiota tukeakseen kestävä matkailua tai yleisesti kestävä kehitystä Maltalla? Missä olisi vielä parannettavaa? Mainitse esimerkiksi 1-3 tärkeintä asiaa.
7. Mihin **paikallisten** asukkaiden tulisi kiinnittää huomiota tukeakseen kestävä matkailua tai yleisesti kestävä kehitystä Maltalla? Missä olisi vielä parannettavaa? Mainitse esimerkiksi 1-3 tärkeintä asiaa.
8. Mihin **matkailuyritysten** tulisi kiinnittää huomiota tukeakseen kestävä matkailua tai yleisesti kestävä kehitystä Maltalla? Missä olisi vielä parannettavaa? Mainitse esimerkiksi 1-3 tärkeintä asiaa.
9. Mihin maan **hallituksen** tulisi kiinnittää huomiota tukeakseen kestävä matkailua tai yleisesti kestävä kehitystä Maltalla? Missä olisi vielä parannettavaa? Mainitse esimerkiksi 1-3 tärkeintä asiaa.
10. Onko mielessäsi jotain muuta mitä haluaisit vielä lisätä tai tuoda esille?

Kiitos ajastasi!