



PARLAMENT TA' MALTA

IT-TNAX-IL LEGIŻLATURA

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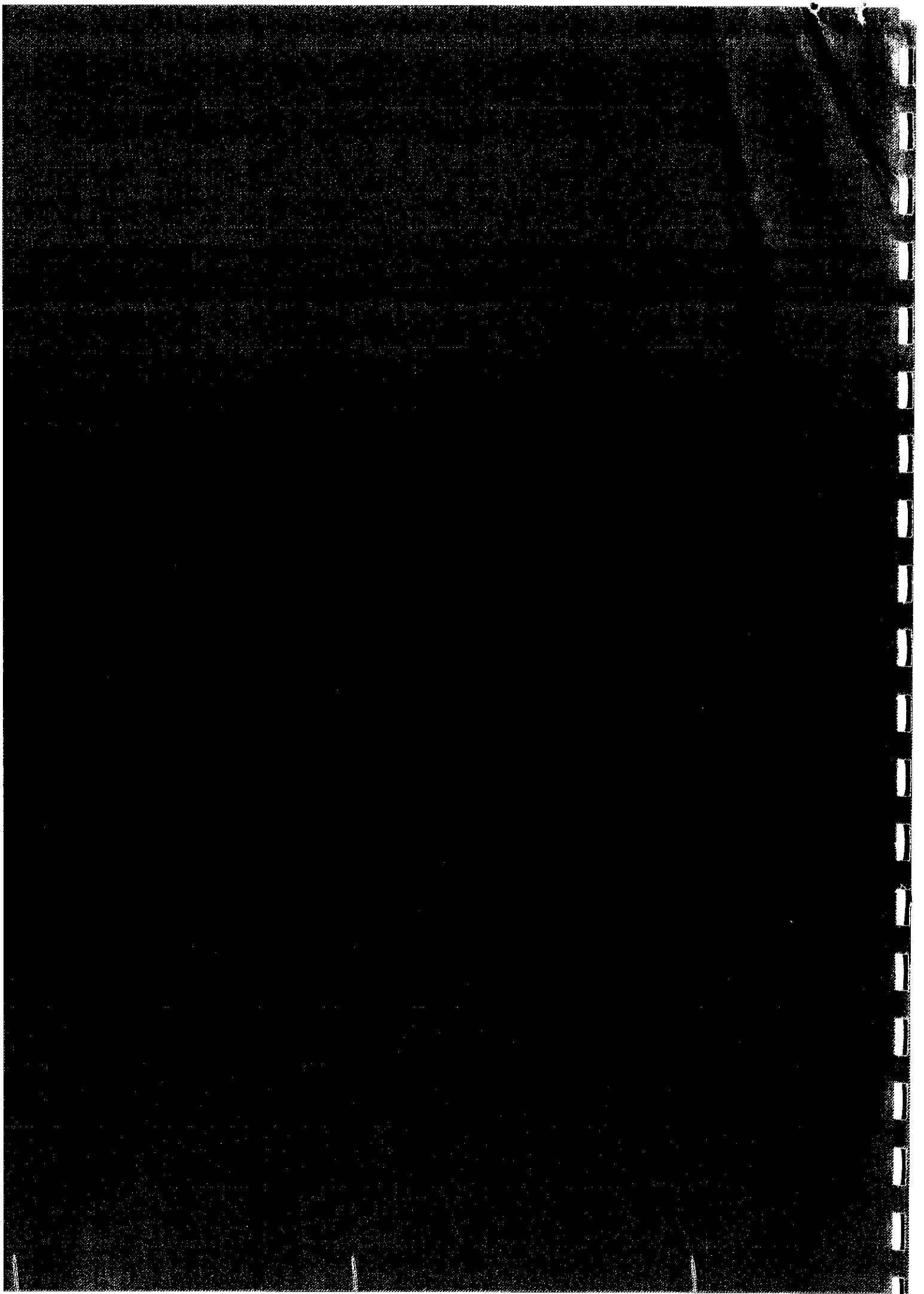
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Raymond Scicluna
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malta environment and planning authority



ANNUAL REPORT
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FOREWORD

Perit Vincent Cassar
Chairman

The year under review has been characterised by the formulation and approval of a number of policies and the initiation of a number of other initiatives coupled with improvements in the operations of the organisation.

Policies are the backbone of the organisation as they drive and regulate the process for the approval or rejection of development applications submitted to MEPA. Such policies have to be clear and not subject to various shades of interpretation. This is required as applicants have to know where they stand even before they submit their application. Similarly, Periti have to be in a position where they are able to give accurate advice to their clients.

For years, part of our planning system was failing to meet the expectations of the public and other stakeholders given the policy lacuna that existed in a number of areas, while in other areas the policies were not addressing the realities of today. Over these past months, we have managed to bridge this gap and formulate clear and meaningful policies in a number of areas.

The coming year will see the publication of the Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (SPED) after it receives approval by Parliament. This is an important document as it will not only replace the Structure Plan enacted in 1990 but it will also guide land use and physical planning for the next 10 years.

The publication of the Development Control Design Policy, Guidance and Standards, for public consultation, also known as DC 2014, is another important milestone. Hopefully, this document will be finalised, approved and issued for implementation during the first half of 2015.

This will be a step forward in achieving a better design for our living environment. The current DC 2007 is too restrictive in setting out strict design and dimension parameters that it leaves very little opportunities for creativity in design. It is hoped that, the DC 2014 will give enhanced opportunities to Periti to come up with better and more innovative design solutions. This is needed as we have had a decline in innovative architectural design over the last years.

In the coming year, another important milestone will be the publication for public consultation of the Local Plans. It is projected that approval of these plans will also be achieved before the year ends. The majority of the current Local Plans have been in existence for the last 8 years and it is now time that they are updated as required. During these years, MEPA has identified a number of discrepancies and anomalies in the current plans and these need to be adjusted accordingly.

I am not in favour of further indiscriminate enlargement of the already existing Development Zones, however, I recognise that there are a number of anomalies that need to be addressed and adjusted. The introduction in the past of Areas of Containment and Rationalisation Sites have created their own problems which are at times difficult to solve and which also create further anomalies. I am of the school that prefers a system where any additional new areas that are added to existing Development Zones, are planned and laid out by MEPA and not by the land owners. This was the system that was adopted when the first Town Planning Schemes were drawn up in the 60s.

Enforcement remains one of our weak points. In 2013 MEPA inherited a backlog of enforcement

cases which had been accumulating over the years. MEPA did not have the resources or the will to tackle such cases and these were left to accumulate. On the other hand, there was nothing in place which penalised the perpetrators as soon as an illegality was committed and discovered. The introduction of daily fines, which penalises the perpetrators as soon as an illegality is committed and discovered, are helping the enforcement system to become more effective and some successes have been registered in this direction, although, I am still of the opinion that these fines are on the low side and should be increased hundred fold. Perpetuators, when faced with the imposition of daily fines prefer to remove the illegality themselves instead of incurring additional fines and this in itself gives same form of success.

In similar fashion as has been the situation for the 22 years since the Authority has been in existence, the year under review has not been void of controversies. The Development Permission granted for the new Delimara Gas Plant certainly was the case which created most controversy. We are aware that certain decisions and issues place us in the limelight. This is a situation we have to live with - one day we are praised for taking a particular decision, on another day we are 'slaughtered' for taking another particular decision.

It is opportune to give credit also to the work that is carried out within the Environment Protection Directorate. Besides the regular reporting to the EU Commission on environment matters and the drawing up of Instruction Notes and other documents to guide attendees at meetings at EU level, other work related to permitting is also carried out. The Directorate is involved in the planning process through the regular screening and assessment of Development Applications in order to gauge whether an Appropriate Assessment or an Environment Impact Assessment is required. Moreover, the Directorate is also responsible for the processing and assessment of Industrial Permitting (IPPC) and Environment Permitting relating to industrial activity.


One must not forget the other important work that is carried out by the Directorate related to noise, waste, ecology, biodiversity and air quality. Of equal importance is the work carried out by the EU Affairs Unit and the National Affairs Unit.

One important milestone that has been achieved during this year was the formulation of Management Plans and Conservation Orders for all 34 terrestrial Natura 2000 sites. These were approved by the MEPA Board and will be issued for public consultation in the coming months.

In my report for 2013, I had made reference to the need to have a National Geographic Information System (GIS) where large quantities of existing and useful data found within various Government departments, agencies and authorities are centralised and shared by all relevant parties, including the public, wherever possible. I am pleased to say that MEPA with its base map infrastructure has now taken this concept forward for implementation through an ERDF project.

This information system, which presents highly complex data in an easy to understand mode, will also provide policymakers with better access to high-quality thematic information about the environment. As a result, planning and other policies can be amended or created for the purpose of improving the quality of the environment and to reduce impacts on it, while safeguarding human health.

It is envisaged that the MEPA demerger will take place in mid-2015. The Authority, together with the Ministry for the Environment and the Office of the Prime Minister, through the Office of the Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and the Simplification of the Administrative Process, have been working towards ensuring a smooth transition, where MEPA's current responsibilities and functions will be divided between the new Malta Planning and Development Authority and the Environment and Resources Authority, once the proposed legislation gets approved by Parliament.



Office of the CEO
Mr. Johann Buttigieg
Chief Executive Officer

This year will be renowned as an active year where MEPA completed the restructuring exercise which commenced in 2013, after the change in Administration. The Authority implemented a number of strategic initiatives to review and more importantly simplify its processes and completed the revision to a number of planning policies.

Policies and Plans

With policies and plans being the platform for effective land use planning, the Authority continued to give priority to updating and formulating new policies. During the year, four major planning policies were approved and published. These included the Floor Area Ratio Policy, the Height Limitation Adjustments policy for Hotels, the Rural Policy and Design Guidance and the Fireworks Factory policy.

The Authority also completed the review of the Strategic Plan for the Environment and Planning Development (SPED) together with its Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Although not yet published, the Authority conducted extensive work on the formulation of another two important policies which will regulate the future extension of cemeteries and development applications pertaining to Fuel Service Stations.

At the end of the year, the Authority also published for public consultation a new Development Control Design Policy, Guidance and Standards 2014 (DC 2014). This proposed policy DC2014 is a clear departure from a single classification of policy provisions found in previous DC publications. The policy document heralds in a new contextual design framework

which distinguishes between different qualities and elements that comprise urban and architectural design. Through this policy document, there is optimism that better quality design buildings will be proposed and developed, since the onus is on quality rather than on quantity criteria.

Other policies which were being reviewed and are in their final stages include, the Solar Farm Policy, Marsaxlokk Inner Harbour Development Brief, Policy Review for Strait Street and the Old Civil Abattoir, Shooting Ranges Policy and Billboards Policy.

Work on the revision of the Local Plans has also progressed significantly throughout the year and it is expected that after the approval of the SPED by Parliament in 2015, the first draft of the Local Plans will be issued for public consultations.

Legislation

During 2014, significant input was given towards the demerger process. Co-ordination between MEPA and the Ministry for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change (MSDEC) gather momentum as preparation on the relevant legislations as well as the logistical details are well underway. In March, a joint public consultation meeting was held, following which, further discussions were held which highlighted the need to secure improved co-ordination in policy and plan making. The purpose for which Malta's environmental objectives are met.

The coming year will see the demerger coming to fruition whereby clarity in terms of decision

making and operational procedures will become more distinct. In order to facilitate a smooth transition and secure cost-effective operations at a national level, there is scope to develop improved operational procedures between the two entities for the benefit of the general public.

To further reduce the bureaucracy in MEPA's processes, two legal notices were reviewed, the Development Notification Order and the Uses Classes Order. Commercial units, which are another strong component of the national economy, have been segregated according to their impact and where those of a lesser impact are also exempt from applying for a development permit.

Two major changes have been carried out to the Environment and Planning Act to improve the right of objectors and eNGOs in the process of submission and appeal from a development permit.

Restructuring the Development Services Directorate

During 2014, the restructuring of the Development Services Directorate was completed. To ensure consistency and efficiency, the Directorate was divided into five Units, namely the Small Business Development Unit, the EU & Special Projects Unit, the General Development Unit, the Urban Conservation and Rural Development Unit and the Major Development Unit.

Due to the decrease of approximately 40% to the planning fees in 2013, the Authority in 2014, saw an increase of over €1 million euro from validated planning application over the same period.

Follow the review of the Development Planning Act, MEPA will in the near future start to act as a one-stop-shop for a number of activities. This change is expected to reduce charges, expenses, time and resources. For 2015, the emphasis will focus on the increase in efficiency

and the introduction of the fast track applications to ensure timeliness.

Restructuring the Compliance and Enforcement Directorate

Throughout 2014, the Compliance and Enforcement Directorate was restructured to strengthen the arm that regulates the environmental aspect. During the year, MEPA conducted most of major direct actions on infringements in the countryside and which were posing a threat to the environment.

To increase efficiency within the Directorate, MEPA is exploring the possibility of equipping enforcement officers to have access to plans, policies and other information whilst on site inspections. This will help to determine instantly whether an infringement is being carried out or otherwise.

Investing in Information Technology

During the year, the Authority undertook major investments in Information Technology, especially in upgrading its servers and networking equipment. Following an audit carried out by MITA, MEPA also invested close to €500,000 to strengthen the security level of its IT systems. Ongoing investment in ICT will remain a priority in the coming years as the Authority wants to remain guaranteeing the public a high level of transparency and accountability through its online application systems.

The Mapping and Information Resources Unit started working on acquiring funds to implement a new European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) project with a value of €7million.

An ongoing capacity building exercise was also implemented in 2014. Units which were suffering from a short fall of staff were provided with the human capital required to operate effectively and efficiently.

MEPA has also initiated a series of call for tenders for major services it utilizes during its daily operations. An ongoing programme of work was initiated for structural improvements and maintenance to the MEPA building.

Paperless office

The concept of a paperless office was also launch in 2014, with printing costs having already been reduced by more than a quarter of a million euro. In the coming year, a holistic printing solution will be implemented with MEPA aiming to cut down 60% of its paper processing, resulting in further cost savings. During 2015, MEPA will be embarking on an ambitious long term project that aims to digitalise all old development planning files.

Customer Care

A restructuring exercise was also carried out within the Customer Care Unit, so as to manage better and streamline the high influx of calls and enquiries which the Authority receives. During 2015, the Unit shall start operating a call-centre-support system to deal with MEPA's clients more efficiently and effectively by providing timely responses. The Authority is also in the process of designing customer surveys to better monitor and improve the level of service.

Environment Protection

During this past year, MEPA continued to ensure that the environment responsibilities and obligations, which fall under its remit, are fully met. The Authority, through its Environment Protection Directorate, continued to provide significant input, at EU and international level, to the preparation of Malta's position, to ensure that Malta's uniqueness is reflected in the design of new legislation. Through the five air quality stations, that provide real time data through its website, the Authority continued monitoring the air quality while it also continued the monitoring of inland and coastal water quality in line with the Water Framework Directive.

Natura 2000 Management Plans

During 2014, MEPA also concluded the EU funded project which saw the preparation of management plans for all terrestrial Nature 2000 sites, which are expected to give more clarity towards the sustainable management of such sites. The draft plans will be issued for public consultation in 2015.

MEPA has also finalised the ecological and socio-economic assessment of Malta's marine waters and established environmental targets to achieve a good environmental status in line with EU legislation. This work will contribute towards the development of a national Integrated Maritime Policy that will ensure that blue growth is undertaken in a sustainable manner.

Industrial Permitting

Inspections were carried out to oversee compliance monitoring of environment permit holders to ensure adherence to permit conditions and reduce impact on the environment. This has led to an increase in permitted operators as operators were brought in line with regulations. In addition, during the year, the environmental permitting procedure was subjected to the first IMPEL review by peers from other European states, resulting in a positive outcome whereby they commended the good practice in compliance procedures undertaken by MEPA.

Communication Initiatives

During the year, the Authority continued with its educational programme of organising two free monthly Sunday tours for the public. These tours, Nature & Biodiversity and Heritage Planning, remain as always very popular and highly sought after. A new initiative is the school educational programme 'On-site', enabling students to get first-hand experience of the responsibilities and functions that fall directly under MEPA's remit.

The Authority also organised various public consultation initiatives associated with the various draft planning policies which were issued over the months. These public consultation phases, include the dissemination of policy information and the organisation public and stakeholder meetings: to discuss, listen, explain and understand the view points and issues of those present.

Four major awareness campaigns were launched throughout the year which included, 'Making Change Simpler', 'Celebrating Biodiversity', 'Summer Break Time' and 'Businesssense'.

The Authority also organised a number of environment responsible initiatives for its employees, such as a Car Free Day, a Clean up at *il-Magħluq* in Marsaxlokk and a Tree Planting at *Għarghur* Primary School.

Demerger

Throughout the past year the Authority continued working on new processes and systems which will be introduced as part of the demerger when the new law gets enacted. Government has given direction that the new law will be enacted in the summer of next year and will be implemented by the beginning of 2016.

One major aspect of this 'reform' is the streamlining of planning processes to ensure a system that is more effective both in terms of quality and timeliness.

The Authority is working on setting up of a fast track application system for applications which are compliant with local plans, policies and within scheme. Unnecessary lengthy bureaucratic procedures are not adding any value to the applicant nor the public and are draining the Authority of experienced resources. These resources can be better utilized to assess higher impact planning applications where quality and design are paramount.

Building Regulations

The Authority is also working on the integration of the Building Regulations within the provisions of the new Planning Act. The Building Regulations will basically incorporate the responsibilities of the existing Sanitary Laws under Part V of Chapter 10 of the Laws of Malta, the Avoidance of Damage to Third Party Regulations under Legal Notice 72 of 2013 and the Energy Performance of Building Regulations, 2012 under Legal Notice 376 of 2012. Besides streamlining the requirements of the Building Regulations with those of Planning Development, this integration will also widen the one-stop shop concept which will come in line with MEPA's commitment to improve its service to customers and the public in general.

Finances

The income generated from development applications which were decided maintained the same level with a marginal increase over 2013 however comparing to 2012 one draws an overall increase of 37% increase in income. The decrease in the permit fees that came into effect in July 2013 and where one would expect that this may eventually result in a decrease in income for the Authority was not the overall result of the downward revision in permit fees.

The Authority has achieved an overall increase of 345% in income generated from daily fines. This results from a legal notice introduced in late 2012 and which legal notice besides its financial impact has attributed to the overall efforts of the Enforcement Directorate. 2014 has seen a shift in the overall structure of the entity and other cost curtailing initiatives were implemented in 2014 which have attributed to this decrease in operational cost. MEPA has made Capital Investment of €500K mainly in Information Technology Infrastructure to strengthen one of its main operational tools which required overall upgrading.

Development Services Directorate

Development Control

During 2014, the Authority received 4,896 screening requests which is an increase of nearly 11% over the previous year. In turn, the Planning Directorate validated 3,922 development planning applications, resulting in an increase of up to 6% over the same period the previous year. Effectively, this means that the introduction of the new building levy rates in 2013 had the desired effect in boosting the number of planning applications. Through the validation of these planning applications, the Authority generated 5.6 million euro in Development Planning Fees (DPFs).

The Environment and Planning Commissions (EPCs) were more efficient in the past year, deciding upon 3,964 planning applications, an increase of nearly 7% over the previous year. Up to 94% of applications decided were approved, a slight increase over the 2013 figure.

Equally positive, was the number of Development Notifications received and decided during the past 12 months. The Authority validated 2,019 development notifications and decided 1,985 with the approval rate capped at 92%.

A new Business Development Unit was set up early this year within the Planning Directorate. This new unit complimented Government's pledge to reduce bureaucracy and facilitate the process for businesses to start up and work in an environment which promotes their sustainable growth. Additionally, over the year, the Authority embarked on an ambitious exercise of introducing a number of pro-business measures which were meant to give an impetus for businesses to start up, grow and develop. These new measures and initiatives started being introduced during the year and will continue to be rolled out in 2015 including the reduction in fees relating to commercial development applications, a new Use Classes Order, the introduction of the one-stop-shop

concept, the fast track application process, an increase in the validity period for planning permits and compliance certificates and new policy interpretation documents aiming to facilitate procedures.

Planning Applications	Jan – Dec 2014	
	2013	2014
Screening Requests Received	4,374	4,896
Validations	3,681	3,922
DPF for Validated Files above	€4.6 M	€5.6 M
Decisions	3,700	3,964
Approval Rate	92%	94%

Development Notifications	Jan – Dec 2014	
	2013	2014
Receipts	1,835	2,117
Validations	1,861	2,019
Decisions	1,945	1,985
Approval Rate	93%	92%

Forward Planning

Strategic Plan for Environment and Development (SPED)

In 2014, the Government in collaboration with MEPA, launched the Strategic Plan for the Environment and Planning (SPED) for public consultation, which document will replace the 1990 Structure Plan and regulate the sustainable use and management of land and sea resources in an integrated manner up until 2020.

In line with Government policy, the proposed Plan seeks to enable economic growth, strengthen employment opportunities, increase competitiveness and innovation whilst ensuring a healthy environment for future generations.

Whereas, the 1992 Structure Plan for the

Maltese Islands was based on a resource oriented strategy, the SPED adopts an approach where strategic planning is being broadened to encompass the concept of spatial planning. Here, the focus is in translating economic, social, cultural and environmental policies into a geographical context.

The SPED, covers marine waters up to the 25 nautical miles and the terrestrial space of the Maltese Islands and was prepared, following an analysis of Government Policy and extensive consultation with Ministries and Government entities, coordinated by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. This process resulted in a comprehensive assessment of the thematic and spatial issues that influenced the Plan and could also be tackled through spatial planning.

The SPED calls for urban sprawl to be contained, while it encourages future development to be accommodated in urban areas that are well served by public transport and existing infrastructure. New development needs to be energy and water efficient and minimise the need for people to travel, while it protects and enhances the distinctiveness of our townscapes and historical cores.

Indications are that the SPED should be discussed and approved by Parliament in the first half of 2015.

Local Plans

During 2014, the baseline preparatory work for the Local Plans was finalised. Subsequently, a streamlining, classification and geo-referenced plotting exercise was carried out with the 6,814 submissions that the Authority received during the public consultation phase for the revision of the Local Plans.

During the year, various meetings were also held with key stakeholder groups. These included, all Local Councils, the Kamra tal-Periti (KTP), the Malta Developers Association, MEPA employees, permanent secretaries and ministries and other stakeholders. Moreover,

additional meetings were also held with private individuals who requested a meeting, either to clarify their submissions or for further information relevant to the local planning process.

In order to simplify and consolidate the Local Plans, policies which had a similar content in different local plans are now being relegated to general policies and where relevant these are intended to be cross referenced to the pertinent maps. The Local Plans are being designed to be based on a paperless concept and on a number of dynamic maps to ensure a better future upgrading process.

The technical finalisation of the draft Local Plans has been set for the end of June 2015. This would be followed by discussions with Government, and a minimum of 8 weeks public consultation.

Throughout the year, a number of revisions were also undertaken in terms of Urban Conservation Areas (UCAs) boundary revisions, Comprehensive Design Areas, Green Enclaves, Outside Development Zone (ODZ) settlements, Areas of Containment and other areas which were identified to merit revision.

Policy Reviews

Apart from the SPED and the Local Plans, the Forward Planning Division was directly responsible for a number of other policy reviews which were carried out during the year. These included, the Fireworks Factory Complex Policy, which received Ministerial approval in November; the Fuel Stations Policy, which at year ending was being discussed by the Parliamentary Standing Committee and the policy for Billboards and Shooting Ranges, which still needs to be issued for public consultation. The division also worked on the approved amendment to the Use Classes Order legal notice.

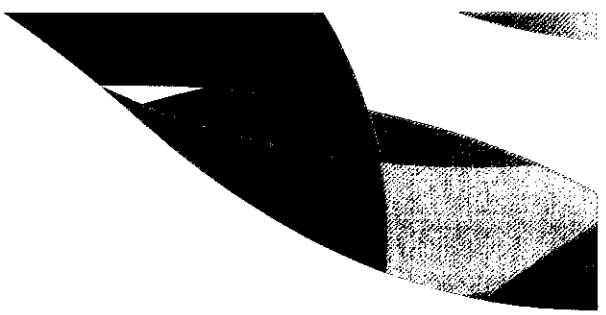
A new policy framework was drafted for Strait

Street and the Old Abattoir in Valletta. This policy review was issued for public consultation at the end of December. This proposed policy (GV31), takes into account the Government's Vision for Valletta 2018 and seeks to promote a diverse range of uses and activities connected to, or in support of, the promotion, teaching and practice of culture and local crafts.

Heritage Planning

The Heritage Planning Unit continued with the scheduling and updating of the national heritage inventory database. At the end of the year, 50 newly discovered archaeological sites within the area of *Mgarr* and *Zebbiegh* were scheduled. In addition, the Authority also extended the scheduled boundary of the Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI) to incorporate land to the south of *Tà Hagra* Temples in *Mgarr* and a sizeable area to the south and east of the church in *Zebbiegh*. Currently, the total protected area covers 0.8 square kilometers.

In addition, the unit continued to assess Restoration Method Statements and monitor the planning conditions associated with heritage aspects.



Compliance and Enforcement Directorate

One of the main targets that got accomplished by the Compliance and Enforcement Directorate in 2014, was to address the pending list of complaints which had accumulated and had never been formally closed off during the past years. The exercise also included informing and guiding complainants whose complaints were unrelated to MEPA's role or responsibilities to direct their complaint to the appropriate and competent Authority or Department.

By streamlining some of its operations, the Directorate made an effort to ensure that new incoming complaints were being dealt with in an expedient and effective manner. During the year, the Directorate received 2,807 enforcement complaints, carried out 4,875 site inspections for these complaints and closed off 2,918 cases.

Although, the approach adopted by the Directorate, when faced with an illegal development, is to persuade the contravenor to comply and within days remove the illegality. During 2014, the Directorate was compelled to issue an enforcement notice in 416 cases. For 71 of these enforcement cases, the Authority also imposed a daily fine.

During the year, the Directorate managed to close 383 enforcement notice cases. For 165 cases, the contravenor complied with the enforcement notice, while for the remainder either the contravenor applied to sanction the illegality through a development permit or had their appeal against the enforcement notice upheld.

During 2014, the Directorate carried out 2,661 site inspections to monitor on-going works on approved development projects.

Compliance Certificates

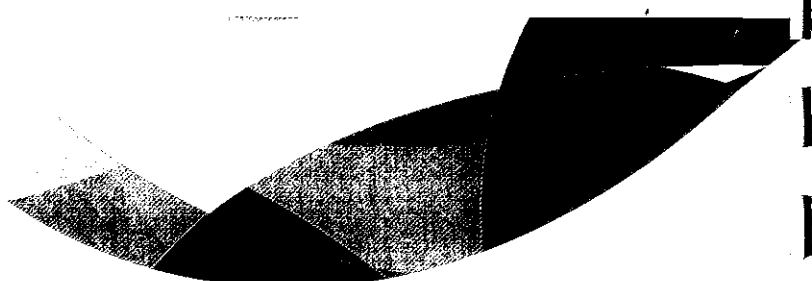
The Directorate also focused on improving the processing of compliance certificates so that requests are dealt with promptly. Additionally, to ensure better consistency in the processing of these certificates, the Authority started issuing these certificates by one office so as to filter any interpretations given by different officers in dealing with compliance procedures. This measure also resulted in more certificates being issued and within a shorter period of time.

During the year, the Directorate received 6,904 requests and issued 6,528 compliance certificates. Throughout 2015, the Authority will be working on a project to digitalise the compliance certificate process, allow submission of requests and the issuing of certificates to be carried out electronically, saving time on processing and the cost of paper and postage.

Direct Actions

During the year, the Authority carried out direct action on 99 cases. Primarily, this action was taken on sites which were outside the development boundaries, within scheduled areas or where the illegal development constituted bad neighbourliness. July was the month where most direct action cases were tackled, tallying a total of 54 cases.

During 2014, the Directorate started working on an ICT project to have in place new software which will cover the whole enforcement process - from receipt of a complaint to taking direct action if necessary.



Environment Protection Directorate

Environmental Policy

During 2014, the Environment Protection Directorate (EPD) continued to review all draft plans and sectoral policies according to a quality assurance procedure. This exercise has assisted Malta in permeating its environmental obligations into national plans and sectoral policies, while also reducing the associated negative environmental impact. This centralised policy review function took on a more fundamental role, following the setting up of the Government's Online Portal for Public Consultation. This function was carried out in addition to MEPA already being a statutory consultee in the Strategic Environmental Assessment process.

EPD continued to coordinate the formulation of positions on proposals relating to EU obligations and those stemming from Multilateral Environmental Agreements ensuring that Malta's position in the international fora was adequately represented and contributed towards the drafting of obligations based on Malta's uniqueness.

The EPD also administered, co-ordinated and managed projects co-financed by the European Union. Work in this area included projects related to environmental monitoring; the social and economic analysis on the use of marine waters and the costs of degradation; the assessment and protection of marine migratory species like the bottlenose dolphin and loggerhead turtles in Malta; the surveying of marine habitats and the designation of further marine protected areas (MPAs). The Directorate also concluded the plans for the management of terrestrial protected Natura 2000 sites. These plans have been presented to Government for endorsement and direction on the way forward for their implementation. EPD also provided its input and expertise on other specific funded projects such as the development of the shared environmental information system (SEIS).

Several initiatives were carried out to ensure a reduction in loss of biodiversity, increase the integration of environmental principles in other sectors, increase awareness and conservation of species, and ameliorate site management. Other expected benefits associated with these initiatives include greater control on invasive alien species and increased protection of natural resources.

In relation to EU Affairs, four major achievements for this year were, the successful conclusion of the handing over of EU related chemical legislation to MCCA, the European Environment Agency (EEA) country visit, the first IMPEL Review Initiative and the conclusion of two EU pilot and one infringement case.

MEPA prepared consistent, timely and quality positions on 15 EU dossiers that were discussed throughout the year. As part of the preparations for Malta EU Presidency in 2017, the Authority gave input for the identification of priorities, the setting up of key meetings and the assessment of required resources.

On implementation of EU legislation and policy, the Authority focused on a number of proactive initiatives to avoid infringements, such as the coordination of 14 pieces of legislation that were published and another 11 pieces that are in the process of being transposed. A comprehensive exercise was also carried out on behalf of MSDEC to identify legislation that requires consolidation or revocation. Overall 21 reports were submitted to EU bodies and work on 13 reports was initiated for 2015. Finally in relation to bilateral work with EU bodies, MEPA ensured that it brought Malta in the forefront of discussions within various EU environmental related networks, including EPAN, IMPEL and the EEA.

Environmental Management

During 2014, EPD continued to strengthen its role in integrating environmental considerations in the development control process, primarily through managing the Environmental Impact Assessment process and the Appropriate Assessment mechanism. Within this framework, the Directorate continued to give advice to planning application applicants on environmental issues as an integral aspect of development planning process. The improved internal interface and streamlined procedures for impact assessments, has facilitated and improved the integration of EPD's responses when consulted on planning applications.

EPD continued to promote the management of protected areas, through the implementation and development of management agreements with site managers, as well as the management of other selected areas. The Directorate also concluded the 22 management plans and 8 Conservation Orders for all terrestrial Natura 2000 sites, through the involvement and consultation with all stakeholders.

During the year, the Directorate worked on the preparation of an economic feasibility study as part of the measures under the Water Catchment Management Plan (WCMP), which Plan continued to be implemented in order to achieve a holistic approach towards water management laid out in a step by step of actions and measures to better manage our waters. Work also started on the drafting of the second Water Catchment Management Plan. This included the first status assessment of inland surface waters, an ecological and chemical status assessment of coastal waters and the preliminary identification of potential measures that will be put forward for stakeholder and public consultation next year.

Efforts were also made to inter-calibrate ecological water quality data at a Mediterranean level so as to ensure that Malta's definition of good ecological status was carried out.

Environmental Permitting

A substantial amount of environmental permits were issued during 2014, including environmental permits processed/revised according to the provisions of the new Industrial Emissions Directive (IED) in order to reduce the impact on the environment from targeted industries.

With a view to effectively integrate environmental concerns into the broader spectrum of the development consent process and increase agency efficiency and environmental protection, the Directorate also provided environmental permitting assistance for planning permits concerning farms and stables, hotels and restaurants, waste management facilities, industrial sites and complexes, commercial and medical laboratories amongst others.

The Directorate worked with quarry owners who are in the process of obtaining an environmental permit, while extended technical assistance to more operators and entities with the purpose of achieving a more streamlined process and better environmental management.

Throughout the year, there was an increase in initiatives towards a more effective waste management system on a number of fronts. A significant increase of permits was also recorded in the number of Consignment Note Permits for the transfer of hazardous waste within Malta. By December 2014, 406 permits were issued and around 3,400 movements under these permits were carried out. The six permitted waste schemes; 2 for packaging waste recovery, 3 for waste from electric and electronic equipment, and 1 for waste batteries and accumulators, continued to ensure a coordinated approach to each waste stream while providing a service to each waste holder. Exported waste was also managed through a number of Transfrontier Shipment of waste applications issued for the export of hazardous waste and non hazardous waste (mainly recyclables) pursuant to the obligations of the Waste Shipment Regulation. As at the end of December 2014, MEPA received 52

applications for the transboundary shipment of waste, however there were 63 active permits most of which for hazardous waste and around 647 movements were carried out under these permits. During the same year, around 1,766 shipments of non-hazardous waste destined for recovery were exported to various countries. These environmental permits and consignment notes were inputted into a hazardous waste database.

Environmental Monitoring

During 2014, the monitoring of the coastal water and inland surface water within protected areas started in line with our EU obligations. These first set of results will serve as an important guide for policy development and permitting.

The surveillance and monitoring of key biodiversity aspects, continued, in order to ensure safeguarding of our natural heritage and enable the appropriate reporting at national and international levels.

The radiation monitoring programme which analyses the presence of gamma radiation and radioactive isotopes in air, soil and water also continued. During the year, EPD carried out baseline studies both in soil, sediments and sea water sample (both surface and column) to identify the national average and detect the presence of radioactive isotopes in the environment.

EPD also upgraded its network with three new stations which are able to measure the total gamma dose and perform spectroscopic analysis to measure total alpha and beta in air. Every hour, these dataset were uploaded to the European Radiological Data Exchange Platform and on SEIS (Shared Environmental Information System) to ensure that every entity is kept updated with the situation with respect to these potential pollutants.

During the year, draft guidelines for the monitoring of blasting operations during

quarrying were also completed. These draft guidelines, although used by quarries using blasting as their method of mineral extraction, seek to assist operators when monitoring to reduce their vibration and air over pressure levels. While the emission limit values has been revised, the guidance should ensure that immediate attention is targeted towards mitigating such emissions in areas that are mostly affected by these operations.

Compliance monitoring was continued on shipments of waste aimed at preventing illegal movements of waste originating or transiting from Malta. By the end of December 2014, 155 inspections were carried out under the Waste Shipment Regulations with the aim to validate the waste data provided by waste brokers. Work by the committee, chaired by MEPA together with Transport Malta, Malta Police and Customs, set up to better coordinate inspections related to Transfrontier Shipments of waste and Consignment Notes, resulted in a more efficient use of resources and a better coordinated approach to the issue.

Compliance inspections were carried out on environment permit holders (such as energy generation industry, factories, quarries, waste management operators, etc.) to ensure adherence to permit conditions aimed at reducing impact on the environment.

The Directorate also continued to investigate and carry out inspections following complaints received from the public. Where necessary, EPD took the necessary action to request operators to apply for the legally required environmental permits resulting in an increase in permitted operators, who operate in a cleaner manner.

Information resulting from inspections was entered in a shared MEPA database to increase internal data accessibility and communication while increasing MEPA's environmental protection efficiency.

The air quality monitoring network, which

comprises of 5 real time stations, continued to operate. In addition, MEPA started deploying passive diffusive tubes in order to be able to provide more reliable information on the state of air quality. MEPA also continued to maintain the national atmospheric emissions inventory in line with EU and International obligations.

Environmental Information

During the year, publications on environmental information were disseminated to increase awareness on the subject. The Authority also continued to make Environment Impact Assessments and other environmental data available to the public for viewing on the Authority's website.

Guidance notes and explanatory notes were produced for operators and stakeholders with interest in the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED), with over 20 specific/public consultation meetings having been organised with the aim of informing stakeholders on how to comply.

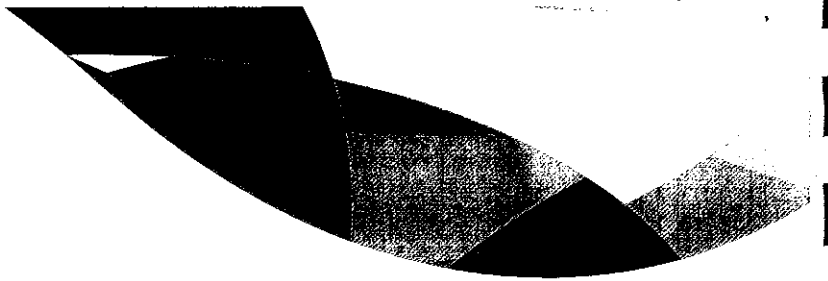
Guidance notes and Terms of Reference were produced for environmental monitoring concerning use of explosives by the quarrying industry. These were discussed through a public consultation meeting and were also disseminated to each licensed quarry operator for their views. It is expected that this information will yield a better understanding of operator responsibility and a reduction in the negative impacts from vibrations associated with such operations.

EPD participated in a number of local and international meetings to increase knowledge and improve relations with relevant stakeholders ultimately increasing MEPA's efficiency in environmental protection.

A good number of meetings were conducted with operators, architects and consultants to discuss the legal obligations emanating from environmental permits on quarries. As a result, it is expected that this information will yield a better understanding of operator responsibility,

a reduction in the negative impacts associated with such operations for the environment and society in general.

Six public consultation meetings on EU matters were carried out in conjunction with MEUSAC. These meetings were successful, well attended and important for stakeholders and MEPA, to ensure that positions and deliverables produced take into account the views and experience of stakeholders and do not pose undue burden on affected parties.



Corporate Services Directorate

Information Resources Unit (IRU)

During 2014, the Information Resources Unit (IRU) completed various projects, including the €4 million ERDF156 project which focused on significantly upgraded Malta's national environmental monitoring infrastructure and capacity, with the prospect that the improved availability and reliability of information on the state of the environment will enable the development of more informed and better targeted policy measures in all spheres of public policy, including health, fiscal, economic, social and environmental domains. Additionally, IRU concluded the €300,000 ESPONTrain project, which project sought to stimulate a transnational educational and training ESPON activity facilitated by both an e-learning procedure and a networking promoted by ECPs.

IRU was highly effective with the management of data cycle from creation and sourcing of data to inputting, analysis, reporting and dissemination. The IRU was involved in various national and international projects which have both enhanced the knowledge at MEPA and also enabled the implementation of various international requirements on EU reporting. The Unit still maintained its main role of spatial data creation and analysis across all the directorates, through thematic modelling and reporting.

The Unit started planning for a new €7 million ERDF (2014-2020) project on data integration and Spatial systems (SIntegraM). This project will entail services for the creation of spatial analytical programmes for data consumption and data maintenance for policy making.

Land Survey Unit

Throughout 2014, the Land Survey Unit continued with its activities, namely, the setting out of scheme alignment and road formation levels for new developments or the asphaltting

of new roads and the preparation of large scale topographic survey plans.

During the period under review a total of 866 setting out requests were submitted at the Land Survey Unit, out of which 785 were processed. These setting out requests covered localities both in Malta and Gozo. 83% of these requests were processed within the pre-set time of 10 working days. In addition, 36 requests were received for setting out of scheme alignment and road formation levels prior to the construction of new urban schemed roads. These requests originate from Transport Malta and various Local Councils.

As in previous years, the Setting Out Survey Section within the unit was also actively involved during the processing of development planning applications whereby internal consultation are carried out vis-à-vis the site and street levels. For sites falling within urban conservation areas, the unit provides details of the scheme alignment.

The Topographic Survey Services Section within the Unit, managed to retain its existing clients' base while attracted new ones. These clients primarily include corporate government entities namely Transport Malta, Estates Management Department, Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools, public liability companies such as Malta International Airport, and a number of private architects and developers.

Mapping Unit

In the year under review the Large-Scale Topographic Mapping Team within the Mapping Unit continued with its task of maintaining and updating the Large-Scale Topographic Mapping Product Portfolio which is the core product of the Mapping Unit. During the past 12 months the production team continued with the large-scale remapping of the southern urban zone of

Malta – *Marsaxlokk, Birzebbuga and Kalafrana*. The team also carried out updating of a number of urban settlements and hamlets in areas outside the development zone. During 2014 the team invested resources into researching the requirements necessary for upgrading and updating the large-scale topographic basemap. This is being carried out with the aim of including the update of the basemap in an ERDF project proposal for the EU funding programme 2014 – 2020. This work will continue into 2015.

Implementation of new datasets within the MapServer has also been finalised. New functionalities and additional environmental data and restricted trapping zones have also been included.

The Unit also continued to support and maintain the Development Services Geo-Information system. Quality checking for all plotting parcels has been initiated and incorporated as an on-going procedure.

The Mapping Shop also continued to offer the on-going provision of mapping products and services to external clients, together with the provision of information related to Archive Survey Sheets.

The Unit also carried out the maintenance of contract-based licenses, started working the implementation of Mobile App to integrate Mapping data, issued a tender for a New Plotting System and carried out the updating of Street names on Plotting System.

Human Resources Unit

During 2014, the Human Resources Unit primarily focused its work on capacity building within the Authority. The exercise included the processing of 751 applications followed by the issuing of 31 internal calls for application which were complimented by a further 12 external calls. This exercise was further enhanced through the introduction of a digitilised system which system facilitated the processing of and selection of the applications received.

The Unit also worked on the preparatory phase for the issuing of health insurance tender for the provision of free health insurance services to employees and their dependents. Furthermore, the HR Unit together with the IT Unit were actively involved in the drawing up of blueprints for the enhancement of current in house attendance recording system and the introduction of an in house Web-leave system. During 2015, the Unit plans to digitalise other major HR processes including the palming maintenance system.

The Unit also continued to perform other normal HR activities which relate to training and development, maintenance of attendance records, introduction of shift roster, performance appraisal and tapping of EU funds for overseas training opportunities. Reimbursement of child care, processing of health insurance claims and the provision of personal protective equipment were also undertaken during the year.

Information Technology

The Information and Communication Technology Unit carried out various infrastructural upgrades during 2014. The core networking equipment at the offices at St. Francis Ravelin in Floriana have been completely revamped and upgraded, enabling the introduction of various enhancements in security, authentication and connectivity between servers and users. The Unit also executed a new Storage Area Network which supports a virtual environment, and various services have been migrated to provide increased speed, resilience and storage space to cater for the Authority's needs. The Authority's firewall has also been upgraded and enhanced to include further security and filtering measures. The Unit has also contributed towards implementing the Authority's objective that of moving towards a paperless office concept. For this purpose the ICT unit started introducing dual monitors for users and also introducing a new printing infrastructure.

The old email system has been migrated to a

new email setup with enhanced security, user experience and online webmail functionality. From a software perspective, a new online portal has been developed inhouse in preparation for new processes to be introduced in 2015. Inhouse systems have been enhanced and supported with changes to processes and legislation.

During the coming year, the ICT unit will draw up a disaster recovery plan as contingency measures to ensure business continuity for the organisation and migrate the database servers to a virtual environment.

Customer Care

During the year, the Customer Care Unit was formally set up and assigned additional personnel to fulfil its functions. In addition, to the existing services offered across the counter, the Reportline 2290 1090 was also set up through which reports, relating to illegal development, were being handled expeditiously, resulting in a significant increase in the number of calls handled by the Authority.

The Unit started working on introducing a new call handling setup aimed to achieve a better customer experience. It is estimated that the Authority received over 78,000 calls on the general number during 2014. MEPA intends to follow up unattended calls effectively and more efficiently.

Procurement and Support Services

During 2014, an extensive number of calls for quotations and tenders were issued and awarded. These covered a wide variety of supplies and services targeting both the Planning and Environment Directorates within the Authority. Amongst other works, the Procurement office upgraded its IT infrastructure, procured new cleaning services, preceded with procurement related to the implementation of two EU LIFE+ funded projects, and is in the process of awarding a new contract for printing, scanning and

photocopying services for all of MEPA.

Internally, Support Services proceeded with the day-to-day maintenance of the premises, managing of security personnel, fleet management, store keeping, and coordination of overseas travelling. Support Services increased its maintenance staff complement during 2014, which made it possible to start undergoing pro-active work to embellish the premises.

By the year end, the Procurement and Support Services have been amalgamated into one team. These two offices will be integrated and their functions streamlined.

Digitalisation across the entity

In a bid to contribute to the Authority's corporate environment responsibility and at the same time embrace the Green Initiative, the Corporate Services Directorate started looking into developing digitization initiatives across its processes. This paperless concept is already at an advanced stage within the development planning units and work has started on the Archives Section of the Operations Unit.

While the Human Resources Unit is in the initial stages of exploring the digitalising of its processes, it is envisaged that the concept will progressively be carried on throughout the whole organisation.

The digitalisation process is thought to effectively contribute to broaden and enhance access to information, increase information sharing, limit the use of paper, free up storage space and improve information management, amongst others. Although the initial outlay of investment may be expensive, the realisation of financial benefits and costs will indirectly be recouped albeit over time.

Boards and Committees

MEPA Board

Chairman
Perit Vincent Cassar

Deputy Chairpersons
Perit Elizabeth Ellul
Perit Franco Montesin

replaced by Martin Camilleri on 5th November 2014

Independent Members:
Mr Paul Apap Bologna
Prof. Victor Axiaq
Dr. Veronique Dalli
Dr. Timmy Gambin
Mr. Matthew Pace
Mr. Alex Vella
Ms. Angela Zammit

Public Officers:
Mr. Raymond Camilleri
Mr. Sharlo Camilleri
Dr. Ivan Tabone

Members of the House of Representatives
Hon. Ryan Callus
Hon. Dr. Joseph Sammut

Board Secretary
Mr. David Cassar

replaced by Mr. Joseph Borg on 25th March 2014

Environment and Planning Commissions

Between January – October 2014

Between November – December 2014

EPC A

Chairperson: Perit Elizabeth Ellul

Chairperson: Perit Elizabeth Ellul

Members:
Perit Claude Borg
Perit Marie Fleur Ebejer
Dr. John Mangion

Members:
Mr. Martin Camilleri
Dr. Charles Grech
Perit Simon Saliba
Perit Mariello Spiteri

Environment and Planning Commissions

Between January – October 2014

EPC B

Chairperson: Perit Franco Montesin

Members:

Perit Anna Marie Attard Montalto

Mr. Bjorn Bonello

Perit Saviour Borg

Mr. Anthony Ellul

Between November – December 2014

Chairperson: Mr. Martin Camilleri

Members:

Perit Aaron Abela

Perit Anna Marie Attard Montalto

Perit Anthony Camilleri

Perit Elizabeth Ellul

Heritage Advisory Committee

Cultural

Chairperson: Magistrate Dr. Denis Montebello

Members:

Ms. Miriam Cremona

Mr. Carmel Hili

Perit Claude Mallia

Ms. Yvonne Micallef Stafrace

Mr. Raymond Pitre'

Mr. Joseph Zrinzo

Natural

Chairperson: Judge Dr. Joseph David Camilleri

Members:

Perit Ruben Abela

Mr. Jean Paul Attard

Dr. Graham Busuttil

Dr. Noel Camilleri

Mr. David Dandria

Dr. Norman Shaw

MALTA ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING AUTHORITY
INCOME STATEMENT



	Actual 2012 €	Budget 2013 €	Forecast 2013 €	Actual 2013 €	Budget 2014 €	Forecast 2014 €	Estimates 2015 €
TOTAL OWN GENERATED REVENUE							
Income generated from own operations	8,387,472	7,680,829	8,449,440	10,952,553	8,831,689	8,932,914	12,667,002
Other operating income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bank interest receivable	3,246	7,000	3,184	1,401	4,000	646	679
Total own generated revenue (i)	8,390,718	7,687,829	8,452,624	10,953,954	8,835,689	8,933,560	12,667,681
GRANTS AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS - RECURRENT							
Parliamentary Appropriation - Government Subvention receivable for Recurrent Expenditure (ii)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other contributions from other public administration	3,325,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	2,700,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
Donations receivable from sponsorships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
EU Grants receivable to cover Recurrent Expenditure featuring under 'Total Expenses' below	2,060,738	83,521	1,832,799	1,761,045	900,000	176,267	800,000
Other Grants receivable	350,767	35,650	288,445	377,196	290,000	373,651	350,000
Total Grants and Other contributions (iii)	5,736,505	3,119,171	5,121,244	4,838,241	4,190,000	3,549,918	4,150,000
a. TOTAL INCOME (i + iii)	14,127,223	10,807,000	13,573,868	15,792,195	12,825,689	12,483,478	16,817,681
TOTAL EXPENSES							
Direct operating expenses - recurrent							
Salaries and wages	9,274,979	10,213,435	9,710,000	9,783,569	10,098,400	9,566,821	10,472,193
Bonus and income supplement	804,788	850,000	820,000	863,157	840,000	887,215	1,139,706
Social Security Contributions	819,218	860,000	840,000	767,521	860,000	850,669	871,217
Allowances	760,159	800,000	780,000	681,593	800,000	713,107	632,187
Overtime	279,175	300,000	250,000	361,590	280,000	508,085	1,000,000
Utilities	350,665	524,091	528,000	503,174	530,000	447,683	470,067
Material and Supplies	43,090	42,163	30,443	45,251	32,000	34,199	35,909
Repair and Upkeep	162,249	130,691	131,643	151,063	132,000	170,681	279,215
Rent	92,586	95,000	94,737	102,809	95,000	95,000	95,000
International memberships	15,424	10,543	10,524	15,377	11,000	16,736	17,573
Office Services	470,344	461,903	449,825	349,325	450,000	200,713	210,748
Transport	409,160	415,435	397,157	382,362	400,000	354,567	372,295
Travel	187,786	189,274	138,942	148,813	140,000	113,407	119,077
Information services	216,796	215,675	169,261	227,334	173,000	198,567	208,516
Contractual services	831,926	845,021	673,899	697,543	680,000	603,552	644,724
Professional services	266,981	194,054	205,999	248,785	235,000	528,649	1,102,582
Training	68,626	44,129	31,533	48,981	32,000	40,312	80,000
Hospitality	9,842	4,817	7,007	13,741	7,000	14,808	15,549
Incidental expenses	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bank interest payable	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bad debts written off	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Increase in provision for bad debts	62,725	-	150,000	19,110	-	-	-
Decrease in provision for bad debts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Provisions	126,318	53,617	52,566	58,947	54,000	52,566	55,195
Depreciation charge	760,957	400,000	800,000	779,617	700,000	757,897	725,000
Other recurrent expenditure funded through EU Grants	2,014,567	150,000	1,895,424	1,822,722	1,000,000	414,361	1,100,000
Other Expenditure	10,009	9,630	4,433	16,041	5,000	16,571	17,499
	17,912,900	18,809,478	17,871,393	18,048,205	17,554,400	16,586,186	19,664,252
(Deficit) / Surplus	- 3,785,677	- 6,002,478	- 4,297,525	- 2,256,010	- 4,728,711	- 4,102,708	- 2,846,571

MALTA ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING AUTHORITY
FINANCIAL POSITION STATEMENT



	Actual 2012 €	Budget 2013 €	Forecast 2013 €	Actual 2013 €	Budget 2014 €	Forecast 2014 €	Estimates 2015 €
ASSETS							
NON-CURRENT ASSETS							
PROPERTY, PLANT & EQUIPMENT	6,176,487	6,076,487	5,776,484	6,054,140	5,476,484	5,674,977	5,849,977
INTANGIBLE ASSETS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
INVESTMENTS IN ASSOCIATES	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
OTHER NON-CURRENT ASSETS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	6,176,487	6,076,487	5,776,484	6,054,140	5,476,484	5,674,977	5,849,977
CURRENT ASSETS							
INVENTORIES	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES	2,221,594	2,221,594	2,221,594	3,562,513	2,221,594	3,740,330	2,740,330
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	977,619	325,535	13,043	1,290,741	70,332	556,464	8,644
OTHER CURRENT ASSETS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	3,199,213	2,547,129	2,234,637	4,853,254	2,291,926	4,296,794	2,748,974
TOTAL ASSETS	9,375,700	8,623,616	8,011,121	10,907,394	7,768,410	9,971,771	8,598,951
EQUITY							
ORDINARY SHARES	1,164,687	1,164,687	1,164,687	1,164,687	1,164,687	1,164,687	1,164,687
OTHER RESERVES	1,062,864	1,027,214	774,419	1,862,824	484,419	1,915,390	1,970,585
RETAINED EARNINGS	- 21,831,438	- 27,833,916	- 26,128,965	- 24,107,952	- 30,857,676	- 28,210,586	- 31,057,158
TOTAL EQUITY	- 19,603,887	- 25,642,015	- 24,189,859	- 21,080,441	- 29,208,570	- 25,130,509	- 27,921,886
LIABILITIES							
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES							
BORROWINGS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PROVISION FOR OTHER LIABILITIES	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CURRENT LIABILITIES							
TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES	28,217,733	30,850,160	28,786,560	29,513,863	32,908,560	32,766,326	34,534,883
CURRENT INCOME TAX LIABILITIES	955,977	1,555,977	1,555,977	1,344,575	2,155,977	1,517,597	1,517,597
PROVISION FOR OTHER LIABILITIES	1,805,877	1,859,494	1,858,443	1,129,397	1,912,443	818,357	468,357
	28,979,587	34,265,631	32,200,980	31,987,835	36,976,980	35,102,280	36,520,837
TOTAL LIABILITIES	28,979,587	34,265,631	32,200,980	31,987,835	36,976,980	35,102,280	36,520,837
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	9,375,700	8,623,616	8,011,121	10,907,394	7,768,410	9,971,771	8,598,951

