



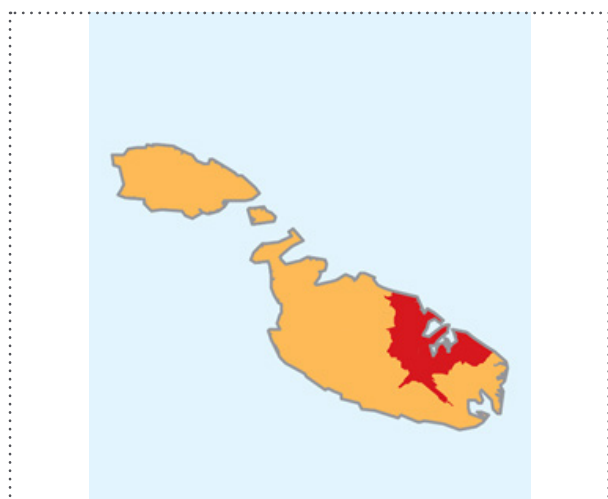
MALTA

INSIGHT PAPER

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RURALITY (1)

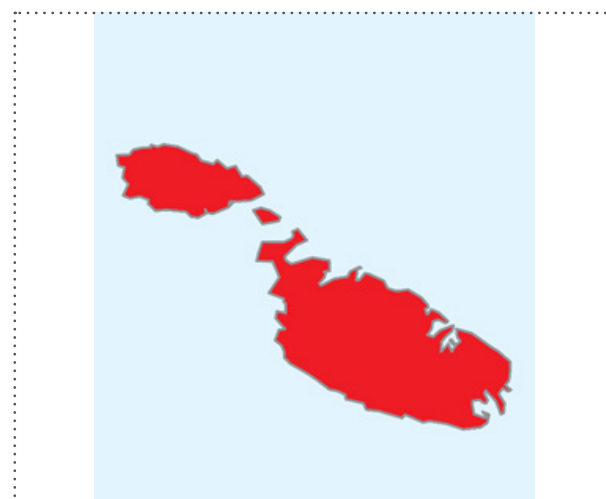
Degree of urbanisation for local administrative units level 2 (LAU2)



- Cities
- Towns and suburbs
- Rural Areas
- Data not available

Source: Eurostat, JRC and European Commission Directorate-General for Regional Policy, May 2016

Urban-rural typology for NUTS level 3 regions



- Predominantly urban regions
(rural population is less than 20% of the total population)
- Intermediate regions
(rural population is between 20% and 50% of the total population)
- Predominantly rural regions
(rural population is 50% or more of the total population)
- Data not available

Source: Eurostat, JRC, EFGS, REGIO-GIS, 24 June 2016

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION

89,8%

Share of people living in cities

10%

Share of people living in towns and suburbs

Source: Eurostat, 2016

0.2% Share of people living in rural areas

GEOGRAPHY

MALTA is an archipelago of seven islands, three of which are inhabited: Malta (246 km²) with a population of 402,720 inhabitants as at 2015, Gozo (67 km²) with a population of 31,683 inhabitants and Comino (3.5 km²) which is inhabited by 3 people.

NUTS 3 divides MALTA into two regions: the first is comprised of the largest island – **Malta**, while the second region is comprised of the other two inhabited island – **Gozo** and **Comino**.

Both are defined as “predominantly urban” regions according to the NUTS 3 classification, which may seem in contradiction to the rurality indicated in Figure 1 below.

For the island of Malta, although there are many areas that are rural in character, no part of the island is far from Valetta, the capital and main urban centre of the country. By contrast, the island of Gozo has no significant urban centre (Victoria with population of about 7,000 people) and requires a ferry crossing to access Valetta.

RURALITY (2)

Nature of Rurality:

Rural areas in MALTA are depicted in grey in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Rural and urban localities by national definition¹

These rural areas are defined as having:

1. a population density lower than 5,000 persons per square kilometre;
2. a minimum of 10% of the locality used as agricultural land;
3. a minimum of 35% of the locality classified as outside development zone (ODZ)².

As at 2015, 47% of the population lived within urban areas while 52% of the population lived in rural areas³.

¹ Rural Development Programme for Malta 2007 – 2013, Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs, 2009

² Rural Development Programme for Malta 2007 – 2013, Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs, 2009

³ Regional Statistics Malta 2017 Edition, National Statistics Office, Malta, 2017

RURALITY (2)

Key challenges:

Following the 2011 Census, it was concluded that the population density in MALTA stood at average 1,325 persons per square kilometre¹. However, between 2010 and 2015, the population in MALTA continued to increase at an annual growth of 19,035 inhabitants².

The highest increases in population took place within the 70 – 90+ age group while the 10 – 19 age group saw the largest decrease translating into an evidently ageing population.

³

As at 2015, the number of licensed vehicles in MALTA amounted to 346,918. The Urban area claims 45% of licenced vehicles. The number of vehicles /1000 inhabitants was at 983 in the Region of Gozo and Comino and 799 in Malta. Despite this fact, however, in Gozo, levels of congestion are much lower than in Malta typically only occurring on the final stretch approaching the Victoria terminus (Regional Capital)⁴.

GOZO:

the island faces a number of challenges originating from its double insularity. Being an island within an island, Gozitan economic operators suffer from disadvantages, such as high transport costs, which their Maltese counterparts do not. Transport in Gozo is highly dependent on private cars, however, the recently introduced reform to the public transport system is expected to mitigate this⁵.

The lack of job opportunities within the island is also a challenge. 8% of the Gozitan population work in Malta⁶, raising needs and challenges of inter-island transport, particularly during inclement weather considering that the sea link is the only current passenger transport link between the islands.

Share of people at risk of poverty

In 2015, 68,658 persons (15.8% of total population) living in private households in MALTA were at-risk-of-poverty, with 90.9 per cent residing in Malta region and 9.1 per cent residing in the Gozo and Comino region (exclusively rural region). The highest estimated increases in the number of persons at-risk-of-poverty in 2015 were registered in the Maltese urban districts however, at 36.2%.⁷

Unmet needs in healthcare

In 2017, the share of people aged 16 and over who reported unmet needs in health care was at 0.1% in total, the main reason cited being 'Long Waiting Lists'⁸.

Unemployment

In 2015, the largest share (27.8 per cent) of unemployed persons resided in the Southern Harbour district (urban area), amounting to 1,283 persons. The largest proportion of unemployed persons featured in the 50 years and over age bracket, accounting for 39.1 per cent of the total. In terms of unemployment duration, most districts registered their highest proportions in the 105 weeks and over cohort; the exceptions to this were the Northern and the Western districts (rural) which had the highest proportion of their unemployed in the *less than 12 weeks* bracket.⁹

More recent statistics report that unemployment is currently set at 0.4% of the population. This translates to a total of 1,813 persons, 191 of whom reside in Gozo.¹⁰

NEET

Of the total 1,813 unemployed people in Malta, a total of 84 people fall within the under 20 years of age cohort. This is divided at 76 in the region in Malta and 8 people in Gozo¹¹.

¹ CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING 2011, National Statistics Office, Malta, 2014

² REGIONAL STATISTICS MALTA 2017 EDITION, National Statistics Office, Malta, 2017

³ Ibid.

⁴ National Transport Master Plan 2025, Authority for Transport in Malta, 2016, p.54

⁵ Strategic Plan for Environment and Development, Malta Environment and Planning Authority, 2015, p. 16

⁶ Regional Statistics, Malta, National Statistics Office, 2017, p. 96

⁷ REGIONAL STATISTICS MALTA 2017 EDITION, National Statistics Office, Malta, 2017

⁸ Statistics on rural areas in the EU, Eurostat, ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Statistics_on_rural_areas_in_the_EU

⁹ REGIONAL STATISTICS MALTA 2017 EDITION, National Statistics Office, Malta, 2017

¹⁰ News Release: Registered Unemployed: September 2018, National Statistics Office, Malta, 2018

¹¹ News Release: Registered Unemployed: September 2018, National Statistics Office, Malta, 2018



RURALITY (2)

2%

Share of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in rural areas, **2016 (Low reliability)**

N/A

Share of people aged 16 and over who reported unmet needs for health care in the previous 12 months due to expense, distance to travel or length of waiting list in rural areas, **2016 (Not available)**

5%

Unemployment rate, persons aged 15–64, in rural areas, **2017**

8,6%

Share of young people aged 18–24 neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETs) in rural areas, **2017**

Source: Eurostat



NATIONAL POLICIES RELATING TO RURAL MOBILITY AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Considering the lack of truly remote/sparsely populated areas in MALTA, mobility in rural regions is seldom considered specifically in policy documents. On the other hand, taking into consideration the classification of rurality as explained under the 'Nature of Rurality' section above, policies relevant to said areas are included in various national level policy documents which take a more holistic approach of the region or state as a whole.

The most relevant Regional Policy document is The Eco-Island vision for Gozo, which is essentially a Local Sustainable Development strategy for the Island of Gozo adopted by Government in 2009.

Through a holistic approach, this strategy seeks to achieve an enduring environmental improvement, while at the same time fostering economic development and social progress on the island. In terms of transport, the strategy focuses both on the improvement of public transport within the smaller island (plans drawn up by the strategy in 2009, which have since then been implemented), but more specifically it focuses on inter-island mobility in order to reduce the effects of double insularity intrinsic for Gozo¹.

¹ A VISION FOR AN ECO-ISLAND; Synthesis of the public consultation process on the ecoGozo vision, Ministry for Gozo, 2009

NATIONAL POLICIES RELATING TO RURAL MOBILITY AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

These policy recommendations were more recently taken up in the Transport Master Plan 2025 (TMP) and National Transport Strategy 2050 (NTS) which were published in 2016 by the Authority for Transport in Malta, also known as Transport Malta. These documents consider all modes of transport on land, sea and in air, and aim to create a sustainable national transport system for urban, rural and coastal areas. Through it, the Government has developed a vision of where Malta wants to be in the short, medium and long term, and the strategic direction required to get there.

In line with the above-mentioned Eco-Island Strategy, mobility for the region of Gozo and Comino is considered more specifically within the NTS and TMP.

Rural areas within Gozo are not treated specifically, however the documents include measures to increase the connectivity of rural areas to the urban core in both Malta and Gozo. To do this, the two documents emphasise the enhancement of accessibility through the planning for proximity, transit-oriented development, improved transport and communication systems, improved infrastructure and the use of greener fuels and vehicles.

This use of more environmentally friendly vehicles is in fact considered a critical principle in achieving the strategic goals of '*Sustainable Urban and Rural Environments*'.

The NTS and TMP include the following measures to increase the connectivity of rural areas, including Gozo:

- Further development of the TEN-T network which seeks to increase the accessibility of rural areas and Gozo;
- Further improvement of the public transport system, thus making it more reliable and efficient over long distances;
- The development of transport hubs, thus increasing the catchment area of public transport in rural areas;
- Assessment of further ferry landing places, providing additional accessibility to coastal areas;
- The development of demand responsive transport services, allowing flexible transport solutions to rural areas;
- Encouragement of e-commerce, e-government and flexible employment solutions, thus decreasing the burden of those living in rural areas

Specific measures for Gozo have also been considered. These include:

- Encouragement of better links between Malta and Gozo;
- Ensuring the development and improvement of sustainable transportation modes in Gozo.
- Introduction of electric buses in Gozo (medium term measure);
- Review the financial sustainability of the Malta-Gocho link (Short term Measure);
- Development of the landing place for the ferry service (including freight) to/from Gocho (short term measure);
- Re-introduction of an express passenger ferry link between Malta and Gocho (short term measure)².

All measures listed above are currently at various levels of implementation.

Rural Development:

In terms of Development Strategies for Rural Areas, the general policy is to control further development in said areas, focusing instead on preserving the landscape and encouraging agricultural activities. Development in rural areas is strictly controlled by the recently re-issued Strategic Plan for Environment and Development which falls within the remit of the national Planning Authority (SPED). This document makes proposals for future spatial distribution of development and the protection of the environment on land and sea in a manner that is consistent with national policies.

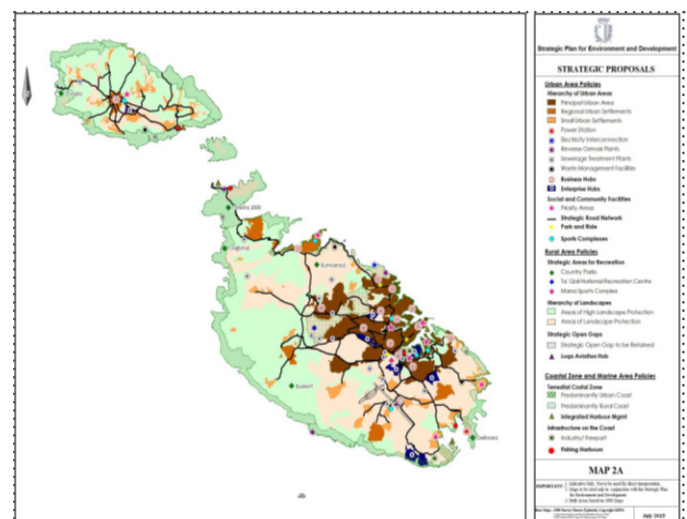


Figure 1: Strategic Proposal for development: Source: SPED, 2015

NATIONAL POLICIES RELATING TO RURAL MOBILITY AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Healthcare:

Healthcare delivery in Malta is dominated by the public sector with 96% (1,748 beds) of the beds being publicly owned and managed, whilst the remaining 85 beds are privately owned. Further to the main hospital, Mater Day, found in Malta, public primary healthcare is offered in 8 health centres and 42 clinics distributed around the two islands¹.

These represent the hub of the primary health care services provided by the Government. The hospital on Gozo is directly linked to Malta via air in cases of dire emergencies. Free transport is also provided to mobility impaired out-patients to conduct their scheduled hospital visits.



Photo Credits: Envato Elements

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Governance in Malta is organised at two layers, National Government and Local Government. The organisation of public transport is managed at the level of National Government.

Mobility in general falls within the remit of the Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects, whose executive arms are the Authority for Transport in Malta (the National Regulator of transport in all its aspects), Infrastructure Malta (responsible for the building, management, improvement and maintenance of arterial, residential and rural roads, as well as other public infrastructure in the Maltese islands) and the Planning Authority (responsible for planning and development).

The Ministry for Gozo also takes horizontal responsibility for all matters pertaining to the islands of Gozo and Comino excluding Health services and Education which

fall under the remit of the Ministry for Health and the Ministry for Education and Employment respectively. Transport Malta has responsibility for all modes of transportation, including land transport (public transport, freight, private vehicles), maritime, and aviation. It is organized as nine Directorates, of which the Land Transport Directorate is responsible for land passenger transport. The Transport Strategy Directorate is also relevant to land passenger transport. Local governance in the islands of Malta is under the remit of the Ministry of Justice, Culture and Local Government. There are 68 Local Councils, of which 14 are in Gozo. The remit of the Local Councils is primarily the management and upkeep of local amenities and services, as well as providing grassroots consultation/communication channels.

¹ Healthcare Delivery in Malta, Price Waterhouse Coopers, 2012

ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The public transport network covers all areas of the islands of Malta and Gozo, albeit timetables are less frequent (hourly) in rural areas. The bus service is operated under a concession contract which was granted to the Malta Public Transport following public tender.

“Malta Public Transport” is the national bus operator responsible to operate all public transport by bus on the Maltese islands. It was awarded the current contract in 2015. It currently operates about 80 routes in Malta and 15 routes in Gozo, with a fleet of over 400 buses, carrying 48 million passengers annually. MPT manages the common fare card (tallinja card) and the real-time passenger information systems. Routes, timetables and fares are regulated by Transport Malta.

Mobility services available in rural areas are provided on the same basis as those available in urban areas.

Following a public tender, car sharing services are currently being deployed by Car2Go who has a concession agreement with Transport Malta. The service will include at least one station in every locality.

Car Sharing stations are being located close to public transport hubs including both bus and ferry services. Electric vehicle charging infrastructure has also been available since 2013 in every locality in both islands.

Bike sharing has been introduced by the private sector. Its reach within rural areas however has been limited to tourist-centric areas. Guidelines on the further deployment of bike sharing services were published by the Ministry for Transport in 2018 to regulate any further deployment of bike sharing services.

Transport on demand is also currently being introduced by certain Local Councils with the full backing of the Transport Malta.

As of 2018, free school transport has been extended to private and church schools along with that already offered to public schools. This initiative is being led by the Ministry for Education.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

All services are regulated by Transport Malta who holds sole regulatory remit in air, land and sea transport.

Regulatory instruments for passenger transport services operate at national level, both rural and urban areas are dealt with by the same instruments, namely Transport Malta who regulates all forms of transport. The main regulatory instrument is the Authority for Transport in Malta Act (Chapter 499, 2010), supported by Motor Route Buses (Revocation) Regulations, 2011 which revoked the prior regulatory regime dating from 1948. This Act establishes the Authority and defines the basis for regulation of public bus services (in addition to powers covering other modes vested in the Authority).

The same applies to public transport services. In terms of Bus Transport and Car Sharing Services, one private operator is engaged, following public tender, to operate services at national level. Due to the size of the country, this ensures economies of scale. For the same reason however, the market for such services is restricted to a single operator.

In addition to the regulation of scheduled public transport services, Transport Malta also regulates other forms of public transport including taxis, electric minicabs, coaches and minibuses, sightseeing services, chauffeur-driven vehicles, horse-drawn cabs and hire vehicles for self-drive.

Taxis are intended for individual hire (not as shared taxis) and may be pre-booked, hired at stands or hailed in the street. Transport Malta sets the applicable tariff. Taxis are licenced for operation in either Malta or Gozo islands (250 and 50 licences respectively). Taxis are required to be fitted with tracking device and two-way communication, CCTV is optional.

FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

There is no dedicated funding for mobility services in rural areas and such funding is included in more general provisions. Funding is generated and allocated at national level. This includes:

- Government subsidies for public bus transport, led by the Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Projects. Recent schemes include free public transport for all youths between the ages of 16 and 20 years.
- A mixture of national and EU funding for the construction and management of roads, led by the Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Projects

- National funding assigned to Local Councils to maintain residential roads, led by the Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government
- Direct Government funding for school transport, led by the Ministry for Education

Other forms of transport, such as inner-harbour ferry services, car sharing and bike sharing, chauffeur-driven services etc. are operated commercially with no intervention from Government funding.



Photo Credits: Envato Elements

OTHER INFORMATION

- Malta Public Transport (public transport company) has a general obligation, and sole remit, to provide bus transport at national level
- Car2Go (car sharing company) has a general obligation, and sole remit, to provide car sharing services at national level
- NextBike provides bike sharing in certain localities in Malta and Gozo; Further bike sharing and scooter sharing services are being deployed by Malta Public Transport
- ITS / Intelligent Mobility initiatives are operated and regulated by the Authority for Transport in Malta

In most respects, mobility services in Malta are quite strongly regulated. Operating licences are required for all services open to the public, and these are issued only by Transport Malta under a clearly-defined regime. That said, the market has been opening in recent years, first for services operated on a commercial basis (unscheduled transport, including chauffeur driven services), and more recently by putting car sharing services out to competitive tender, and the publication of the guidelines for shared bike services.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND MINISTRIES ADDRESSING RURAL AREAS

TITLE	ROLE
Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Projects	Responsible for Ports and Maritime Transport, Public Works, Road Transport, Development Planning, Lands, Land Registration, Accommodation, Building Industry Regulation
Authority for Transport in Malta	National Land, Sea, Air Transport Regulator
Infrastructure Malta	Responsible for the building, management, improvement and maintenance of arterial, residential and rural roads, as well as other public infrastructure in the Maltese islands
Planning Authority	National agency which regulates planning on the Maltese islands
Ministry for Education and Employment	Responsible for Education, National Archives, Libraries, Employment, Youth, Sports, Non-governmental and Voluntary Organisations
Ministry for Gozo	Gozo Affairs (excluding Health services and Education)
Public Transport Malta	Operator with exclusive concession for public transport services by bus on the islands of Malta

LINKS TO WEBSITES

- Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Projects: mtip.gov.mt
- Ministry for Education and Employment: education.gov.mt
- Ministry for Gozo: mgoz.gov.mt
- Planning Authority: www.pa.org.mt
- Authority for Transport in Malta: transport.gov.mt
- Public Transport Malta: www.publictransport.com.mt

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- Strategic Plan for Environment and Development, Malta Environment and Planning Authority, 2015: <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/mlt158315.pdf>
- Rural Development Programme for Malta 2007 – 2013, Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs, 2009: <https://eufunds.gov.mt/en/EU%20Funds%20Programmes/European%20Agricultural%20Fund/Documents/National%20Rural%20Development/Rural%20Development%20Programme%202007%20-%202013.pdf>
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- Statistics on rural areas in the EU, Eurostat, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Statistics_on_rural_areas_in_the_EU
- National Transport Strategy 2050, Authority for Transport in Malta, 2016: www.transport.gov.mt/transport-strategies/national-transport
- A vision for an Eco Island: www.ecogozo.com/docs/A%20Vision%20for%20an%20Eco-Island_Ministry%20for%20Gozo_August%202012.pdf
- Healthcare Delivery in Malta, Price Waterhouse Coopers, 2012: www.pwc.com/mt/en/publications/healthcare/assets/healthcare_delivery_august_2012.pdf