

# A STRATEGY FOR VALLETTA

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# VALLETTA

STRATEGY



PLANNING AUTHORITY



OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL PERMANENT SECRETARY  
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

# VALLETTA

*A quality heritage city for tomorrow*

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## **1.0 Purpose**

The Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (SPED), Government's spatial plan which replaces the 1990 Structure Plan, regulates the sustainable use and management of land and sea resources in an integrated manner up until 2020. The quality of our built environment profoundly affects the quality of everyday lives. This is one of the key drivers behind the design and continual regeneration of our surroundings.

The SPED has identified the Grand Harbour Area as a strategic node for integrated regeneration (vide Policy UO 1.1) and specifically singled out Valletta as one of the localities demanding special attention to lift persons out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion (vide Policy TO 3.1). Indeed Valletta has been designated as one of the island's leading business hubs and a core commercial node for retail, office, culture, tourism and leisure services (vide Policy UO 1.5 and Maps 2A and 2B designating Valletta as a business hub).

The purpose of the Strategy is

- I. To set the spatial framework to achieve goals outlined in the SPED policies and advance the implementation of sectoral policies related to tourism, culture, economy and transport.
- II. To satisfy the requirements of the Operational Guidelines for World Heritage Sites.

This proposal will undoubtedly maximise the benefits to the Valletta residents, its business community, the large number of employees working in Valletta and even greater number of visiting tourists whilst at the same time serve to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site.

## **1.1 Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value**

The 'City of Valletta' is property No. 131, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1980 under the following criteria:

- *Criterion (i)* The city is pre-eminently an ideal creation of the late Renaissance with its uniform urban plan, inspired by neo-platonic principles, its fortified and bastioned walls modelled around the natural site and the voluntary implantation of great monuments in well chosen locations.
- *Criterion (vi)* The city is irrevocably affiliated with the history of the military and charitable Order of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, which founded the city in 1566 and maintained it throughout two and a half centuries. Valletta is thus associated with the history of one of the greatest military and moral forces of modern Europe.

The Outstanding Universal Value of the City of Valletta is based on values of Integrity, Authenticity, Management and Protection.

Its Integrity as a World Heritage Site refers largely to the fact that the peninsula has retained its original form overall, both in terms of its perimeter and interior, referring especially to the grid-iron plan which characterizes the city. This is supported by the city's Authenticity, particularly of its use as the administrative and commercial epicenter of the island; but also in terms of form, materials and setting. The Management and Protection of the city are governed by Cultural Heritage, Development Planning and Environment legislation. Through this legislation, critical principles of scheduling and grading of historic buildings; and concepts of urban conservation areas and protective zoning were established and continue to guide heritage management efforts to this day.

## **1.2 Valletta's Vision Statement**

This strategy aims to transform Malta's capital into a location where people live, work, recreate and interact within an environment which is also a designated UNESCO World Heritage site. To this end Valletta needs to reconcile the conservation and maintenance of its historic fabric with the residential, cultural, administrative, Governmental and commercial roles to transform itself into a truly sustainable and living city.

The long term approach for Valletta is to

- I. strengthen its role as the nation's capital;
- II. encourage economic, cultural and social regeneration;
- III. protect its intangible value as one of the earliest modern European cities;
- IV. maintain the synergy between the city and surrounding ports,
- V. seek environmental improvement whilst protecting the coastline, preserving its fortifications and conserving its monuments;
- VI. protect its original grid-iron plan and its building profile; and
- VII. improve accessibility.

The strategy of this document takes into account the submissions for Valletta's regeneration submitted by a number of Government Ministries and agencies together with those received following a call for Expression of Ideas, issued by Government in March 2014. A number of fundamental proposals were taken into consideration for the Capital City's general upgrade. The submissions were submitted by:

- I. The Office of the Prime Minister
- II. The Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government
- III. The Ministry for Tourism
- IV. The Ministry for Transport and Infrastructure
- V. The Valletta 2018 Foundation
- VI. The Grand Harbour Regeneration Corporation
- VII. The Building Industry Consultative Council
- VIII. Architects
- IX. Urban planners
- X. Designers
- XI. Members of the general public

## **2.0 Historical background**

### **2.1 The City of Valletta**

The foundation stone of Valletta was laid by Grand Master Fra Jean de Valette (1557-1568) of the Hospitaller Order of St. John the Baptist (Order) on 28 March 1566. Politically the decision to build Valletta reflected the will of the Grand Master to have the Order permanently in Malta following the victory over the Turks in the 1565 Siege of Malta. Religiously the decision reflected the will of many a Knight to fashion a worthy successor to their previous 'Fortresses of God' in Jerusalem and Rhodes. Militarily the new city fortress was meant to be the core of the defensive network set up in Malta by the Order. Culturally Valletta was meant to reflect the image of what was then perceived to be the southernmost point of diffusion of an emerging Baroque European culture.

The founding and development of the new city can be considered from multiple perspectives:

- I. The 'great peril' to Christian Europe that was then being posed by the Ottoman Empire, and the military response to counter this threat.
- II. Utopian thinking of the day about the building of well-fortified settlements based on radial or grid iron layouts.

The identification of the site, Mount Sciberras, on which Valletta was to be built, was made as early as 1524, six years prior to the Order's coming to Malta, and the first scheme was submitted in 1534. This proposal involved the construction of bastions around what was then a medieval tower. It was followed by a series of master plans by different military engineers, which were not taken up for different reasons, primarily due to lack of funding.

The Great Siege of 1565 provided a brief but essential interlude in the sequence of events leading to the building of the city. Ottoman military strategy underlined the necessity to build a new fortress city on the Mount.

### **2.2 Building Regulations**

The city was designed by an engineer appointed by none other than Pope Pius V: Francesco Lapparelli da Cortona. His drawings for Valletta seem to have been prepared in the early months of 1566, and were approved by the Grand Council of the Order on 27 March 1566. To honour the Grand Master at the helm of the Order it was decreed that the city was to be named CIVITAS VALLETTAE.

The construction of all the buildings was to be controlled by a commission, the *Officium Commissariorum Domorum* (commission, appointed in 1568), which issued a set of regulations. These called for the setting up of a *collachio*, an exclusive residential reserve for members of the Order. However the planned *collachio* did not materialise since the defence requirements underlying the design of the city entailed the location of different *auberges* close to specific parts of the fortifications.

Military considerations also called for public roads to be unencumbered in order to permit the rapid deployment and transfer of troops and *materiel* from one part of the city to another. It was also important for the works on the city to be completed as quickly as possible so much so that they had to be started within six months of the acquisition of the plot, and completed within 12 months.

The regulations were also designed to ensure that the central core encapsulates a zone reserved for public buildings, having wider streets, squares and residences for the more privileged. Indeed, the commission was empowered to approve the transfer of each particular tract of land. Plots were then allocated in accordance with the official and financial position of the would-be purchaser. The commission was also empowered to prohibit gardens or open spaces along street fronts. Furthermore, the design of the buildings' façades adjoining street intersections had to include decorated corner features.

The regulations also referred to public health concerns, with requirements calling for water storage and the disposal of waste waters. Each building had to contain a water cistern and a cesspit connected to public sewers.

Stone required for the construction of these buildings was to be quarried from the *manderaggio* area, located to the northwest of the peninsula, and from the excavation of the above-mentioned cisterns/cesspits. The *Capo Mastro*, appointed prior to the commencement phase of the works, had the remit to implement these regulations during the construction of individual buildings.

## **2.3 The Fortifications**

The 'fortress city' concept was the crux in the design of Valletta. This entailed the suppression of the fabric to the system of fortifications that was to define initially the city, and later Floriana. Indeed, the zone allocated for defence positions around the bastions was to take up circa 20% of the overall area of Valletta. The fortifications constructed around the period 1566-1600, were very much in accordance with Lapparelli's vision. The enceinte of projecting bastions and recessed curtain walls

were stiffened by the presence of two high Cavaliers situated behind the bastions of St. James and St. John. Lapparelli's original drawings showed nine of these structures. However it appears that he never had the intention of having all of them constructed.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century and in the seventeenth century, Lapparelli's scheme was criticised because of the lack of outworks, the excessive depth and narrow width of the ditch, the smallness of the bastions and the vulnerability of the lateral walls to an attack from the sea. The links with Fort St Elmo were considered weak, and a large tract of the foreshore was left unprotected.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, substantial modifications and additions were implemented. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century one saw the inclusion of walls around the suburb of Floriana. These developments were, in a manner of speaking, instigated by the following considerations:

- I. By 1635 the fortifications were considered already outdated by the leading papal military engineer Pietro Paolo Floriani.
- II. The resident military engineer of the Order, Mederico Blondel des Crosettes also referred to the importance of the aesthetic qualities of the bastions, when seen from the harbour area.
- III. By the seventeenth century, it was realised that the walls required a strong ceremonial dimension, designed to project an aura of triumphalism with regard to the victories of the Religion of Malta over the foes of Christianity.

Such considerations were applied to the entrances of Valletta; particularly to the main gate which was rebuilt in grander form.

## **2.4 Tunnels and underground routes**

Two important aspects of the well-fortified city of Valletta in its early years concerned the presence of secret underground passages, and a water management system, vital for the survival of the city under siege. The Order had accumulated a wealth of experience in the use of underground routes connecting buildings and leading to countermines. This practice seems to have been continued after the initial installation of the convent of the Order in St. Angelo and Birgu after 1530.

Military engineers and strategists at the time of the building of Valletta firmly believed in the value of such underground passages to provide secrecy and adequate cover to soldiers moving from one part of the fortified enceinte to another and also in escape routes in the event of evacuating different sections of the fortified system.



In accordance with Lapparelli's Codex comments, these underground passages were used in Valletta to facilitate the rapid deployment of soldiers from one defence work to another in protecting the ditch of the landfront fortifications.

## **2.5 Water Management**

The accidental discovery of a fresh water spring outlet in 1567 represented an early landmark in the efforts of the Order to provide Valletta with an adequate water supply. This source of water was supplemented by the provision of a system of public and private cisterns and wells which became fully operative towards the end of the sixteenth century.

With the passage of time, it became evident that Valletta, like other cities, could not be self-sufficient in fresh water supplies. After years of deliberation, planning, and fund raising, the system received a boost in the early seventeenth century, under Grand Master Wignacourt, when water from the Rabat area was channelled to Valletta by means of an aqueduct.

In addition to the provision of public reservoirs, the Order insisted through the *Officium Commissariorum Domorum* that all buildings irrespective of whether they were dwellings, *auberges*, churches, palaces, monasteries or public buildings had to have their own water storage arrangements.

The commission also demanded the creation of cesspits, defined as *luoco* to receive human and household wastes. A *luoco* would consist of underground bell shaped chambers, which had to be designed in such a way to enable connection with the sewerage network beneath the streets.

## **2.6 Early urban fabric**

The sewerage system was designed to function by gravity. All wastes were thrown into the cesspit through a narrow shaft or chute normally at basement level. In due course as Valletta's population increased, this system proved to have numerous disadvantages. The preciousness of fresh water meant that very little was used to flush the sewerage network.

Years of accumulated wastes resulted in blockages and the consequent formation of stagnant pools. The lack of ventilation and traps in the house connections resulted in fetid smells which spread into the buildings making their lower quarters practically uninhabitable.

Effluent which did reach the edges of the city simply spewed out into the sea from the bastions' openings or rock-faces. The evident result was the contamination of the harbour waters, with the problem being more evident in the Grand Harbour, which also the depository of raw sewage from Vittoriosa and Senglea.

Another issue connected with the Valletta sewerage system was the porosity of the conduits. Water contamination through seepage into the fresh water cisterns was a constant threat. Despite the apparent foresight of what was then considered to be a modern sewerage system, Valletta was still struck by many an epidemic throughout its history.

The intense building activity that characterised the early development of Valletta indicates that towards the close of the sixteenth century, the planimetric and architectural characteristics of the urban fabric must have become quite explicit. The spirit of the city, as reflected in the 'warp and web' distribution of streets and buildings and an austere architecture, was designed and built with great urgency.

The buildings which were constructed in this period included the Magisterial Palace (currently, the President's Palace), the Conventual church (currently, St John's Co-Cathedral), the Hospital (currently, the Mediterranean Conference Centre), and the *auberges* of Aragon, Germany, Auvergne, Provence, Castille, France and Italy, together with an unspecified number of shops and private residences.

These buildings complimented each other in their blatant subservience to the military and monastic ideals and rules of the Order. This outlook was to change radically in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries due to the pressures which typified the development of Baroque Europe.

Upon reaching the main gate known as *Porta S. Giorgio* and ascending the ramp to finally emerge in *Strada S. Giorgio* (currently, *Triq ir-Repubblika*), a visitor to Valletta, in c.1600 would have appreciated the linear quality and unusual width of principal thoroughfare. So too was the sheer size of the artillery factory on the left known as the *Ferreria* which was spatially distinguished by a narrow street from the foundry at the back.

The Order had placed on the side of this building, which was situated close to the fortified enceinte of Valletta, a huge basilisk which had been abandoned by the Ottomans during their disorderly retreat from Malta in September 1565. This artillery piece had been used during the Great Siege to bombard strategic locations

It is recorded that this weapon was dragged to this location soon after the commencement of the Valletta construction works, where it was exposed as a war trophy. In the seventeenth century, it was relocated to the Upper Barrakka, from where it vanished after the Order's departure from Malta in 1798.

## **2.7 Baroque Urban Changes**

The emergence of new European structures of Baroque power was inevitably reflected in the manner in which the Order ruled Malta in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. During this period a sequence of non-hawkish Grand Masters, some more enlightened than others but all bred in the Baroque life style, ruled Malta in a typically Baroque despotic fashion from the Magisterial Palace, exercising in the process all those subtle instruments of coercion that were so familiar to Europe's ruling aristocracy of the era.

The emergent Baroque spirit of Valletta was characterised as follows:

- I. New residential quarters in peripheral areas
- II. The Baroque transformation of Valletta
- III. Further infrastructural development.

### **2.7.1 Residential quarters in peripheral areas**

In due course, new residential quarters were constructed in the peripheral areas which were previously not available for development. The early 18<sup>th</sup> century saw the evolution of a new suburb, Floriana, in the vacant land between the sixteenth century fortifications and the outworks, which were originally designed by Floriani.

These developments reflected the pressures of population growth, which fundamentally altered the concept of the original military city. Land which had originally been left free from buildings for military purposes had to be taken over for housing. This eventually led to the mushrooming of slums in the least favoured areas.

### **2.7.2 The Baroque Transformation of Valletta**

Sixteenth century urban fabric, early as it was, was modified either through the construction of new churches, palaces and administrative or recreational buildings or, alternatively, the re-modelling of façades and/or interiors of sixteenth century buildings.

The approach taken by the designers was based primarily on the study of perspective. One's attention was to be focused on the aesthetic value of the receding enclosure planes on both sides of the straight street which, as in contemporary Baroque theatre, had become the fields of well-designed compositions and ornamental fantasy, which rose above the military spirit imparted by the bland walls of the previous century.

Secondly, Valletta, or better the Valletta centre, emerged and evolved as the backdrop for the gilded carriages of the aristocracy, the well-dressed citizens walking up and down *Strada S. Giorgio*, the ceremonial daily parades of uniformed soldiers and the frequent processions that inevitably took place on important occasions. These performances were choreographed in order to strike awe and impress the common people.

Specialised architectural features, which included but not only, a number of pleasure gardens and courtyards, gaming facilities, fountains, private museums and an aviary for exotic birds in the upper courtyard of the Grand Master's palace, greatly enriched the streetscape of seventeenth and eighteenth century Valletta. The city was thus transformed into a vibrant hub of political, cultural and commercial activity, which was often positively commented upon by various travellers who from time to time visited the now 'Baroque Malta'.

## **2.8 Further infrastructural development**

Reference should also be made to the upgrading of the infrastructural networks of the previous century, particularly the water supply system. This system became more regular and reliable following the construction of the Rabat-to-Valletta aqueduct.

The rock apron situated between the fortifications of Valletta and the shoreline was eventually taken by mercantile facilities such as wharfs and warehouses financed by foundations set up by Grand Masters Lascaris, Cotoner and Vilhena.

The development of these facilities was accentuated in the eighteenth century through the construction of an impressive line of warehouses along the Floriana flank of the Grand Harbour (currently, The Valletta Waterfront), which was enveloped by an impressive scenographic façade designed in the Baroque style.

## **2.9 British Period**

Under British rule (1814-1964), Valletta went through a number of re-developments. Apart from a generic change of use of most of the buildings erected by the Order, several major projects were implemented.

Evidence indicates that within a decade after their arrival in Malta, the British had settled quite comfortably in Valletta and made full use of most of the buildings erected by the Order. The changes may not be so evident at first glance, since neo-classical and neo-gothic manifestations are not so marked within the city.

It appears that the Maltese were not so enthusiastic about these styles and they did not adopt them within the confines of Valletta. Only the buildings erected by the British themselves depart from the surrounding Baroque landscape. Most of the buildings erected by residents of Valletta seem to have continued following the Baroque architectural language promoted by the Order, but at the same time adopted some of the new construction techniques used by British engineers.

Strikingly while a lot of development did occur within Valletta during this period, an even higher level of construction activity took place in Floriana.

Both settlements developed in parallel and it is quite difficult to separate the events which took place in the two settlements at the time. In 1813, Governor Sir Thomas Maitland received orders to remove all the escutcheons in Valletta and replace them with the British coat-of-arms. This order was ignored, and many of the Order's escutcheons were repaired and subsequently restored under the Governor Sir John Gaspard le Marchant (1858-1864). To this day, Valletta has remained Baroque in nature with most of the public buildings constructed during the British period adding a Victorian flair to the city.

The more important works carried out by the British in Valletta involved:

- I. Fortifications
- II. City gates
- III. New gardens
- IV. Modifications to the urban fabric
- V. Post-World War II works

### **2.9.1 Fortifications**

During the mid-nineteenth century the British military carried out several works on the Valletta fortifications. The most notable upgrade was the new battery at the foot of the saluting battery at the Upper Barrakka Gardens, namely Lascaris Battery.

### **2.9.2 City gates**

The three major access points of the city were modified as follows:

- I. In 1853, the main entrance to Valletta, *Porta San Giorgio* was demolished to be replaced by what became known as Kingsgate, *Porta Reale*, or *Putirjal*.
- II. In 1884, the *Porta del Monte* was demolished and replaced by a four entrance gate appropriately called Victoria Gate.
- III. In 1902, Marsamxett Gate was replaced by a wider tunnel to allow better access to and from the sea shore.

### **2.9.3 New gardens**

The British were responsible for the creation of the three public gardens in Valletta, namely:

- I. In 1810, a neo-classical monument was erected in memory of Sir Alexander Ball in the Lower Barrakka which was converted into a public garden by 1821. In 1911, the garden was extended onto the Castille bastion, currently, the site of the Siege Bell memorial. This was indicative of the loss of strategic importance of the bastions.
- II. In 1824, the Upper Barrakka Gardens, which were first constructed in 1661, were converted to public use. The lower terrace was upgraded to function as a Saluting Battery.
- III. The last garden to be created was Hastings Garden (*il-Ġnien ta' Hastings*) in 1826.

### **2.9.4 Modifications to the urban fabric**

The most significant changes to the internal fabric of the city fall under these categories:

- I. Open spaces
- II. Residential development
- III. Schools
- IV. Major buildings
- V. Anglican buildings
- VI. The Valletta Market



## VII. The Opera House

### 2.9.4.1 Open spaces

In 1814, the 17th century Main Guard building, opposite the Governor's Palace (previously the Grand Master's Palace, and currently, the President's Palace), and the square (Palace Square; currently *Pjazza San Ġorġ*) was adopted for use for military parades.

### 2.9.4.2 Residential development

The demand for residential development continued to increase in the nineteenth century. It was however difficult to be met because of the scarcity of space. The use of modern building materials and techniques made it possible to construct higher buildings, with the first project of this kind buildings being the *Camerata* (1859).

### 2.9.4.3 Schools

Early in the nineteenth century, the British initiated a school building programme. Two were built in Valletta:

- I. the first was an elementary school on a site next to the *Sacra Infermeria*, and
- II. the second a school for adults and infants close to the *Auberge* of Baviere.

Both buildings clashed with the context as they were designed akin to the style used in British barracks all over Malta.

### 2.9.4.4 Major buildings

Before the outbreak of Second World War, high-profile developments were made, such as the Vernon Club on St. James's Bastion (*is-Sur ta' San Ġakbu*) and a fish market at Barriera Wharf (*Xatt il-Barriera*) to replace the one built by the Order in front of the Ta' Liesse church.

The location selected for the Vernon Club was a further indication that the bastions had become militarily redundant.

A new era beckoned. The value of the fortifications was no longer connected to a military/defence function. Rather they provided the two harbours with the aesthetic qualities that have rendered them unique destinations within the Mediterranean. Today, this characteristic is being well-exploited for tourism purposes.

The most notable project during this period would have been the construction, in 1938, of the well-known and still existing Vincenti Buildings in Old Bakery Street (*Triq l-Ifran*), which replaced the Bakery of the Order.

#### **2.9.4.5 Anglican buildings**

Also during the nineteenth century, the Church of Our Lady of Porto Salvo (St Dominic) in Merchants Street, as well as the façade of the Church of St Paul's Shipwreck, were both significantly reconstructed in the Baroque style.

It is evident that the intention of the establishment of the Maltese Catholic Church was to draw a clear distinction between the Catholic and Anglican approach to architectural stylistic issues. Indeed, the Catholic Church was adamantly against its church buildings being designed in the neo-classical or neo-gothic styles of the Protestant British.

In 1839 Queen Adelaide, consort of King William IV, offered to build at her expense, a proper church for Anglican worshippers in Valletta. It was to replace the *auberge* of Germany. The building was to be a cathedral dedicated to St Paul, and works commenced in 1842.

Another two Anglican churches were erected in Valletta:

- I. in 1857, the Church of Scotland's neo-gothic church of St Andrew was constructed at the corner between South Street (*Triq Nofs in-Nhar*) and Old Bakery Street.
- II. In the same year the garrison church of St George was constructed next to the *auberge* of Castille. It was designed in a style which is a hybrid of the imported British neo-classical and the Baroque.

#### **2.9.4.6 The Valletta Market**

The new market building (*is-Suq tal-Belt*) was constructed behind the Governor's Palace to replace the food market, which was situated in Merchants Street (*Triq il-Merkanti*). The frame structure used in the market is the only example of a completely self-supporting cast-iron structure built during the nineteenth century. It was opened to the public in 1861.

#### 2.9.4.7 The Royal Opera House

The Royal Opera House (*it-Teatru Rjal*) was designed by the absentee architect Edward Barry. Having never visited the site, he assumed that it was flat. For this reason, his original proposal had to be raised on a three metres high podium.

The introduction of this podium was quite controversial. It meant that a terrace had to be constructed at the front of the building, causing the front façade of the building to be pushed back from the road edge, thus reducing the size of the theatre. The theatre was inaugurated in 1866. It had a maximum seating capacity for an audience of 1,063 persons. It caught fire in 1873 and was reconstructed by 1876.

The old foundry located opposite the front entrance of the theatre was pulled down and a new building called Palazzo Ferreria, was built. It was designed in a style that was very similar to the Italian *cinquecentismo*.

An important feature of the palace was that it was recessed back from the street line of Kingsway (currently, *Triq ir-Repubblika*). This provided the space for a small square which permitted a better perspective of both buildings. It also provided a contrast to the narrow entrance way which, at the time, led into Valletta.

#### 2.9.5 Post World War II works

The consequences of World War II on Valletta were substantial. A network of underground shelters had to be excavated. The blitz led to the total destruction of several buildings and monuments. Others were severely damaged:

- I. The St Elmo Lighthouse had to be demolished since it could be used as a landmark by enemy aircraft and submarines.
- II. The *Auberges* of France and Auvergne, the Chapel of Bones, St Elmo Elementary School and the Vernon Club were among the buildings that were totally destroyed during air-raids.
- III. The *Auberge* of Castille, the Royal Opera House, the Grand Masters Palace and the market were some of the more notable buildings which were badly damaged.

The post-reconstruction works were mostly carried out either as specified or designated by British architect-planners Austen Harrison and Pearce Hubbard. Immediately after the cessation of

hostilities, they submitted a master plan for the redevelopment of Valletta, Floriana, and the Three Cities.

Where Valletta was concerned their proposals were two pronged:

- I. Proposals for the rehabilitation of the main squares and public buildings.
- II. The replacement of the slum by large scale housing projects.

They also considered the problem of traffic within the city. While at the time many suggested that Valletta should be a car-free zone, they felt this would be detrimental to commercial activity. Thus they proposed to create a circular route around the periphery while the central part was designated as a mainly pedestrian precinct. They also proposed that the bus terminus at Castille Place (*Misraħ Kastilja*) be moved and amalgamated with the one at Kingsgate. Castille Bastion would thus be available for car parking.

The new bus terminus was completed in 1959 and its focal point was the Tritons Fountain in front of Kingsgate. The Castille Bus terminus was however only relocated to City Gate in 1974 and only then was Castille Bastion developed into the proposed car park. Harrison and Hubbard also recommended the development of a centralised government office in the block behind Main Guard. This however was never taken up.

The future of the Royal Opera House site and its immediate confines, which were the subject of substantial public debate over the past three decades, apparently were not considered as a priority of the reconstruction in the 1950s due to the more pressing need for people to be housed.

Harrison and Hubbard indicated that they would have liked to propose a new building to replace the Opera House, but it seemed that the general public favoured the reconstruction of the original building.

In 1953 Government organised a design competition. The winning contribution was the work of the Italian architects Marcello Zavellani-Rossi and Alziro Bergonzo, who proposed a scheme for both the Opera House and the upgrading of the adjacent square (at the time, George Cross Square).

Works to clear up the existing buildings around the square were initiated in 1964, shortly after Malta became Independent, and the Zavellani-Rossi and Bergonzo scheme for City Gate (*Bieb il-Belt*) was adopted.

The new square was placed to the right of Kingsway. Arcades were built on three sides of the square (*Misraħ il-Ħelsien*), and only a housing block to the northwest of the square was built. The works were completed around 1975.

## **2.10 Post-Independence Developments**

Following Independence the major works carried out in Valletta centred mostly on the *Bieb il-Belt* area. In the early-1970s they moved on to slum clearance projects.

In the 1980s, the *Sacra Infermeria* of the Order (known as the Knights' Hall) was converted into a Conference Centre and inaugurated to host the *Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe*. In early-1987 the main hall of the centre caught fire and was totally gutted. It was rapidly refurbished and reopened in 1989. Over the years there were a number of proposals for the construction of a hotel in the vicinity so as to enhance the functionality of the conference centre. To date however none of these proposals have materialised.

In 1983, the Government built a new block of apartments on the site which previously was taken up by the remains of *Ġnien is-Sultan*. Four years later saw the restoration of the last remaining part of the garden, one of the fountains designed by Francesco Buonamici.

In the following year a part of the Ghetto Slum was demolished and a new housing development was set in place. During the same year, a part of Fort St Elmo was inaugurated as the new Police Academy.

In 1989 saw restoration works on the belfries and the roof of St John's Co-Cathedral.

In the following year the spires were placed on top of the belfries of the Cathedral after the original ones were removed during the World War II.

1989 also saw the relocation of the outdoor market known as *il-Monti* and the reinstatement of the *Is-Suq tal-Belt*, which had previously been moved to Floriana. It is worth noting in this respect that the *il-Monti* market, since the time of the Knights one of the most important contributors of a vibrant Valletta, was relocated from Merchants Street to St James ditch in 1974.

Today, this outdoor market is very well frequented and serves as a crowd puller to Merchants Street. The relocation of *il-Monti* to the covered market area of Merchants Street, together with the holistic design for the outdoor catering modules has led to the regeneration of the area with more

investment being put into the embellishment of the catering outlets in this street which in turn led to increased pedestrian traffic.

The last decade of the twentieth century saw the creation of a new annex of the Central Bank of Malta, on the counterguard of St James. This building was designed to be sensitive to the surrounds as it is sunk beneath the bastions so much so that it is only visible from above.

Several embellishments of the city were also made during the later part of this period, not least being the restoration works that were carried out by the Valletta Rehabilitation Project on several church interiors.

In 1991 St John's Square (*Misraħ San Ġwann*) and Republic Square (*Misraħ ir-Repubblika*) were repaved, and in the following year the Siege Bell Memorial was erected next to the Lower Barrakka.

Republic Street (*Triq ir-Repubblika*) was repaved during 1998 with a pattern reminiscent of the paving scheme found in Valletta during the nineteenth century.

During the last years, the Government activated a large quantity of rehabilitation and restoration projects in Valletta. They vary from the restoration of palaces and the bastions, to embellishment projects such as the rehabilitation of *Pjazza San Ġorġ and Misraħ Kastilja*.

A leading development was without doubt the Renzo Piano designed intervention in the Opera House Site, Freedom Square, City Gate, and the Bus Terminus, which came into full fruition in 2015.

Some of these initiatives were further explored as part of the vision for the regeneration of the Grand and Marsamxett Harbour, including Fort St Elmo which underwent further extensive restoration and refurbishment. The Fort St Elmo regeneration project was an investment aimed at improving the general quality of the environment in this area. In this project, an almost derelict complex of buildings was transformed into a cultural centre and 'reconnected' to the rest of Valletta, ensuring a more complete experience of the city.

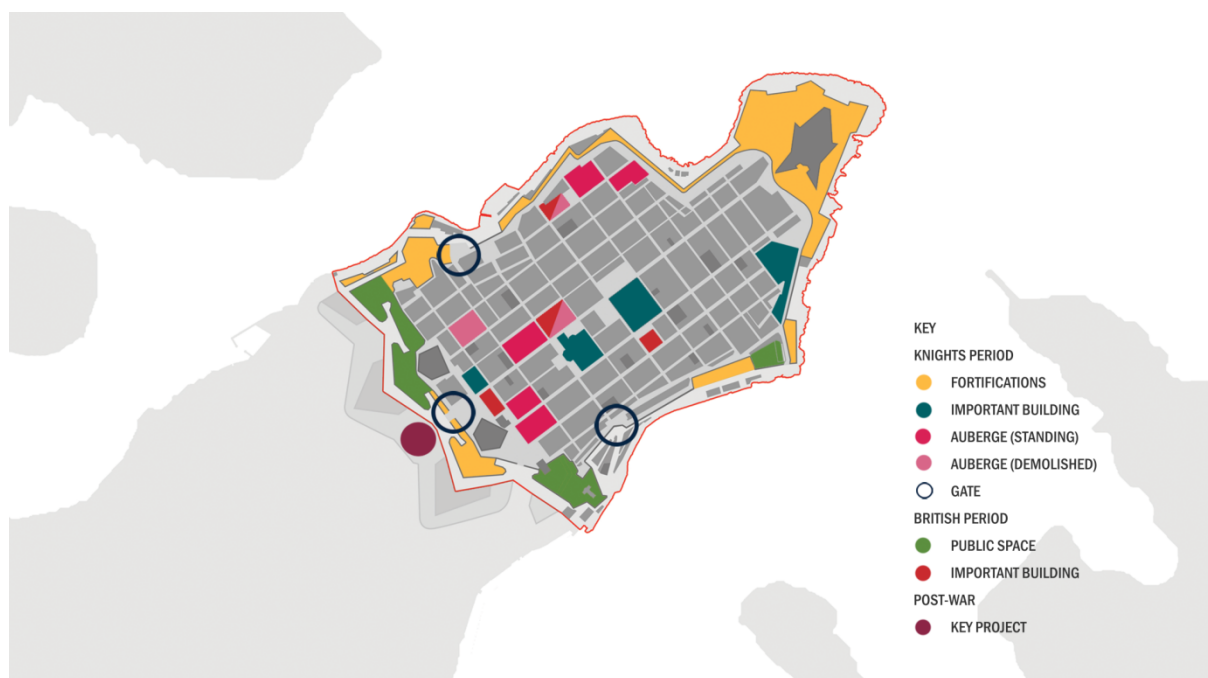
Many of the streets and public spaces within the Valletta Centre have been paved/pedestrianised in line with the strategy outlined in the GHLP. The area in *Misraħ ir-Repubblika* taken up by open-air catering establishments was redefined, in order for the Biblioteca to be provided with an adequate forecourt. Later, *Pjazza San Ġorġ* was redefined as a public square through the removal of the so called 'Main Guard' parking facility and the complete redevelopment of the square. The restoration



of Victoria Gate and the Notre Dame de Liesse Church, which started in September 2009, have been completed.

In 2015, a complete redesign of Castille Place took place. The central roundabout was removed and the open space – lost in 1976 – was regained to give more visibility to the Auberge de Castille. The *grandeur* of one of the finest architectural works in Malta, as evidenced by its spectacular façade, truly came to the fore.

These projects are meant to confirm Valletta as the administrative, commercial, and cultural centre of the country, whilst ensuring its accessibility and ability to meet the needs of modern living.



**Figure 1:** Key buildings and spaces in Valletta

### **3.0 Social, economic and environmental profiles of Valletta**

#### **3.1 Demographic Profile**

Malta has a population of approximately 420,000, half of whom live in and around the Grand Harbour area. Current demographic trends for Valletta are a cause of major concern with a trend which mirrors a similar drift in other European cities. Economically, Valletta is one of the most important business and financial centres on the island. However it continues to experience a population exodus. Since the 1980s, more and more middle-income residents have moved out of the city. Less are settling in. Justifiably, over the years, the ever growing number of daily commuters has also increased exponentially.

Valletta's rich cultural heritage represents an important challenge to this City. In 1980, Valletta was recognized as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Following such a designation, and thanks to the Development Planning Act (1992), Valletta was designated as an Urban Conservation Area (1995). All properties in Valletta are considered to be of historical value and conserved. Valletta is considered to be a renaissance/baroque fortified city built in the most austere baroque architecture. However the architecture within its urban fabric evolved over the years and led to a mix of styles juxtaposed next to each other reflecting epochs during which they were built. Vacant property in Valletta does not fall within one category. There is a myriad of buildings built in different epochs. Some are part of a palace. Others are substandard with no aesthetic value whatsoever.

##### **3.1.1 Population**

Valletta can be considered to be a relatively young city, compared to other European counterparts. Despite being small in size (0.8km<sup>2</sup>), it is extremely rich in history and has a diverse cultural heritage that makes it stand out as one of Europe's most important micro cities.

Various historical events from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards contributed towards the emergence of its unique cityscape, which remained practically unchanged under British rule (1800 - 1964). It was also during British rule that Valletta saw its population peak to more than 24,000 up till 1939. The coming of the Second World War not only saw large swathes of the city being severely bruised and dented by air attacks but also experienced a steady stream of residents leaving the Capital in an effort to seek less targeted areas. The result was inevitable and continued during the post war years which led to a significant decline in the number of households. So much so, the current number of vacant

properties stands at over 30 per cent of all the Capital's properties (NSO, 2012). Census figures indicate that the proportion of Valletta residents to total population of Malta declined from 12.3% in 1901 to 1.3% in 2011 (Table 1).

Table 1: Valletta population and proportion of Maltese population residing in Valletta										
Year	1901	1921	1931	1948	1957	1967	1985	1995	2005	2011
Population	22,768	22,392	22,779	18,666	18,202	15,279	9,340	7,262	6,300	5,785
Proportion	12.3%	10.5%	9.4%	6.1%	5.7%	4.9%	2.7%	1.9%	1.6%	1.3%

During World War I and II, a substantial part of the population left the Inner Harbour region, including Valletta, for security purposes. This trend continued after the World War II with the population in Valletta declining to the 6,300 registered in 2005. Nevertheless, the density of the Valletta population at 7,491 individuals/km<sup>2</sup>, was high side when compared to a national average of 1,285 individuals/km<sup>2</sup>.

### 3.1.2 Age distribution

The age distribution of the population residing in Valletta in 2005 clearly highlights an ageing residential population (Table 2). Indeed at 29% the proportion of Valletta residents over the age of 60 was higher than the national average ratio of 19%.

Table 2: Population distribution by age		
Age distribution	Valletta	Malta
under 9	8%	11%
10 to 19	11%	14%
20 to 29	13%	15%
30 to 39	10%	13%
40 to 49	12%	14%
50 to 59	15%	15%
60 to 69	13%	10%
70 to 79	11%	6%
80 to 89	5%	3%
90 to 99	0%	0%
over 99	0%	0%

This is also evident from the average age of residents living in Valletta which at 44 is higher than the average national age of 39. Interestingly in the case of Valletta, the ratio between the sections of the population under 15 and over 65 years, on the one hand, and the working age population on the other, that is the *dependency ratio*, was 57.9%, while the corresponding ratio for Malta was 44.7%.

## **3.2 Profile of the urban fabric**

### **3.2.1 Urban morphology**

Valletta's urban morphology gives rise to big challenges both to its current resident population and also to commuters. As a peninsula, entirely surrounded by fortifications, Valletta cannot expand in terms of land area. As a World Heritage City, with its high density of historic buildings and monuments Valletta also has a number of conservation constraints. Several buildings having a high architectural and historic profile are difficult to be physically altered. High rise buildings are aesthetically anathema because of the capital's unique skyline.

Although the decline in residential population is one of the most problematic issues, this definitely is not Valletta's sole problem. The overall decay of the general environment, excessive vehicular traffic, degradation of buildings, obsolete infrastructure, social problems, and the collateral effects of tourism and commercial activity are but some of the other issues Valletta is currently facing.

### **3.2.2 Households**

Census 2005 indicates that there were 2,594 households resident in Valletta, representing 2% of total households in Malta. The average size of a household in Valletta at 2.4 individuals was lower than the national average of 2.9.

The highest proportion of households in Valletta, at 35%, was composed of the single person type compared to 19% in Malta.

The Census also indicates that households composed of two or three individuals represent 27% and 16.3% respectively of total households in Valletta. The remainder, that is 1,238 dwellings, were found to be vacant; this figure representing about 2.3% of the vacant properties in Malta. The proportion of such properties in Valletta at 32.5% was higher than the national ratio of 28%.

### **3.2.3 Occupied dwellings**

Being a walled city located on a peninsula Valletta could never sprawl horizontally. For this reason, 63% of the occupied dwellings stock consist of apartments, followed by maisonettes at 17%, and 14.4% terraced houses. The corresponding proportions for Malta were 23.6%, 22.4%, and 39.7% respectively (Table 3).

Unpublished data gathered for Census 2005, provided by NSO, establishes that 38.4% of the dwellings were constructed before 1918, 16% between 1919 and 1945, and 45.7% built between 1946 and 2005 (Table 4).

Table 3: Occupied dwellings by type		
Dwelling type	Valletta	Malta
Terraced houses	14.4%	39.7%
Semi-detached houses	0.3%	4.4%
Fully-detached houses	0.2%	2.6%
Ground-floor tenements	1.6%	6.7%
Maisonettes	17.0%	22.4%
Flats/penthouses	63.4%	23.6%
Suites of rooms	2.3%	0.3%
Other	0.8%	0.3%
Total occupied dwellings	100.0%	100.0%
	2,576	139,178

Table 4: Occupied dwellings by the year of construction											
Period	< 1918	1919 1945	1946 1955	1956 1960	1961 1965	1966 1970	1971 1980	1981 1990	1991 1995	1996 2000	2001 2005
Number	988	411	574	108	43	69	140	85	111	34	13
Proportion	38.4	16.0	22.3	4.2%	1.7%	2.7%	5.4%	3.3%	4.3%	1.3%	0.5%

The latter include buildings forming part of slum clearance and social housing projects. This data indicates that 46.3% of these dwellings were in a good state of repair, while another 32% and 11.5% required minor and moderate interventions, respectively. Of the remainder, 10%, i.e. 256 dwellings were in need of major works, and 0.7%, i.e. 19 dwellings were considered dilapidated.

Census 2005 shows that as an average the size of Valletta dwellings tended to be smaller than the national average. Whereas in Malta just over 77% of dwellings had between four and seven rooms, in Valletta the same proportion of dwellings stood at the three to six room categories (Table 5).

Table 7: Vacant properties in Valletta (Source: NSO, 2007b 2011)											
Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11-16
<b>Valletta</b>	2.1%	6.9%	14.5%	24.4%	24.8%	13.3%	6.5%	3.3%	1.2%	1.0%	2.1%
<b>Malta</b>	0.3%	2.2%	6.0%	14.7%	26.7%	23.4%	12.6%	7.2%	3.1%	2.1%	1.8%

Most of the occupied dwellings in Valletta, i.e. 74% in 2005, are rented unfurnished. This state of affairs has been perpetuated by the very low rents that are paid for such properties (Table 6).

This is the diametric opposite of the state of affairs in Malta, where home ownership is a widely held aspiration. In 2005 75% of the occupied dwellings were owner-occupied. As is noted earlier, in census year 2005, there were 1,238 vacant dwellings in Valletta. Over 73%, that is 903, of these dwellings were maisonettes and apartments. Another 207 were terraced houses and 93 were ground floor tenements with rights over airspace (Table 8).

Table 6: Occupied dwellings by tenancy		
Dwelling type	Valletta	Malta
<b>Owned freehold</b>	17.5%	55.1%
<b>Owned + ground rent</b>	3.6%	20.1%
<b>Rented unfurnished</b>	73.6%	17.5%
<b>Rented furnished</b>	1.7%	3.1%
<b>Emphyteusis contract</b>	1.6%	1.5%
<b>Used free</b>	1.9%	2.7%
<b>Total occupied dwellings</b>	100.0%	100.0%
	2,576	139,178

### 3.2.4 An Increasing Number of Vacant and Substandard Properties

Valletta's rapid depopulation inexorably led to a proliferation of vacant or abandoned properties and structures. These, on their part, brought their share of social vices and problems. To a certain extent, the downside of the physical decline has been offset by the overall richness of the capital's cityscape. The 2011 national Census report confirmed that the number of vacant and abandoned properties within the City has been on the increase. At the time such a stock stood at 1,363 (Table 7). This represented 35% of all the property stock in Valletta, a percentage which stood at 14% higher than the national average for vacant dwellings in urban conservation areas. The resulting high number of vacant dwellings in the City led to an increase in dilapidated buildings which tainted the image of the once vibrant Capital.



Table 7: Vacant Properties			
Year	1995	2005	2011
No. of vacant properties	833	1,238	1,363
% of vacant properties	23	32	35

The extent of neglected buildings within Valletta is not solely due to the large number of vacant properties. The ownership nature of the buildings has also played a role in the city's degraded appearance. A substantial number of residents living in the older parts of the City are not the owners of their dwellings but are tenants with leases dating back several decades. The problem has been augmented by a high tenancy level coupled with low rental levels. Indeed, some of the dwellings are actually rented out for as little as 200 Euros a year. Exacerbating the situation is the tenants' financial standing. Many a tenant has very limited income to finance any improvement in property. On the other hand, the owners receiving nominal rents have no incentive whatsoever to undertake the necessary repair and maintenance works. Accentuating the scenario evenmore are the number of buildings which have been turned into slums, thanks to the several subdivisions of property during the years. Auspiciously these buildings can still be rehabilitated by reversing past structural alterations and reverting their footprint to an acceptable size. Over the years, social housing in Valletta manifested itself with the obliteration of existing buildings and the construction of new apartments blocks. As soon as an area is earmarked for such a development, it degenerates abruptly, and if the development fails to materialise over the years, the area inevitably gets occupied by squatters until the project is really carried out.

Table 8: Vacant dwellings by type		
Dwelling type	Number	%age
Terraced houses	207	16.7%
Semi-detached houses	1	0.1%
Fully-detached houses	0	0.0%
Ground-floor tenements	93	7.5%
Maisonettes	477	38.5%
Flats/penthouses	426	34.4%
Suites of rooms	34	2.7%
Total occupied dwellings	1,238	100.0%

### 3.3 Social profile

Published data on the social profile of Valletta residents including data on education and health is limited. Data which does shed some light on the social profile of Valletta residents is available from a publication issued by the NSO in 2009 on social benefits from a locality perspective. Relevant key indicators from the publication are shown in Table 9 whereby it can be seen that almost half of the people with their ID registered in Valletta depend on some form of social benefits. This ratio is markedly higher than the national average ratio of 35.4%. Higher dependency on social security benefits is also evident from the actual to expected ratio which refers to the actual number of beneficiaries in comparison to the expected number of beneficiaries based on the national average. In total Valletta residents represent slightly more than 2% of the total number of beneficiaries. Total social security benefits spent on Valletta residents in 2008 amounted to €16,229,000 implying that the average annual expenditure per beneficiary residing in Valletta amounted to €5,377, over €1,200 higher than the average national expenditure per beneficiary (Table 10).

A breakdown of selected benefits presented in Table 10. This table shows that despite the fact that the proportion of the population residing in Valletta to total population amounts to circa 1.6% (Table 1), the proportion of beneficiaries hailing from Valletta for selected benefits is significantly higher.

Table 9: Welfare beneficiaries					
Location	Actual Beneficiaries	Expected Beneficiaries	Ratio Actual/Expected	% share of Beneficiaries	Beneficiaries /Population
Valletta	3,018	2,232	1.35	2.06	47.8%
Southern	32,362	28,847	1.12	22.12	39.7%
Malta	146,304	146,304	1.00	100.00	35.4%

Table 10: Expenditure on welfare benefits		
Location	Total Expenditure €1,000	Expenditure/Beneficiary €
Valletta	16,225	5,377
Southern Harbour	61,192	4,604
Malta	149,008	4,198

In fact, about 5% of the residents in Valletta depend on social assistance and about 6% depend on unemployment assistance. It is also interesting to note that the number of single unmarried parents

who are beneficiaries of social assistance more than doubled in 2008 when compared to 2000, while the overall number of beneficiaries residing in Valletta increased by 22.7% over the same timeframe. On the other hand, the number of beneficiaries on *Supplementary Assistance* from Valletta declined by 9% over the same timeframe.

### 3.3.1 Social Deprivation

During World War II, and in the years directly after it, many residents preferred moving out of the city due to war damage, government expropriation for the allocation of social housing and the perceived preference for suburban living. This led to the decline in the population of the city and significant change in the socio-economic profile of the residents. In the short term the negative flow of residents was curtailed by bringing in new residents into social housing developments. Nonetheless in the long-term it only accentuated the social problems, with the consequence that Valletta did not remain an attractive residential area for middle income earners who subsequently moved out of the capital.

### 3.3.2 A Declining Resident Population

Valletta's population has been on the decline since the Second World War. This came to the fore even more in the mid twentieth century with a markedly decrease in Valletta's population. During its heyday in 1931 Valletta's population, as compared to the population of the island, stood at 9%. This declined to 6% by 1948 and to a further 1.5 % by 2011 (Table 11).

Table 11: Population in Valletta (Source: NSO, 2012)					
Year	1948	1967	1985	2005	2011
Population	18,666	15,279	9,340	6,300	5,785

Over the last five decades of the twenty first century several factors came into play leading to the decline in population. The relocation of Valletta residents during the war and the increasing frequency of car mobility which made it easier for non-residents to commute to work in Valletta were but a few. The fifties and sixties, for example, saw the emergence of new employment nodes in industrial estates which led to the migration of people closer to the emerging economic centres. Yet again, the seventies and eighties saw Government social schemes, involving subsidised land and property ownership across the island, which spurred Valletta residents to relocate outside the City.

### 3.4 Economic profile

This section presents a snapshot of the economic profile generated by private sector operators based in Valletta. Public sector entities, consisting of Ministries and Government departments are not included in the data set. It is however pertinent to note that while most Government departments are located outside Valletta, Ministries are mostly located within the city. A complete picture of the employment figures in Valletta would require the augmentation of the figures in Table 12 by the relevant public sector employment. Table 12 also provides a sectoral outline of the average number of establishments and the average employment generated by these establishments over the period 2006 to 2010 as solicited through the NSO.

Table 12: Private sector establishment by sector				
Sectors	Employment		Establishments	
	No	%	No	%
<b>Primary sector including Manufacturing</b>	386	4.7%	179	6.9%
<b>Wholesale and Retail</b>	2,029	24.9%	672	25.9%
<b>Accommodation and Food Services</b>	452	5.5%	180	7.0%
<b>Transport and Communication</b>	848	10.4%	272	10.5%
<b>Financial services</b>	2,183	26.8%	244	9.4%
<b>Professional and other services</b>	1,859	22.8%	857	33.1%
<b>Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation</b>	399	4.9%	187	7.2%
<b>Total</b>	8,156	100.0%	2,590	100.0%

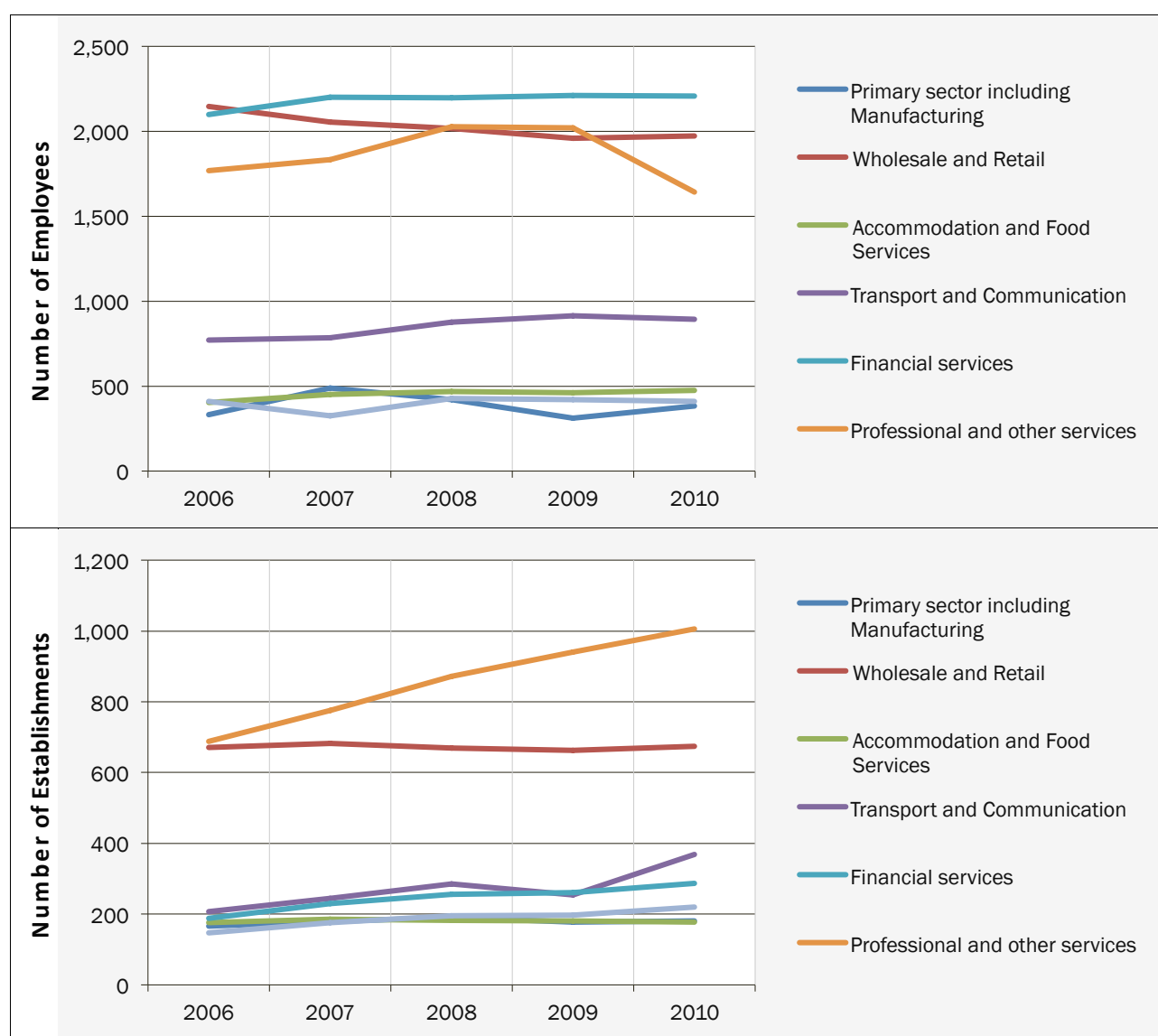
There are in total 2,590 establishments registered in Valletta with 26% of the establishments registered in the wholesale and retail sector reflecting the strong retail nature of the capital city. A further 33% of the establishments are registered in the professional and other services category mainly reflecting small establishments providing law, accounting and other service related activities.

In total the establishments located in Valletta provided employment for 8,156 individuals or 7.9% of the total national gainfully occupied population working in the private sector. The evolution of employment in Valletta and the number of private sector establishments based in Valletta over the period 2006 to 2010 is shown in the charts in Figure 2: Development of economic sectors in Valletta between 2006 and 2010.

In general there has been an increasing trend in the number of Valletta-registered private sector establishments with the overall total increasing by 30% between 2006 and 2010. It would however be interesting to note that the overall increase in the number of establishments is not reflected in

employment growth. Indeed, overall employment within Valletta remained constant between 2006 and 2010. There was a drop in employment in the professional and other services sector, essentially due to the relocation of a relatively large firm to offices outside Valletta.

This highlights the economic importance of these sectors for Valletta. It is furthermore paramount to note that these sectors, particularly the financial services sector and the professional services sector tend to be export oriented and have over the last few years been important drivers of overall economic growth. On the other hand, the proportion of employment generated by the primary sector is significantly lower in Valletta compared to the national ratio as most firms within this industry are located outside Valletta.



**Figure 2:** Development of economic sectors in Valletta between 2006 and 2010

## 4.0 Spatial Development in Valletta

### 4.1 General Overview

Valletta lies on a peninsula located between two of the most important harbours in Malta, the Grand Harbour (*il-Port il-Kbir*), to the south/south-east, and Marsamxett Harbour (*il-Port ta' Marsamxett*) to the north/north-west.

The tip of the peninsula is occupied by Fort St. Elmo, which overlooks the open sea, while Floriana is located to the west and south-west.

While the fortified walls surrounding Valletta and Floriana define the extent of horizontal growth for these two localities, a number of green pockets and open spaces separate them from the sprawl of the neighbouring towns, of Ħamrun and Pietà.

On the other hand, the Valletta, Floriana and Marsa harbour areas overlap to form a continuous harbour-front. The so called Valletta Waterfront, which is provided for in GHLP Policy GP02, is actually located in Floriana and features in the Floriana Policy Map 10 of the GHLP.

The southern coast of the Grand Harbour is occupied by the localities of Isla, Bormla, Birgu, and Kalkara, which are located within the Southern Harbour district.

Valletta, can be divided into two macro-zones, namely

- I. The combination of mixed-use zones which occupy the periphery of the city. Parts of these zones are predominantly residential, which co-exist with office development, storage facilities, and micro-sized manufacturing and repair activities. These zones are characterised by a general lack of open spaces and the corresponding amenities which are considered essential in residential areas.
- II. The Centre in which major public administration, cultural, and commercial developments and public urban spaces are located. This zone is situated on the higher levels of the city, along Republic Street (*Triq ir-Repubblika*) and Merchants Street (*Triq il-Merkanti*), from City Gate (*Bieb il-Belt*) to the President's Palace and St George's Square (*Pjazza San Ġorġ*), although it does extend to the northern coast along parts of Archbishop Street (*Triq l-Arċisqof*).

## **4.2     Redevelopment and Heritage Conservation**

Valletta's designation as a World Heritage Site implies that the urban fabric within the City is of significant architectural value. This imposes several building constraints, which condition redevelopment opportunities. Several conservation policies also come into play resulting in restrictions on restoration practices, which may lead to inordinately expensive works, thus curtailing opportunities for the re-use of existing derelict and vacant buildings. Often, the high costs involved in restoring buildings increase the pressure for such sites to be used as more economically feasible projects (e.g. as commercial hubs). This, in turn, continues to contribute to a further decrease in Valletta's resident population. Additionally, conservation policies are perceived by residents to create restrictions on property improvements, such as effecting structural alterations to ground floor properties to create garages for vehicles. All this helps to discourage individuals from seeking a residence in Valletta. This predicament is not only restricted to individual buildings but is rendered more complex by the importance of the overall urban composition and morphology that depict Valletta.

## **4.3     Issues Relating to Accessibility**

Valletta's morphology provides challenges to both pedestrian accessibility and to vehicular mobility. The Order's original plans for Valletta aimed at flattening the terrain of Mount Sceberras. However the estimated costs for actualising this were too high, and instead the City was planned around the existing topography seeing the middle part of Valletta, mainly around *Triq ir-Repubblika*, constructed on the flat part of the terrain with steps and undulating streets emerging from either side leading towards the harbours. Nowadays, the central commercial areas around *Triq ir-Repubblika* are adequately pedestrianised and relatively free of vehicular traffic, which is important to cater for the high increase of pedestrian mobility within the City during the day time. However, within the outer residential areas of Valletta, mobility is mainly characterised, and all too often hampered, by narrow and stepped pavements.

Considering that the majority of Valletta's population is an ageing one, the pedestrian network within residential areas may present an obstacle for mobility-impaired individuals, and hence restricting Valletta's elderly from interacting and contributing towards the City's vitality. Realistically speaking, the road network cannot be totally transformed solely for pedestrian use. A certain leeway for vehicular mobility to serve the commercial areas and the residents' needs is required.

However, the restricted road width limits the possibilities to provide street parking. This has led to a situation where parking spaces encroach on pavements, creating further challenges to pedestrian mobility.

The high increase in vehicular traffic during the day generated by the large number of employees working in Valletta has had a negative impact on the management of vehicles within the city boundaries. Valletta and Floriana are established office centres mustering considerable vehicular traffic within the fortification network. Despite a steady suburbanization of the population, Valletta remains the cultural, administrative and commercial centre of the Maltese Islands.

Parking of vehicles within the City is highly problematic and virtually impossible after 0900hrs. The public transport system operates with limited access within the inner fabric of the City although the main bus terminus is located just outside the main entrance to the Valletta. Paradoxically, the restrictions in terms of vehicular mobility favour pedestrian circulation within the City particularly in the central core where most of the commercial outlets and offices are located.

#### **4.4 Property Prices**

Unlike the residential units, commercial properties within Valletta yield a much higher return of income. Many international companies seek to acquire property in Valletta, since an address within the Capital's confines is beneficial to their image and prestige. Unofficial real estate figures indicate that the average price for purchasing commercial property in Valletta is in the region of €1350 per square metre. Obviously commercial property within Valletta's centre bears a greater monetary value than properties outside the existing commercial hub. Often pressure is brought into play to convert cheaper property, located outside the commercial hub, to commercial use rather than into residential development. In fact, reflecting this trend, prices of existing residential buildings have been inflated, making it difficult for individuals to purchase affordable residential property within Valletta's confines. There were instances when the residential property prices were as high as €1825 per square metre. Such inflated prices make it impossible for existing residents in rented property to seek home ownership, and make it even harder for the second generation residents to continue to reside in Valletta.



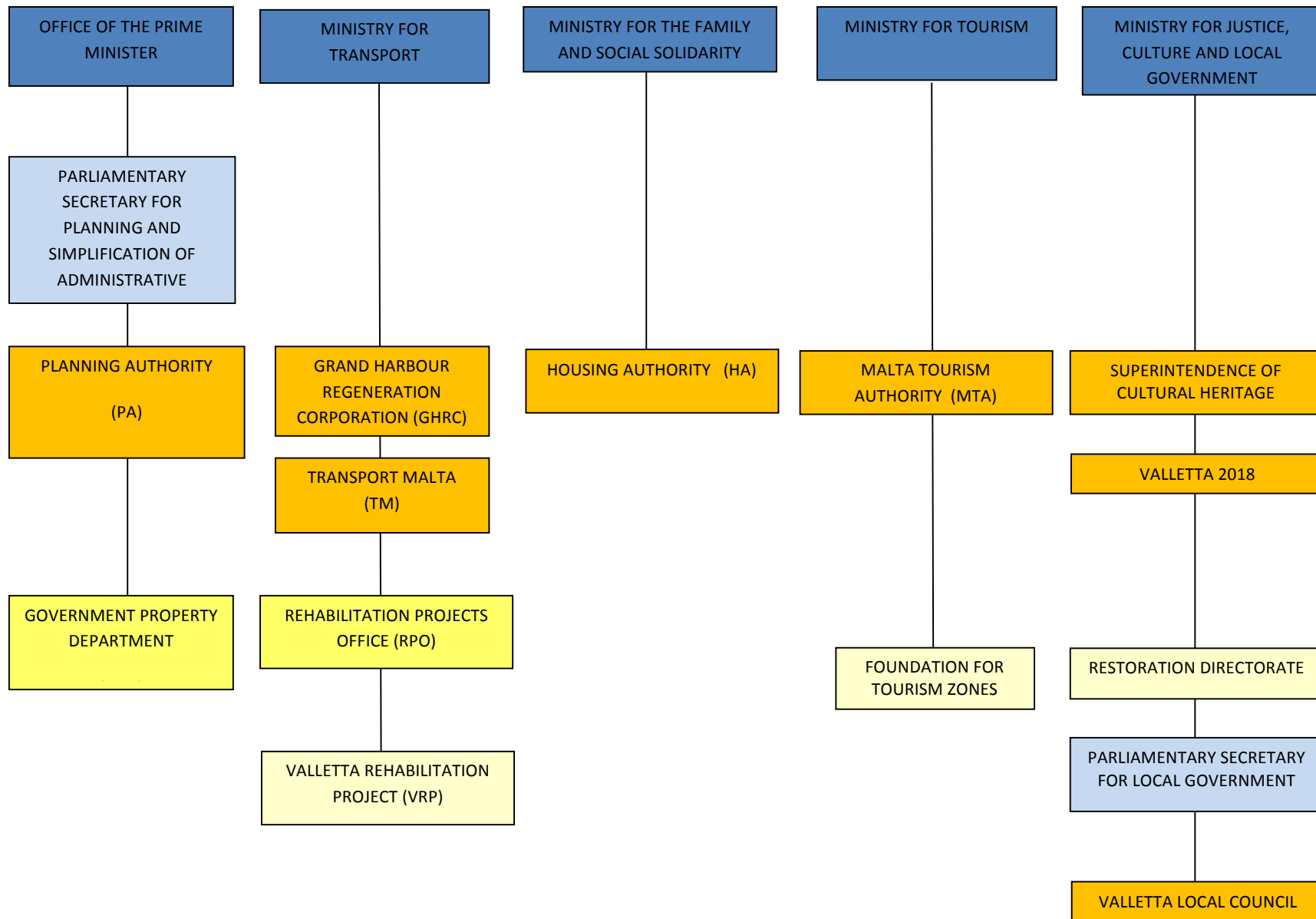
#### **4.5 Fragmented and sectoral development approach**

Government stakeholders that in one way or another have a share in the development of Valletta are featured in Figure 3: Visual of statutory organisations which are stakeholders in Valletta. It should be pointed out that these organisations are subject to ministerial authorities and are being featured according to their Ministries.

Figure 3: Visual of statutory organisations which are stakeholders in Valletta shows the many stakeholders present in decision making towards development in Valletta. This translates in a situation where it is very difficult for Valletta to have a coherent policy due to the fragmented ownership falling under different authorities and/or organisations under the remit of various ministries. This is especially taxing to private individuals who would like to carry out development in Valletta.

Over the years, the increase in commercial activity and the presence of several offices, both public and private, in the Capital, have led to an increase in daytime population. The heritage value of the city and the number of museums in Valletta are a centre of attraction for a considerable number of tourists throughout the year which has increased substantially, after the development of the Cruise Liner industry. Night time activities related to culture and entertainment have also increased significantly over the past few years possibly augmented by the increase in tourism accommodation within the City and its environs.

Activities such as The Malta Arts Festival, Notte Bianca, the Valletta International Visual Arts Festival, the International Baroque Festival and developments such as Pjazza Teatru Rjal, the transformation of the National Museum of Fine Arts into MUŻA – Mużew tal-Arti (and its relocation to Auberge d'Italie), the rehabilitation of upper Fort St Elmo, the upgrading of the Manoel Theatre, St James Cavalier and the planned investments in the Grand Master's Palace and its rehabilitation into an accessible cultural icon, the new Fortress Builders Interpretation Centre, the creation of a Valletta Design Cluster at the Old Abattoir, the National Library (the Biblioteca) preserving not only the memory of the nation with its collections but also serving as yet another platform for cultural and educational activities and a myriad of other public and non-governmental organisations which have the potential to make Valletta the unique city that it prides itself to be. These go hand in hand with the long-standing arts and cultural festivals, like Carnival, the Malta Jazz Festival, museum and heritage attractions and also parish feasts.



**Figure 3:** Visual of statutory organisations which are stakeholders in Valletta

Initiatives relating to Valletta are usually conducted in a piecemeal fashion, without any overall co-ordination or plan. It is strongly felt that an integrated approach is required for Valletta's regeneration if good value for money is to be expected. This approach should be supported with appropriate funding, with the Government considering the mechanisms best suited to derive and subsequently implement such an approach. Valletta needs a coordination department/entity which, apart from owning the process, can command all the appropriate assets to ensure things get done.

#### 4.6 ENTRUST

The *Empowering Neighbourhoods through Recourse and Synergies with Trade* (ENTRUST) report identifies three possible approaches which could be adopted for the rehabilitation of Valletta. The research project was supported by the European Commission under the Fifth Framework RTD Programme of the European Union and the RPO formed part of a network of regeneration practitioners from eight European cities in 2002.

The three approaches are namely:

- I. ***The state funded approach*** through which the Central Government sets the priorities and controls all activities as a single entity. Such an approach requires significant financing and would be hugely dependent on public funds or European Union programmes.
- II. ***The partnership approach*** through which the Central Government, local governments, and the private sector collaborate closely with each other towards a common end. Such an approach seeks to ensure that all stakeholders feel part of the project. Such endeavours may be difficult to organise because certain partners may be dependent on others within the same partnership.
- III. ***The nodes approach***, through which a number of nodes would be selected, allowing both the public and the private sector to collaborate within the limits of a specific geographic area. The selected nodes would normally be geographically connected to each other and would function as spearheads of development stimulating action in the links situated between them.

The *nodes approach* appears to be the most favourable option in the case of Valletta. This conclusion is supported by studies of the introduction of ferry service between Sliema and Valletta,

and the impact which this service has had on St Mark Street (*Triq San Mark*) and the lower part of St John Street (*Triq San Ġwann*).

## **5.0 Objectives**

Government is determined to enhance and improve Malta's Capital City by committing itself to implement a holistic and wide ranging plan for Valletta. Past experience shows that a number of segregated projects which were performed within Valletta, did not attain their full potential, although it has to be recognised that these projects each have their particular importance. The Strategy for Valletta is expected to change the way how plans are drawn up and how decisions are to be taken. A clearer approach should be adopted to ensure coherence, efficiency and effectiveness. Valletta forms part of the wider urban regeneration priority area of the Grand Harbour region. Valletta can act as a fulcrum to instigate the wider regeneration objectives of the Grand Harbour region.

In this context, the Government has identified the following aspects as the main objectives of the Valletta Plan:

- I. Improve on the quality of urban living in Valletta with a wide mix of quality residential units and quality open spaces. This should be supported with more social and community services such as schools, health services, facilities for the elderly, family hubs etc. In an increasingly globalised world, the importance of 'placemaking' and local identity however is not to be underestimated. Based on the uniqueness of Valletta, the concept of local identity is underpinned by an area's topography, geomorphology and natural features, together with its built environment, its open spaces, land use patterns and spatial organisations, visual relationships, and various other elements. Local identity also includes social and cultural practices and values, many of which may appear intangible and transient but are no less real, such as cultural, tourism and religious events;
- II. Practise and promote sustainable management;
- III. Fulfil the role of a centre of excellence for urban heritage management and conservation and to safeguard for future generations the cultural assets of the world-heritage city;

- IV. Attract more high-end retail outlets to Valletta and also facilitate the setting up of more offices coupled by auxiliary services such as food and drinks for employees, users, visitors and tourists;
- V. Update the Valletta Transport Strategy plan of 2004 and prepare a SUMP (Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan) for Valletta;
- VI. Underline the cultural heritage of the capital city and instigate more cultural infrastructure and activities to attract more visitors to Valletta;
- VII. Identify ways how to create better tourism attractions and provide more quality accommodations within Valletta;
- VIII. Consolidate further the administrative aspect of the Capital city by better prioritising the use of the Government owned buildings in Valletta;
- IX. Improve the quality of the urban environment and its upkeep;
- X. Ensure better coordination among all stakeholders for the effective implementation of the Valletta Strategy; this should be achieved by identifying the department/entity to oversee and coordinate the implementation of the various sectoral policies which fall under the aegis of this Strategy.

Valletta is a priority area for regeneration and revitalising the City whereby people who live in the City do so because they are attracted by the historic environment, the vibrancy and ongoing cultural activities. The target audience are the young upwardly mobile professionals, artists, students and families with teenagers and foreigners. The international emergence of the creative city has been tied to the changes in living standards and expectations of contemporary life, coupled with the work and life practices of the networked knowledge economy. People want to live, play and work in spaces which are stimulating, contributing to their overall well-being and to that of their children and relatives, while engaging professionally with a whole mix of people from various backgrounds and interests. Valletta has the right ingredients to continue on the path of transforming itself into a creative city, attracting a social mix of residents, workers, visitors and other users that demand higher quality standards of living, a stimulating cultural and creative milieu, and an urban and social environment that encourages them to learn, share, and enjoy the city.

Development trends over the period 2007-2014 have denoted a relatively low number of new dwelling units (Table 13). Redevelopments of existing dwelling units and consolidation of dwelling units are also included.

Table 13: New dwelling units by year								
Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>New Units</b>	3	14	20	11	6	16	18	19

Table 14 indicates the floor space levels per year for commercial and tourism accommodation typologies. This indicates the increasing popularity of Valletta for tourism after 2011 mainly through the conversion of palazzini and large town houses into boutique hotels.

Table 14: Approved floor space by typology per year					
Year	Office (sq m)	Retail (sq m)	Food & Drink (sq m)	Tourism (sq m)	TOTAL (sq m)
2007	2,461	718	163	0	<b>3,342</b>
2008	513	224	119	0	<b>856</b>
2009	350	324	493	0	<b>1,167</b>
2010	1,443	286	505	0	<b>2,234</b>
2011	1,621	1,833	508	0	<b>3,962</b>
2012	1,466	497	616	1,130	<b>3,709</b>
2013	319	151	217	198	<b>885</b>
2014	1,604	179	895	2,060	<b>4,738</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,777</b>	<b>4,212</b>	<b>3,516</b>	<b>3,388</b>	<b>16,155</b>

The approach for Valletta is to identify key strategic nodes which will have a multiplier effect on their surroundings and at the same time creating links between them. These strategic nodes will undergo interventions which will not be stand-alone projects but will also permeate the surrounding areas. The creation of successful urban places is not only about buildings; it is just as much about the quality of the streets, squares, piazzas and other open spaces that comprise the public realm of the place. These are the ‘living rooms’ of Valletta, and their design, management and use are just as important to their success as every other aspect of their planning, design and development. A well-designed, well-managed and well-used public realm is essential to the vitality and vibrancy of urban places. A Valletta with high quality streets, piazzas and gardens can become a more attractive place to live, work and visit, and a destination for residential, commercial, industrial and cultural investment, including tourism. The 2007 Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities articulates the European Union’s recognition of the importance of a high quality public realm, not only for its positive impact on the quality of life of urban populations, but also for its role as a ‘soft locational

factor' in attracting knowledge-based industries, creative workforces, and tourism to locate in particular places.

**Development proposals would need to be assessed on a case by case basis by taking cognisance of the context and the capacity of the area to accommodate their proposed use. The preferred uses within Valletta are residential, commercial, cultural and tourism provided that they are deemed compatible with their context.**

## **6.0 Policy thrusts**

### **6.1 Management of Valletta**

To attain the maximum potential of Malta's Capital city, a department/entity needs to be entrusted with the implementation of the Strategy. This will serve as an administrative body to plan, lead, organise and control all the implementation phases of the Valletta Strategy – including monitoring and reviewing of all projects. Its main functions are to

- I. spearhead detailed sectoral policies/plans prepared by Ministries in line with the Valletta Strategy (for the various areas of implementation);
- II. ensure effective implementation of all the projects (in line with reasonable and timely targets);
- III. monitor and review the implementation of each and every project (corrective action should be taken as and when necessary);
- IV. establish a GIS for the integration of all data pertinent to Valletta and its environs;
- V. establish a streamlined one stop shop approach;
- VI. come up with a budget plan of all the initiatives of the Strategy and to ensure that funds are available;
- VII. identify any possible sources of funding (including EU funding) for all the projects;
- VIII. retain the role of the Valletta World Heritage site manager in line with the requirements of the Operational Guidelines for the UNESCO World Heritage site.

In addition, the department will liaise closely with the following Ministries for the following reasons:

- I. Ministry for European Affairs and Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto – to tap into EU funds for any of the projects listed in the Valletta Plan.
- II. Ministry for Tourism – implement the National Tourism Policy and the Foundation for Tourism Zones.



- III. Ministry for the Economy, Investment and Small Business – to make the business hub of Valletta more economically viable and attractive.
- IV. Ministry for Finance – to ensure financial feasibility and viability of proposed investments and the promotion of the creative economy.
- V. Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government – to ensure development of cultural attractions and activities including the participation of resident communities; to promote the continued conservation and protection of the historic fabric.
- VI. Ministry for Sustainable Development, Environment and Climate Change – to guide the greening of underutilized areas such as ditches, greening of roofs.
- VII. Ministry for Energy and Health – to promote the integration of renewable energy infrastructure and water conservation; and to upgrade existing service infrastructure.
- VIII. Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity – to guide social mobility and cohesion of Valletta residents
- IX. Ministry for Transport and Infrastructure – to provide a holistic Accessibility Strategy and Comprehensive Transport Plan for the Principal Urban Area as identified in the Strategic Plan for Environment and Development and to actively cooperate through the GHRC and RPO in the infrastructural projects which are aimed for Valletta.
- X. Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security – to provide for an updated, better coordinated and more effective application of the relevant aspects of law and order.
- XI. Ministry for Education and Employment – to provide education and employment opportunities in line with the social cohesion thrust of the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity.

A more coordinated approach will guarantee more focused efforts by the various Ministries to ensure that all decisions are taken in line with the general mission statement of this Plan. The department also needs to maintain continuous liaison with key stakeholders within Valletta such as the Valletta 2018 Foundation, ecclesiastical authorities, constituted bodies, NGOs and other bodies to ensure that the wider community takes an active role in the implementation process.

## **6.2 Proposals for Quality Urban Living in Valletta**

Government is committed to developing an integrated approach towards the continuing enhancement of urban areas with a view to improve the quality of life and sustainable living standards of identified low socio-economic deprived communities. Government recognises that a multi-faceted approach is necessary in order to address holistically the needs of urban communities. The revitalisation of cities and the regeneration of communities are not limited solely to upgrade the urban environment but need to be complemented with interventions aimed at boosting economic activity. Cities are not just the infrastructure within the area but are also made up of the persons who work and reside within the area. Within this context, there is also a real need to invest in the social aspect of the community by addressing the social and educational needs. In this regard and in line with Article 7 of Regulation 1303/2013, the Operational Programme 1 – Fostering a competitive and sustainable economy to meet our challenges, a priority axis on Sustainable Urban Development has been identified. It includes different thematic objectives with a view to ensure that the specific challenges and needs of these communities are met. The following measures are being proposed:

- I. Improve the urban environment in the Harbour area for stronger and sustainable neighbourhoods (Investment Priority 1)
- II. Foster an environment which is conducive to economic activity in particular tourism and cultural activities, through the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage (Investment Priority 2)
- III. Invest in the social and physical regeneration in deprived neighbourhoods (Investment Priority 3)

### 6.2.1 Key proposals

The Strategy should focus on an improved approach for urban living in the Capital city. To this extent the following key proposals should be taken up. Other proposals as identified in other Government sectoral plans and policies in line with the objectives of this plan are also to be pursued.

#### **Proposal 1: Property Inventory**

The first problem that any administration needs to overcome in the regeneration of Valletta is a compilation of proper data, which can help urban managers to draw up a Plan that can improve the capacity of the market property in this area. Government does not have an accurate database of property details in Valletta, and the information in hand is not always captured in digital format. The information available is still mostly paper-based in a number of government departments and for one to collate such data, one need to go through the rigorous procedure of actually handling the respective property files to check their status, ownership and other relevant property details.

An IT based property management system of all the buildings/properties in Valletta is to be drawn up with the aim of identifying the location, state, condition, typology (both aggregate and specific), ownership and constraints associated with each property site within Valletta. This initiative will contribute significantly to the overall and effective implementation process of the Valletta Plan itself. The Budget speech for 2015 specifically mentioned the **Pilot Project on Government Property in Valletta**.

This builds on the premise that to regenerate Valletta there needs to be a clear indication of all the property within its confines. The exercise will also include the centralisation of all data layers currently held by different Ministries and/or their agencies. This exercise would also prove useful in protecting national treasures from falling into disrepair and in identifying opportunities for investment even in conjunction with the private sector, as shown by the response following the recent Government properties put on the market.

Mapping property through GIS gives policy makers up-to-date information on the location of vacant property, property use, zoning, environmental conditions, and other variables, both in the aggregate, and for specific zones. In the absence of such a reliable database, it will be difficult to have a systematic response to make land and underutilised property available also on the private market.

The use of Space Analysis may also help Government understand properly reasons why properties were vacated. For this reason, it is important that the database contains information on properties, the duration to date of their vacuity and the existing reasons or obstacles that are keeping the property vacant. In order to do this, the Property System database is to be ingrained with fields related to information about ownership, condition, type of property, information related to housing and social benefits, complaints and the action that is being taken to re-use them. Furthermore, as long as the property remains vacant, Government can monitor the situation better.

**Timeline:** Immediate

**Major Stakeholders:** Government Property Department (GPD), National Office Statistics, Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, and the Planning Authority.

## **Proposal 2: Pilot Area for Regeneration**

On the basis of proposal 1, there is the potential that empty/derelict property in Valletta becomes a vehicle to upgrade the urban living within the Capital city. Government should lead by example and kick-start a process to restore all its properties within the area identified in as a Pilot Area for Regeneration (node 1). This neighbourhood quarter has an area of around 50,000 sq m spanning part of Old Bakery Street to the south, parts of St. Christopher Street and Archbishop Street to the west and the English and the French curtain walls and the coastal areas which they overlook. This quarter is contiguous to the Auberge de Baviere in the lower part of Valletta. Besides the Auberge itself, this area has other historical buildings. It is the last area in Valletta to be developed and an area falling at the end of one of the five valleys of Valletta, the Ghetto Valley, and having a direct access to the waterfront through the Jews' Sally-Port. This area also housed the old slaughterhouse (Old Abattoir/Il-Biċċerija). The centre of this area features a two-level building bounded by Bull Street, St. Christopher Street and St. Charles Street. The area is also known as the Jewish Ghetto and is thought to have served as a Jews' quarters.

Overall the area is in a derelict state, and in the past was earmarked for housing improvement. The GPD has confirmed that 58% of the properties within it are Government owned. However the area has considerable potential since it includes key buildings and which could be transformed into attractions. These nodes include the Auberge de Baviere, 90 West Street, the Anglican Cathedral and projects which are already underway such as the Design Cluster at Il-Biċċerija (Old Abattoir) and

Strait Street. The upgrading of this area will render it more attractive for current and potential residents, will provide for affordable housing, and capitalises on existing open spaces such as Independence Square. In addition, there is a considerable amount of empty/derelict properties in Valletta which are owned by the private sector. In this regard a scheme to encourage a Private Public Partnership to upgrade/restore these properties should be drawn up. This exercise should also explore the possibilities of making use of large private green spaces belonging to the Church and its entities. Property owners should be urged to actively participate in this initiative. The main focus should always remain that of attracting new residents in Valletta, to boost the economy in general and to make Valletta more tourism and culture centred.

**Timeline:** Work on a proposal should commence immediately

**Major Stakeholders:** Ministry responsible for EU Affairs, Ministry for Culture, Ministry for Social Affairs and Family, Ministry for Education and Employment, Government Property Department, Planning Authority.

**Other areas which may be considered for regeneration include the Marsamxett and Arċipierku quarters as described in Annex A.**

### **Proposal 3: Transport Strategy**

In line with Objective V, a transport strategy will be developed for Valletta. This strategy focuses on the following pillars:

- a) An optimised public transport system as the main means of mass transportation to and from Valletta.
- b) Improved management of vehicular access within Valletta
- c) Overall assessment of the parking capacity within Valletta including the identification of more off street parking facilities, including sustained utilisation of park and ride.
- d) Improved maritime links connecting Sliema and Cottonera with Valletta. This should include the investment in better landing places and the possibility of a vertical link to Marsamxett.
- e) Incentivising eco-friendly transportation methods such as evaluating the introduction of Bike Sharing, cleaner transport between Park and Ride and Valletta, car sharing and car pooling facilities.

- f) Exploring the introduction of people movers between Upper and Lower Valletta.
- g) Pedestrianise key areas and open spaces such as Independence Square.

**Timeline:** Immediate

**Major Stakeholders:** Ministry for Transport and Infrastructure; Ministry for Sustainable Development, Environment and Climate Change; Ministry for Energy and Health.

#### **Proposal 4: University Campus**

The Old University building (node 7) which is located in a prime area of Valletta is currently underutilised. It is recommended that the University of Malta, in collaboration with MEDE, explores any possibilities to further utilise the old University building with the aim to attract more students, both local and foreign, to Valletta. This will generate more economic activity in Valletta and will undoubtedly have a positive impact on increasing the academic image of Valletta.

**Timeline:** Immediate

**Major Stakeholders:** Ministry for Education and Employment; University of Malta.

#### **Proposal 5: Strategic Nodes**

A number of key locations have strategic significance due to their geographical position in the City. These have the potential to attract people from the city centre to its periphery and vice versa. This can be mainly achieved through the improvement of peripheral land and sea transport. A significant part of local identity is the existence of built heritage features. These features, both large and small, can be used as focal points to incrementally build an identity within the changed setting of recent development. In addition, a strong sense of local identity and a manifest sense of place are likely to give rise to the ambience that users, residents, workers and visitors, would find attractive. The following landmark sites are prioritised as potential nodes for regeneration:

- I. Pilot Area for regeneration including the Auberge de Baviere and the Old Abattoir– node 1;
- II. Lower St Elmo – node 2;
- III. Marsamxett waterfront – node 3;

- IV. Examinations centre/Evans building/Primary school – node 4;
- V. Pixkerija/Quarantine Hospital/Pinto stores – node 5;
- VI. 90 West Street – node 6.

In the past some of the above locations had already been earmarked for particular land uses. It is now being proposed that fresh calls for any Public Private Partnerships (PPP) and/or Expressions of Interest (EOIs) to regenerate these strategic nodes should be issued immediately. While the main uses are commercial and tourism, it is crucial that these nodes should also include social and community facilities to enhance the urban regeneration of Valletta. These might include the introduction of child care and elderly facilities, a new primary school and day/night centres and the provision of affordable housing.

In view of national and international commitments such as Malta's EU Presidency in 2017 and the European City of Culture in 2018, it is not recommended to have major ongoing works during this term in the core of Valletta. However work on nodes located on the periphery of Valletta such as Lower St Elmo and Marsamxett waterfront can commence. The added advantages to this approach are twofold:

- I. The resident community would be the first beneficiary of the Strategy since the waterfront has the potential of being transformed into a high quality recreational area which is in close proximity to most of Valletta's residents. The creation of pedestrian walkways, green areas, upgrading of sports facilities such as the waterpolo facilities, trails along the fortifications and the seashore and open spaces are some of the initiatives that could be taken along this stretch.
- II. It would enhance the attractiveness of nearby initiatives such as the pilot area for regeneration of nodes like Lower St Elmo and the Examinations centre/Evans building/Primary school.

The period up to 2018 would be used to complete the data gathering phase, acquire EU funding for nodes 1 and 6 and the events in 2017-2018 would be used to "market" Valletta as a stepping stone for the regeneration of the other nodes.

**Timeline:** Node 1 and Node 6 – linked to proposal 2; Node 2 and 3 – immediate.

**Major Stakeholders:** Government Property Department.

## **Proposal 6: Management**

A management approach, based on the model of town centre management, needs to increase commitment towards a high quality environment, with particular attention to open spaces and busy areas. In order to increase the standard of living in Valletta, it is necessary that the general upkeep, organisation of services and enforcement are improved and organised in conjunction and in an integrated manner. Long term initiatives to safeguard the environment and Valletta's surroundings are of paramount importance. Along these lines, measures are needed to be in place for a more structured way forward to ensure the smooth running of the following services

- I. Greening of open spaces and roofscapes;
- II. Servicing to commercial outlets and open markets (including loading/unloading). These should be visitor friendly, clear and business oriented;
- III. Waste management (business and resident oriented);
- IV. Coordination of infrastructural works related to utilities (electricity, water, drainage, communications and roads).
- V. Support infrastructure such as pavements and public facilities.
- VI. Collaboration towards the organisation of large scale events.

**Timeline:** Immediate

**Major Stakeholders:** Foundation for Tourism Zones (Ministry for Tourism) and Malta Tourism Authority



### **6.2.2 Initiatives currently in the pipeline and future projects**

These include:

- I. The restoration of the Old Abattoir to house the Valletta Design Cluster which has the aim of facilitating the relationship between arts, craft, technology and design. The Design Cluster will house NGOs and associations operating in the various aspects of design to encourage further networking, sectorial representation and knowledge transfer.
- II. The regeneration of Strait Street to provide a platform for a commercial, creativity and multi-cultural hub through new activities and physical interventions.
- III. The restoration and restructuring of the Valletta Covered Market - Is-Suq tal-Belt - (node 8) with the aim of establishing a cultural and entertainment space within a context of a multifunction floor and a traditional food market.
- IV. Tapping of the potential of subterranean spaces beneath Valletta which could be used as linkages to and between strategic nodes. These spaces are a highly elaborate network of passageways, tunnels and catchment areas all with their own separate function.

It is proposed that these and other similar projects are integrated as annexes to this Strategy once these are formally adopted.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

Over the years, regeneration initiatives were mostly concentrated along the central axis of Valletta, namely City Gate and St Elmo with little, or no effort being made in other areas. Whilst these interventions gave Valletta a much needed impetus, they were mostly physical and furthermore did not include the peripheral areas of Valletta. The next step is to initiate the regeneration of the peripheral areas of Valletta. These are mostly residential in character within a poor quality setting. A community-led regeneration approach which focuses on the physical and social characteristics of these areas will transform them into attractive affordable housing complemented by a quality public realm in accessible environs. This will culminate in making Valletta a vibrant 'living city' within a wider area, the Grand Harbour Area that has been earmarked for integrated regeneration.

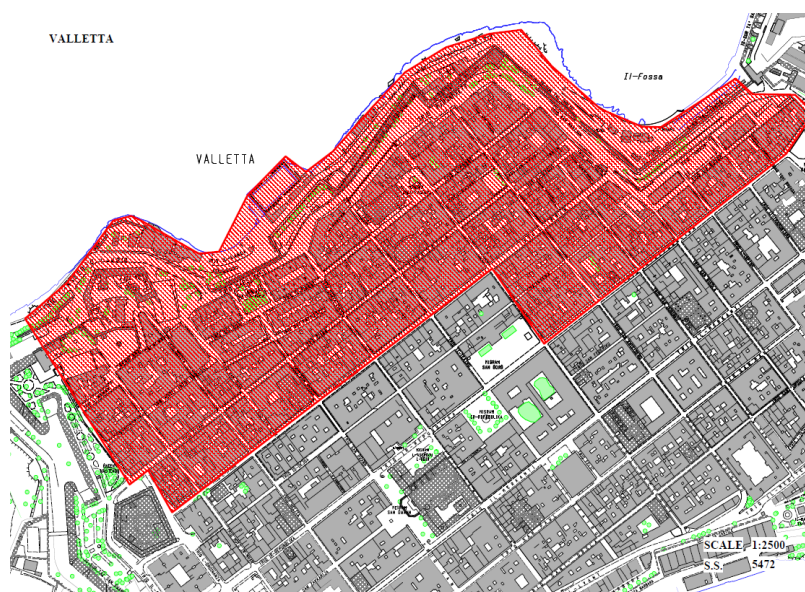
The taking forward of this Strategy is by no means an easy task. For this approach to succeed it is necessary to ensure coordination, cooperation and a coherent approach by all stakeholders involved. This Strategy needs to be reviewed on a regular basis to take cognisance of developments in the economic, social and environmental fields and reflect evolving needs of the stakeholders and the community. This Strategy is just the beginning since it sets the ball rolling for new opportunities which will evolve over time.

The next key steps to follow this Strategy are the setting up of the coordinating entity, the preparation of its implementation plan and a management plan to satisfy the requirements of the Operational Guidelines for World Heritage Sites. Whilst the most pressing tasks have been identified in the list of actions, a more long term implementation plan is needed to identify key targets, stakeholders and ensure coordination. Valletta's World Heritage status is a culmination of the intangible value of its rich and unique heritage assets. The Management Plan will ensure that Valletta continues to receive the required stewardship to complement this UNESCO status.

## 8.0 Annexes

### Annex A: Areas for Regeneration to follow the Pilot AreaThe Marsamxett Node

The Marsamxett node extends to the West from the area known as Il-Mandraġġ (Manderaggio) and to the East to the area known as the Dui Balli or (Deux Bali). In the centre of this area one finds the quarter known as Il-Biċċerija (the Old Slaughterhouse/Abattoir) and Jews' Sally Port. This option, being the largest area, includes the whole part of Valletta overlooking Marsamxett Harbour, as well as the lower part of Valletta known as Il-Baviera environs. The node enclosed embraces an area approximately 215,000 square metres and has a sea-frontage of over 1000 metres.

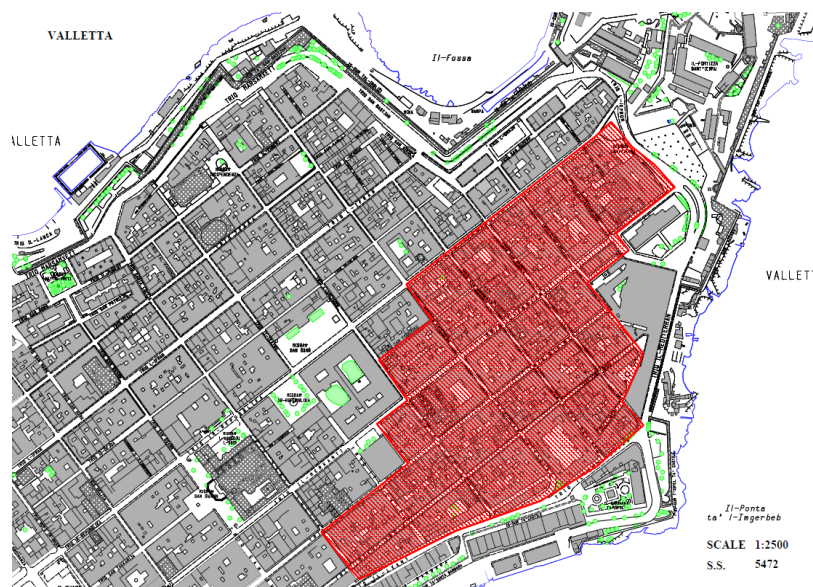


**Figure 4:** The proposed extent of Marsamxett Node

## The Arcipierku Node

The third possible option (Node 3), covering approximately 105,000 square metres, is another predominantly residential quarter. Unlike the other two options, this node however overlooks the Grand Harbour area. The node is defined as the quarter behind the Mediterranean Conference Centre and is bound by Triq ir-Repubblika on the West and Triq il-Lvant on the East. Like the other two nodes, this node also includes historical individual buildings, such as the Old Prison Building which is currently used for social accommodation and the St. Elmo Centre. The buildings located in Triq il-Lvant (East Street) up to St. Christopher Street overlook the Lower Barrakka Gardens and enjoy the open splendid view of the Grand Harbour.

The three nodes, that is the Old Abattoir, Marsamxett and Arcipierku Node, outlined in this section are just proposals, and both the exact extent of the node as well as the selection of a particular node should ideally be made once a number of studies and surveys are carried out within each one of the three areas. These studies will not only give a clear picture of the node under reference, but also help to set out the targets one wants to achieve within such a node. It is on the results of such studies that the Regeneration Plan will eventually be drawn up.



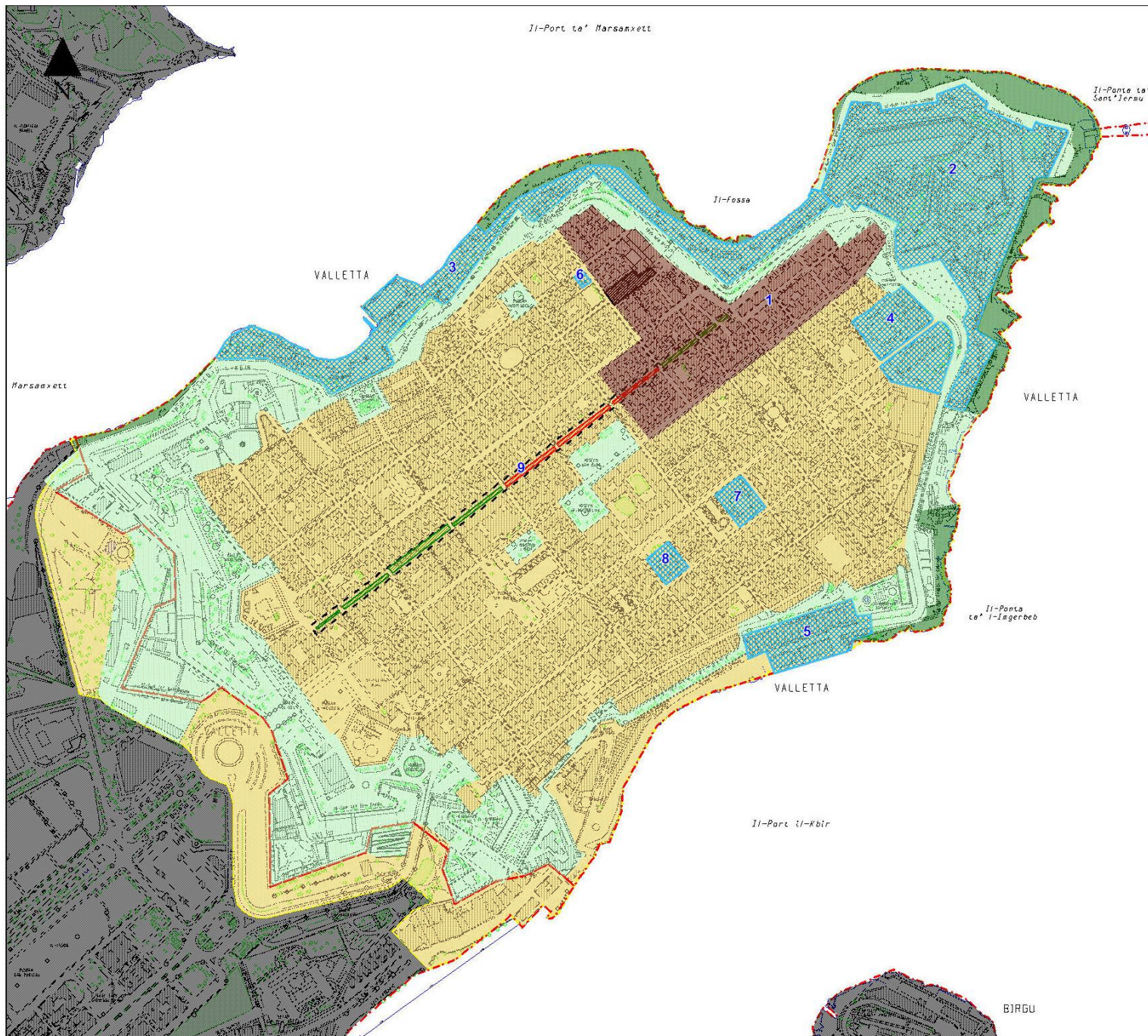
**Figure 5:** The proposed extent of I-Arcipierku Node

## **Annex B: Maps supporting the text of the Plan**









## VALLETTA STRATEGY



Government of Malta

### Key

- Urban Conservation Area
- Regeneration Priority Area
- Nodes
- Cultural Hub
- Core of Cultural Hub
- Periphery of Cultural Hub
- Old Civil Abatoir
- Pilot Area for Regeneration
- Areas of Open Space
- Coast

## ZONING MAP

Scale : Not to Scale Date : MAY 2016

INDICATIVE ONLY  
Not to be used for measurement or direct interpretation.  
Maps to be used in conjunction with Policy Document.  
For the detailed interpretation of alignments kindly contact  
the Planning Directorate's Planning Control Unit.

Map:

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