

Nurturing a Sustainable Society

**A National Strategy for
Education for Sustainable Development
for Malta**

Public Consultation Document

*Developed by the NSESD Board of Governors
under the aegis of the
Ministry for Education and Employment
and the
Ministry for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change*

List of Abbreviations

CEER	Centre for Environmental Education and Research
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
GAP	Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development
HE	Higher Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MCAST	Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NEES	National Environmental Education Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSESD	National Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development
SDP	School Development Plan
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

National Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (NSESD)

Public Consultation Document

The Vision

1. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is an essential component in a nation's efforts to achieve sustainability because it empowers citizens – irrespective of age, gender, ethnic group, belief and walk of life – to become active participants in ensuring a good quality of life based on respect and care for the community of life. This is achieved by helping citizens to change mindsets that promote unsustainable behaviours and practices through critical reflection, the exploration of alternative lifestyles and choices, good governance and wise management of resources.
2. The vision of this strategy, outlined above, is well couched within the vision of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development¹ that envisages “*a region that embraces common values of solidarity, equality and mutual respect between people, countries and generations*” and where sustainable development implies “*economic vitality, justice, social cohesion, environmental protection and the sustainable management of natural resources*” thus ensuring that the needs of present and future generations are met.
3. More specifically, the NSESD is consistent with the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development² which builds upon the UNECE strategy and frames it within the reality of the Mediterranean region. Being at the crossroads of three continents the Mediterranean has always been a theatre for various forms of interactions: religions, politics, conflicts, languages, cultures and trade. Specific environmental issues together with the varied socio-economic conditions that characterise the Mediterranean had – and are still having – a significant impact on sustainable development in the region. Malta is mostly spot in the middle of these realities that are compounded by its small territory and high population density – the highest in the EU.

The Principles of ESD

4. Our conception of sustainable development has to evolve continuously and adapt to respond to the new challenges and dilemmas that we face daily. Consequently, ESD needs to adapt accordingly by providing the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to help the learner explore and respond to changing scenarios.
5. ESD implies a wide range of concerns and should holistically explore diverse themes such as “*poverty alleviation, citizenship, peace, ethics, responsibility in local and global contexts, democracy and governance, justice, security, human rights, health, gender equity, cultural diversity, rural and urban development, economy, production and consumption patterns, corporate responsibility, environmental protection, natural resource management and biological and landscape diversity*” (UNECE strategy, p.4, par.15).
6. ESD should foster respect for and celebrate diversity in all its forms – particularly different forms of life and different cultures. The intrinsic value of traditional knowledge should be valued and integrated within ESD programmes.
7. ESD should prepare citizens for action for sustainable development by promoting the development of systemic, critical and reflective thinking in local and global contexts. ESD should enable citizens to understand and ethically respond to relationships around them on issues of respect, equity, justice and solidarity. These relationships include intra and intergenerational

¹ UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development adopted at the High-Level Meeting of Environment and Education Ministers (Vilnius, 17-18 March 2005). Retrieved from <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2005/cep/ac.13/cep.ac.13.2005.3.rev.1.e.pdf>

² Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (MSESD) (2014). Retrieved from: http://www.medies.net/_uploaded_files/esd_news/ufm_mediterranean%20strategy%20on%20education%20for%20sustainable%20development%20-%20....pdf

relationships, the interaction between humans and nature as well as those who have access to resources and those who have not.

8. ESD is a lifelong process spanning from early childhood to adulthood. Crucial in this continuous process are the formative early years during which attitudes, values and lifestyles are forged. ESD is also a life-wide process responding to the different roles that citizens adopt throughout their lives. Thus it should feature in the educational programmes for higher education, vocational education, training for educators and continuing professional development (CPD) courses. Moreover, ESD should move beyond formal education settings and provide experiences within the non-formal and the informal sectors³.
9. Formal ESD should promote out-of-class experiences that develop school-community links enabling citizens to contextualise their learning to the realities that surround them.
10. ESD should shift the focus away from solely transmitting information towards facilitating participatory learning enabling citizens to actively participate in decision making, promote democratic processes, work in teams and develop networks and partnerships.

Implications of ESD

11. The late John Smyth, who in 1992 chaired the Working Group responsible for the development of Scotland's ESD strategy making it the first country in the world to prepare such a strategy, claimed that good ESD is in fact good education. In other words, ESD provides an opportunity and a context through which most of the educational targets are achieved.
12. *"For ESD to become part of an agenda for change towards a more sustainable society, education itself must be subject to change"* (UNECE strategy, p.8, par.41). ESD is not a cosmetic change to our educational system that can be addressed simply by the introduction/addition of subject content to programmes of learning. It implies developing communities of learning between learners and their educators where knowledge is collaboratively and actively constructed in response to *"multi- and inter-disciplinary examination of real-life situations"*.
13. A landmark national achievement was the inclusion of ESD as a cross-curricular theme in the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) in 2012. This curricular pronouncement needs to be translated into efforts to integrate ESD themes across all subject areas as well as through the provision of specific subject programmes and courses.
14. ESD programmes need to provide citizens with a wide perspective of local, national, regional and global sustainable development issues. This can be achieved through a life-cycle approach that enables citizens to reflect on the impact of decisions on environmental, social, cultural and economic wellbeing of communities.
15. Formal education institutions and other non-formal and informal entities should adopt a whole-institution approach to ESD. This approach implies the adoption of sustainable development principles in the management and procurement practices and the active participation in decision making of the various stakeholders – particularly the citizens.
16. Given their learner-oriented focus, non-formal and informal ESD programmes should be seen as an essential complement to formal education particularly in the provision of adult learning schemes and community-based ESD programmes.

³ Defining Formal, Informal and Non-formal education has always proved challenging. In this document they are defined as shown below:

Formal education: Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.

Informal education: Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective..

Non-formal education: Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view..

Source: Cedefop (2008). *Terminology of European education and training policy: a selection of 100 key terms*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Retrieved from: <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/home/hornav/Glossary.csp>.

17. Promoting sustainability is a collective responsibility and therefore ESD should also feature in specialised training programmes for professionals and decision makers (particularly those involved in management and planning). Besides upgrading the knowledge and skills of participants, these vocational and CPD courses should offer training in the development of new competences that are relevant to the needs of the different professions in response to sustainable development induced change.
18. Educators who understand what constitutes ESD and are equipped with the necessary expertise to adopt transformative pedagogies are an essential component of effective ESD provision. The UNECE strategy elaborates about these pedagogies as being “*participatory, process- and solution-oriented educational methods tailored to the learner*” and gives specific examples: “*apart from the traditional ones, these should include among other things discussions, conceptual and perceptual mapping, philosophical inquiry, value clarification, simulations, scenarios, modelling, role playing, games, information and communication technology (ICT), surveys, case studies, excursions and outdoor learning, learner-driven projects, good practice analyses, workplace experience and problem solving*” (p.7, par.33 [e]). Consequently, ESD needs to be an important component of initial and continuing training programmes for educators.
19. The issue of ESD training for educators is particularly relevant to NGOs who, besides playing a leading role in the provision of non-formal and informal learning, are usually the link between civil society and the government. This important role needs to be acknowledged and supported through partnerships between NGOs, the government and the private sector that would extend the NGOs’ field of action in ESD promotion.
20. ESD provision needs to be supported through the availability of locally relevant teaching and learning ESD resources – provided through various media – for all levels of formal education, and also for the non-formal and informal sectors.
21. Research related to ESD should be strengthened as it is essential to inform policies and decision making concerning ESD. A repository for this research needs to be set up for the collection, sharing and dissemination of results.

The Context

22. The adoption, by the House of Representatives of the Sustainable Development Act⁴ consolidated Malta’s commitment towards sustainable development derived from being signatory to international/regional conventions, declarations and resolutions aimed at improving the quality of life. The Act aims to mainstream sustainable development at all levels of government and to promote more awareness about sustainable development in society. Furthermore, the Act acknowledges the need to “*foster a higher level of knowledge and education in sustainable development across all strata of society*”.
23. The need for a strategy that would “*... focus its action on the formal and informal sectors of education with the goal of directing educational processes towards the development of a new environmental ethic - education for sustainability*” has been on the national agenda since 1995. The first attempt to set up the National Environmental Education Strategy (NEES) did not achieve the required goals because it required a level of commitment towards sustainable development that was not reflected in the needs of the target organisations and authorities. Although, NEES ended up proposing a discussion document rather than a strategy – as was originally intended – it still managed to provide useful lessons and initiate processes that laid the foundations for the current NSESD process⁵.
24. Malta’s commitment towards ESD has matured over the years. Starting from sporadic unco-ordinated initiatives, ESD developed progressively into a co-ordinated effort involving various stakeholders. Two major milestones in the development of national ESD were (i) the setting up of the Centre for Environmental Education and Research (CEER) that stepped up research and resource development in ESD, and (ii) the inclusion of ESD as a cross-curricular theme in the

⁴ Act X of 2012. *Sustainable Development Act*. (CAP521). Retrieved from <http://justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lp&itemid=22669&l=1>

⁵ Pace, P. & Caruana, V. (2004). *The National Environmental Education Strategy: Discussion policy document*. Malta: Ministry for Rural Affairs and Environment.

National Curriculum Framework (NCF). Moreover, the need to set up a National Strategy for ESD was officially acknowledged by various local national documents⁶. Consequently an independent Board of Governors (Annex I) was appointed with the specific remit of planning and initiating the development of the NSESD and to publish the final version of the NSESD document. Since the document is the first of its kind for Malta, the Board of Governors decided to develop the strategy in line with the general principles and recommendations of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development and the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development.

The Aims

25. NSESD is based on the principles of ESD as defined by the major UN and regional events. It hence acknowledges that every citizen has a valid contribution to make towards the achievement of a sustainable society. It therefore seeks, as outlined by the UNECE Strategy, to “*equip people with knowledge of and skills in sustainable development, making them more competent and confident and increasing their opportunities for acting for a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature and with concern for social values, gender equity and cultural diversity*”. This implies that every citizen is an actor in the process of ESD and that ESD can be conveyed through various means. Thus NSESD attempts to:

- nurture a sustainable society;
- devise new ways of organising educational processes using different educational actors, resources and learning environments to educate the various sectors of the population;
- make education more accessible to all citizens;
- improve the quality, relevance and effectiveness of education and training programmes; and
- draw up policies and establish structures to foster and support this education.

The Objectives

26. NSESD will be a useful tool towards helping citizens to:

- make informed sustainable decisions by integrating various economic, social, cultural, political, spiritual and environmental concerns;
- identify ways how environmental processes and human activities impact each other;
- develop a sense of personal responsibility to attain a personal, local, regional and global good quality of life;
- be equipped with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values required to allow them to follow up their concern about sustainability with practical actions;
- identify unsustainable behaviour patterns promoted and reinforced through advertising and other people's behaviour;
- appreciate the advantages of a co-ordinated approach for the adoption of sustainable lifestyles, rather than the fragmentary approach in which the actors act in isolation from one another;
- become actively involved in the process of decision making on sustainable development issues;
- participate in the process of establishing legislation concerning sustainable development;
- have access to information which allows them to make sound and informed decisions about sustainable development issues;

⁶ Such as: A Sustainable Development Strategy for the Maltese Islands 2007-2016 (2006). Malta: National Commission for Sustainable Development.

National Strategy for Policy and Abatement Measures Relating to the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions (2008). Malta: Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs.

National Environment Policy (2012). Malta: Ministry for Tourism, the Environment and Culture.

- prefer technologies that enable the shift to a low-carbon society; and
- become an adaptable and competent workforce, enabling business and industry to improve its performance in sustainable development issues.

The Methodology

27. Although Government - being the main policy maker - has the capacity to develop and support NSESD, its success really depends on the level of public participation. NSESD should be the result of an amalgamation of Top-Down and Bottom-Up approaches to decision making. Various target groups were approached in the preparation of this Public Consultation Document to ensure that the public is consulted even in the compilation of the document on which public consultation will be sought.
28. By approaching various target groups, the NSESD will be able to identify their various educational needs, recognise and build upon existing initiatives and systematically propose actions that need to be taken. People are thus actively involved in the drawing up of policies and will thus own NSESD – improving its chances of success.
29. The NSESD is essentially a document, addressing the various sectors of the community, which describes the sequence of actions to be taken, sets specific targets to be achieved, describes how success can be measured, evaluated and fed back into the planning. The NSESD will:
 - identify needs, priorities, activities and target groups;
 - integrate ESD within government policy;
 - integrate ESD with other measures designed to achieve sustainable living (e.g. legislation, economy and technological developments);
 - provide long term commitment to ESD implementation and the setting up of a broad supporting and regulatory infrastructure;
 - promote ESD initiatives in formal, non-formal and informal contexts;
 - identify community-based resources and skills;
 - discover new ways of promoting co-operative work and networking between individuals, groups, organisations and institutions;
 - provide the training of ESD-competent educators;
 - provide financial and institutional support for NGO participation in government ESD strategies;
 - provide incentives to attract expenditure on ESD from private sources and companies;
 - make optimal use of available ESD resources to avoid duplication of initiatives;
 - support and evaluate new ESD initiatives; and
 - discover new ways of fostering sustainable behaviour.

The Target Groups

30. NSESD conducted consultation with various interest groups and organisations (listed in Annex III) that can be loosely grouped under the following seven target groups:
 - Government organisations and Authorities
 - Environmental / Development organisations
 - Opinion makers
 - Mass Media and the Arts
 - Education organisations
 - Influence groups (Business, Professional and other groups)

- Civil Society
31. The target groups were meant to be indicative and other groups were identified during the data collection phase of NSESD which aimed at exploring the state of ESD within the organisations. The Board of Governors selected a number of researchers through a public call that were assigned to investigate the state of ESD in the various target groups. The researchers conducting the exercise (see Annex II) reviewed online and printed documentation produced by the organisation, carried out interviews with key persons in the organisation and administered questionnaires with the aim of establishing (a) the level of competence and commitment towards ESD; (b) the availability of ESD related tools and materials; (c) the extent of ESD research conducted; and (d) examples of good practice.

The findings

32. **General comments:** It is always dangerous to make generalisations. This particularly applies to ESD where initiatives might not be happening at a macro level, but would still be valid and effective. The overall picture revealed by the target group research is rather disconcerting. Crucial target areas lack any ESD initiative and while in certain quarters ESD provision is adequate, in others the activities claimed to be ESD do not satisfy the international criteria of what constitutes ESD.
33. **Lack of clarity:** Although Malta's Sustainable Development Act provides a definition of sustainable development (mirroring that of the Brundtland Report), the term can be (and is) interpreted differently depending on the point of view of who is defining it. The results revealed a tendency to stress particular strands of sustainable development that are in synch with the interests of the group. This leads to situations where certain aspects of sustainability are heavily lobbied and receive a lot of attention (e.g. the construction industry) while others are rarely (if ever) considered seriously (e.g. light pollution). Therefore, there is the inherent danger that the sustainability agenda might be highjacked by the specific interests of particular entities, who might be addressing valid claims. Nevertheless, such claims might not reflect the real needs of the country and wellbeing of its citizens.
34. **Information transfer:** Evident in all the target groups reviewed is the strong misconception that ESD involves just the transmission of information. Most of the examples of ESD provision reported were in fact examples of information transfer. Consequently, there are several examples of colourful information brochures and well-designed websites that are doing Education **about** Sustainable development rather than Education **for** Sustainable Development. The missing component is the specific transformative pedagogy that ensures active learner participation and promote the development of skills, attitudes and values.
35. **Citizen engagement:** Another ESD related misconception revealed by the research was that ESD is for children, because adults are "*too fixed in their ways to change*". Consequently, the vast majority of successful ESD practices were recorded in schools. There is stark lack of ESD courses for adults and community-based ESD programmes. When available, these courses and programmes target the "general public" and fail to address specific learning needs of the various sectors of society.
36. **Government organisations and authorities:** Most of the government entities contacted were generally reluctant to divulge information about their involvement. Others clearly stated that ESD is not within their remit. A low percentage of entities reporting that they engage in ESD, do so on the basis of the accepted international criteria; the others provide education **about** sustainable development mainly through newsletters, circulars, occasional talks and training seminars to employees. Although interdepartmental and multi-stakeholder cooperation is exercised between entities in matters related to training, most of the training is carried out in-house and the absence of an ESD specialist in their ranks explains the lack of ESD training offered. Providing information about sustainable development issues is considered as providing ESD. Key entities who are at the forefront of sustainable development strategies have a low (or even absent) ESD component in their sphere of action. Published sustainable development policies that incorporate ESD provision in their strategy are an exception rather than a rule. Moreover, the primary target audience for reports is relatively technical thus 'excluding' the general public from participating in related debates.

37. **Environmental / Development organisations:** These organisations proved to be the sector most sensitive to various sustainable development issues. They offer a spectrum of ESD activities ranging from purely environmentally oriented themes (that include natural, rural, urban and cultural perspectives) to others focusing on social cohesion and justice and sustainable economic paradigms. Their programmes are spread over the formal, non-formal and informal educational sectors. Some have a wide target audience whereas others cater for a particular sector of society – with the vast majority of the organisations producing educational material targeting school children. Some organisations tackle a variety of topics whereas others have a narrow remit. The delivery of their educational programmes is also varied: some being ongoing educational programmes with a transformative element which is in sync with ESD, whereas others offer one-off experiential activities which could be less successful in bringing about long-term behavioural changes. Communication is mainly through online services, with printed materials kept to a minimum to reduce costs and the environmental impact. Capacity building is mainly achieved through the organisation of local and foreign staff development courses for their members. Most of the actions in this sector are limited because of lack of financial and human resources, although tapping EU funds has reportedly alleviated the burden. While certain organisations willingly network with other organisations on common issues, others tend to adopt an exclusive parochial stance that further fragmentises efforts and resources.
38. **Opinion makers:** Half of the opinion makers consulted claimed to engage with aspects of sustainable development. The other half don't. ESD provision is assumed, but not specifically addressed. While acknowledging that change towards sustainable lifestyles necessitates an educational process, they fall short from investing in ESD and engage in costly, yet ineffective communication campaigns that provide information, but fail to induce behavioural change.
39. **Influence groups:** None of the trade unions and outdoor organisations involved in the study have ESD provision as part of their objectives. Training opportunities for trade union members vary from no training to training abroad. Trade unions still tend to associate sustainable development with environmental issues. Trade unions are regularly consulted by government, but not on ESD issues. Outdoor groups are consulted by NGOs and schools.
40. **Formal Educational institutions:** This proved to be the target group that was mostly engaged in ESD; with primary and secondary schools being the most active in ESD provision.
- (a) Topics directly or indirectly related to sustainable development issues are featured in the curricula and programmes of the different levels of formal education institutions. The publication of the NCF in 2012 established ESD as a cross-curricular theme in compulsory education. Although, to date, the curricular parameters guiding this development are still being drafted, this directive has made ESD mandatory in schools and facilitated its promotion from an extra-curricular interest to a curricular opportunity. This was mostly seen in the pre/primary sectors where, particularly because of the way teaching and learning is organised. ESD within secondary schooling tends to more intradisciplinary rather than interdisciplinary – it is more subject-based with very limited links between subjects and opportunities to plan across subjects. The monodisciplinary curricular structure becomes more pronounced as one moves upwards in the educational sector. The main themes (in rank order) explored in schools are waste management, healthy lifestyles, water and energy conservation, cultural diversity and inclusion. Although there is still a predominance of environmental themes, over these last few years schools have reported a gradual rise in the tackling of socio-economic themes.
- (b) Heads of school and teachers contacted during the research see ESD as helping students to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to strike a balance between a good quality of life while caring for the earth's natural resources. Therefore, they feel that ESD should be part and parcel of the teaching and learning that takes place at school. ESD reportedly has a positive effect on students in sensitizing them to issues, becoming responsible for their actions and developing a sense of stewardship for others and the world they live in. This emphasis on action is leading to a whole school approach to ESD involving students, staff and the community. Consequently, the majority of schools involved in the research included ESD in their respective School Development Plan (SDP). Schools have also highlighted the use of out-of-class activities in various natural, urban and community settings. Some schools have also developed their grounds to promote ESD and others have integrated entrepreneurship skills with ESD tasks (e.g. fair trade, reusing waste). Heads of school and teachers have also pointed out that ESD is rather lacking in teacher education programmes. Support from NGOs and community resources were seen as necessary for

successful ESD implementation. The EkoSkola programme was specifically mentioned and commended for promoting and supporting ESD in schools by providing curricular and pedagogical guidelines based on international standards. In fact EkoSkola has been active in schools since 2002 – ten years before the publication of the NCF.

- (c) ESD at the post-secondary level is very limited probably because of the importance given to examinations. The main emphasis is on content knowledge related to sustainable development issues that are tackled within specific subject areas. Successful ESD projects at this level are usually well integrated within the subject requirements of certain subjects (e.g. the project coursework of Systems of Knowledge). Although there are some student-led ESD related initiatives, these are still very sporadic and a strategic plan for a whole institution approach is lacking.
- (d) Any reference made to *sustainability* and *sustainable development* in the Further and Higher Education Strategy 2020⁷ and Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024⁸ is purely colloquial and does not refer to the principles of sustainable development addressed by the UNECE. As a result there are no national strategies, policies or legislations which promote or acknowledge the importance of sustainable development – and consequently ESD – in Higher Education (HE)⁹. Although sustainable technologies are increasingly being used in the construction of new buildings (with some degree of retrofitting in old ones) in HE institutions, the concept of whole institution approach to ESD is still missing. Sustainability issues feature in the various courses on offer at the MCAST and the University of Malta, but they are normally content knowledge based and treated through a monodisciplinary approach. Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary structures for research, education and policy development on sustainability issues are on the increase. However communication between research entities and dissemination of results are still very limited.

Implementing ESD

- 41. The promotion and provision of ESD at all levels of governance requires strong political support that integrates this NESDS into the planning, investment and management policies of the State and local government for all levels of education, for all sectors and for all organisations. However, the real challenge lies not in the publication of ESD inclusive policies, but in the commitment for a deep change in the day-to-day decision making and operational frameworks. This can be achieved through the cooperation, shared responsibility and leadership of all the relevant State bodies, particularly the Ministries responsible for education and the environment – who spearheaded the strategy.

Policy Action 1: Government should assign the appropriate budgetary allocations and economic incentives to boost ESD initiatives in formal, non-formal and informal education settings.

⁷ National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) (2009). *Further and Higher Education Strategy 2020*. National Commission for Higher Education, Malta.

⁸ Ministry for Education and Employment (2014). *Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024: Sustaining Foundations, Creating Alternatives, Increasing Employability*. Ministry for Education and Employment, Malta.

⁹ National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) (2015). *Higher Education Strategy for Malta*. Ministry for Education and Employment, Malta.

Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) (2015). *National Vocational Education and Training (VET) Policy*. Ministry for Education and Employment, Malta.

42. The implementation of the strategy necessitates the setting up of a National ESD Platform whose remit would include: (i) the development of a National Action Plan that addresses objectives, actions, tentative timetables, actors involved, indicators and evaluation instruments based on the principles outlined in the NESDS; (ii) monitoring the implementation of the strategy; (iii) sharing of information, including the exchange of best practices, related to the implementation of the strategy; and (iv) stimulating and supporting partnerships and networking among the different actors.

Policy Action 2: Setting up a National ESD Platform that is supported by the necessary legislation and entrusted with ensuring the implementation of the NESDS.

43. UNESCO, as the lead agency of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, developed a Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development¹⁰ that was based on a broad global consultation exercise and input from a wide range of stakeholders. The programme, referred to as GAP, was launched at the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan (November 2014). GAP proposes five Priority Action Areas that are being proposed as the pillars on which the implementation of the NESDS rests. The GAP Priority Action Areas are now listed:

- (a) **Priority Action Area 1: Advancing policy:** ESD should be mainstreamed into sustainable development related policies and policy-making fora. To achieve this, agencies and fora entrusted to promote sustainable development should include ESD professionals in their committees, boards and commissions. This would ensure that ESD is given its due importance and avoid its neglect or its inclusion as an afterthought. This priority action area is of particular relevance to the composition of the Competent Authority, the Guardian of Future Generations and the Sustainable Development Network identified by the Sustainable Development Act.

Policy Action 3: Ensure that ESD features as an essential component in national sustainable development policies and strategies.

- (b) **Priority Action Area 2: Transforming learning and training environments:** Several observers are of the opinion that sustainable development has received too much rhetoric, but little action. This priority action area promotes a whole-institution approach to ESD that translates principles and ideas into daily practice and action. This implies the development of sustainability plans or strategies through which schools and other training institutions (including HE institutions), and public and private sector organizations become showcases of sustainable practice. Besides managing the physical facilities and resources more sustainably, a whole institutional approach implies a change in the ethos and governance structure of the whole institution.

Policy Action 4: Implementing legislation requiring the developing of whole-institution sustainable development plans and strategies by learning and training organisations.

¹⁰ UNESCO (2014). *UNESCO Roadmap for Implementing the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development*. Paris: UNESCO.

- (c) **Priority Action Area 3: Building capacities of educators and trainers:** In most documents pertaining to ESD, educators and trainers are referred to as “*change agents*”. Knowing the subject matter is not enough to ensure effective ESD that targets more than just the acquisition of knowledge. Competence-building of educators and trainers is necessary at all levels of formal, non-formal and informal education to ensure effective ESD. Consequently ESD should be integrated within the training and retraining programmes of teachers not just of early childhood, primary and secondary schools, but also for Technical and Vocational Education and Training institutions. ESD should also be integrated within faculty training at higher education institutions to improve the ability of the faculty to address sustainability issues while inducting their students in their respective professional practice. The issue of training and retraining in ESD also concerns the non-formal and the informal sectors. This is particularly relevant in the case of the Sustainable Development Coordinator and the Sustainable Development Focal Point of every Ministry requested by the Sustainable Development Act.

Policy Action 5: Ensure the inclusion of ESD in training and retraining programmes for educators and trainers – particularly in higher education institutions and the non-formal and informal education settings.

Policy Action 6: Supporting and promoting research in ESD that focuses on effective learning methods, evaluation tools, concept development, attitudes and values that encourage behaviours that promote sustainability; sustainable school/institutional management; and the development of relevant educational resources.

Policy Action 7: Compiling a national registry of qualified ESD experts that could support training and retraining programmes in the formal, non-formal and the informal sectors.

- (d) **Priority Action Area 4: Empowering and mobilizing youth:** GAP considers youth as having the “*potential to propel sustainable development more widely and urgently*” because they are “*the generation that must not only cope with the consequences of unsustainable development today, but also bear the brunt of unsustainable development tomorrow*” (p.22). GAP also notes that youth are increasingly making their voice heard in local, national, regional and global fora about issues concerning sustainability. Moreover, they are an influential consumer group whose habits and choices has a major impact on current and future consumption patterns. The experiences gained from local initiatives promoting student empowerment have shown that young children have a valid contribution in sustainable development fora. Consequently, this priority action area should stress the need for opportunities that give voice to youths **and** children, and for the provision of educational programmes that empower, mobilize and network both to become active citizens in sustainable development fora.

Policy Action 8: The government, its agencies and the private sector (as part of their corporate social responsibility activity) should support certified ESD programmes in schools and organisations catering for children and youths.

Policy Action 9: Public consultation exercises about sustainable development should include sessions specifically dedicated for children and youths during which the issues are explained and their input encouraged and valued.

- (e) **Priority Action Area 5: Accelerating sustainable solutions at local level:** Local communities can be critical drivers for sustainable development if they are sensitized and empowered through relevant ESD programmes and their efforts supported. Local authorities need to initiate, increase and strengthen community-based ESD programmes through formal, non-formal, and informal venues. Limited local resources can be maximised through local multi-stakeholder networks that involve public authorities, educational institutions, NGOs, representatives of civil society, disadvantaged and marginalised groups, local media and the private sector. To avoid insularity and enable cross-fertilization of ideas and practices local communities are encouraged to establish links with their regional and global counterparts and organisations.

Policy Action 10: Local authorities should invest in the development of an informed and empowered citizenry by organising community-based ESD programmes.

Policy Action 11: Local councils should appoint a person specifically responsible for promoting ESD in the locality and networking between different entities and community resources.

Policy Action 12: To combat insularity and keep abreast with the latest developments in ESD, Malta should be regularly represented in regional and global ESD fora. This representation should be such that successive participation would enable capacity building in ESD.

Annex I: The Board of Governors responsible for the development of the NSESD

- **Representatives of the Centre for Environmental Education & Research (CEER)**
 - Prof Paul Pace (Chairperson)
 - Dr Mark C. Mifsud
- **Representatives of the Ministry for Education and Employment**
 - Edward Mifsud
 - Alan Pulis
- **Representatives of the Ministry for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change**
 - Dr Jason Bonnici
 - Prof Emmanuel Sinagra
- **Project Manager**
 - Dr Natalino Fenech

Annex II: Researchers involved in data collection

- Sarah Azzopardi
- Perit Ivan F. Bartolo
- Annick Bonello Cassar
- Maria Brown
- Alexia Georgakopoulos
- Anthea Pisani
- Paola Prinzis
- Joanna Pullicino

Annex III: Entities and organisations who participated in the data collection phase

● Airline Pilots Association Malta (ALPA-Malta) ● Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ ● Alternattiva Demokratika (AD) ● Alternattiva Demokratika Żgħażaġħ (ADZ) ● Argotti Botanic Gardens ● Association of Airline Engineers ● BirdLife Malta ● BirdPark Burmarrad ● Building Industry Consultative Council (BICC) ● Casa Bernard ● Casa Rocca Piccola ● Catering Establishments (a selection of) ● Church Pre-Primary, Primary, Middle and Secondary Schools (various) ● Creative sector (including organisations that promote creative local produce for tourists) ● Din l-Art Helwa ● Directorate of Curriculum and Director for Lifelong learning and Early School Leavers ● EcoGozo ● Enemalta plc ● Enemalta Professional Officers Union ● Engineering Resources Ltd Senior Staff Union (ESSU) ● Federated Association of Travel & Tourism Agents (FATTA) ● Federation of English Language Teaching Organisations Malta (FELTOM) ● Federazzjoni Kaccaturi Nassaba Konservazzjonisti (FKNK) ● Fliemkien għal Ambjent Ahjar (FAA) ● Friends of the Earth Malta ● Gaia Foundation ● General Workers Union (GWU) ● Genista Research Foundation ● Gian Frangisk Abela Junior College ● Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School ● Gozo Business Chamber ● Gozo Tourism Association ● Green Drinks Malta ● Greenhouse - Malta ● Għaqda Koperattiva Tas-Sajd ● Hands on Farming Programme ● Heritage Malta ● Heritage Parks Federation (Majjistral Park) ● Hockey Association Malta ● Hotel establishments (a selection 3, 4 and 5 Star hotels) ● Independent Pre-Primary, Primary, Middle and Secondary Schools (various) ● Insite (the student media association) ● Inspire ● Institute of Sustainable Energy (ISE) ● Institute of Tourism (ITS) ● International Initiative for a Sustainable Built Environment (iiSBE) ● Kaccaturi San Ubertu ● Kamra tal-Periti (KTP) ● Koperattiva Kummerc Gust (KKG) ● Kooperativa Malta ● Koperattiva Produtturi tal-Ħalib Ltd. (KPH) ● Koperattiva Rurali Manikata ● Kunsill Studenti Universitarji (KSU) ● Let's Do It! Malta ● Light Pollution Awareness Group ● Lotto Receivers' Union ● Malta Airtraffic Controllers Association ● Malta Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (MATEFL) ● Malta Chamber of Pharmacists ● Malta Chamber of Planners (COP) ● Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) ● Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (MCCAA) ● Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST) ● Malta Developers Association (MDA) ● Malta Environment & Planning Authority (MEPA) ● Malta Hotels, Restaurant Association (MHRA) ● Malta International Airport (MIA) ● Malta National Aquarium ● Malta Resource Authority (MRA) ● Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) ● Malta Union of Midwives & Nurses ● Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) ● Malta Union of Tourist Guides ● Maltese Psychological Union ● Medical Association of Malta (MAM) ● Mediterraneo Marine Park ● Ministry for Education and Employment ● Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change & Environment ● National Council for Higher and

Further Education (NCHFE) ● National Council of Women (Environment Committee) ● Nature Trust (Malta) ● Noise Abatement Society of Malta (NASoM) ● Palazzo Falson Historic House Museum ● P.A.R.K. Directorate ● Parks, Afforestation, Countryside Conservation and Initiatives (PARK) ● Partit Laburista (PL) ● Partit Nazzjonalista' (PN) ● Pig Breeders' Cooperative Society Ltd. ● Professional Diving School Association Malta (PDSA) ● Ramblers' Association of Malta ● Rural Festivities Unit Għammieri ● SahhAmbjent ● Scout Association of Malta ● Sharklab-Malta ● Sir M.A. Refalo Centre for Further Studies ● SOS Malta ● State Primary, Middle and Secondary Schools (various) ● State Resource Centres (various) ● Ta' Qali Petting Farm ● Taxi Companies (a selection of) ● Transport Malta (TM) ● Union of Cabin Crew ● Union Professionisti fl-Ambjent u l-Ippjanar (UPAP) ● Union Faddiema Bank Centrali ● Union Faddiema Università ta' Malta (UFUM) ● Union for Technicals and Clericals Mepa ● Union of Water Services Corporation Professionals ● University of Malta ● University of Malta Academic Staff Association (UMASA) ● Unjoni Faddiema Magħqudin ● WastServ Malta Ltd. ● Water Services Corporation (WSC) ● Why Not? ● Youtheme Foundation ● Youths for the Environment (Y4TE)

Annex IV: Examples of good practice

The Building Industry Consultative Council (BICC) is a government body having a purely consultative and educational role in matters concerning the construction sector. BICC networks with various other organisations to develop short specialist courses, Continuous Professional Development courses, conferences and seminars that content and skills based. BICC has also introduced a skills card aimed at identify skill gaps and subsequent training needs of the work force. Another initiative was the launch of a website (ecobuild.gov.mt) aimed at providing professionals, building developers and consumers with technical information about green products and services available on the market.

In its efforts to achieve the integrated sustainable management of beaches, the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) opted to participate in the Blue Flag programme (run by the Foundation for Environmental Education) in partnership with Nature Trust (Malta) – a local environmental NGO. Over the years several beaches achieved this international quality award and introduced policies and actions that replaced unsustainable practices and use of beaches. A major requirement in the Blue Flag process is the provision of onsite environmental education activities targeting visitors frequenting the site.

The Eco-Schools programme (run by the Foundation for Environmental Education) has been identified by UNESCO as the largest international network of teachers and pupils in the world. The programme, coordinated by Nature Trust (Malta) – a local environmental NGO – has been running in local schools under the name of EkoSkola since 2002. Through EkoSkola schools weave sustainable development principles and practices with their management policies through the active participation of students in the decision making processes. Besides relating curriculum work with student action, a fundamental step in the EkoSkola methodology is the interaction with the community. Local research has shown that EkoSkola has been instrumental in fostering a change in personal behaviour and institutional practices as well as promoting intergenerational dialogue on sustainable issues.

The Heritage Parks Federation manages the Majjistral Nature and History Park. It organises educational talks and nature walks in the park for members, students, tourists, families and elderly people. Furthermore, this organisation has established active networks with a number of environmental NGOs. They have also launched The Majjistral Park App giving users the opportunity to choose a walk, learn about what the park has to offer and facilitate self-directed learning. Their website (<http://mt.majjistral.org/home>) also provides

WasteServ Malta Ltd. promotes waste management strategies in various localities by organising educational campaigns targeting different sectors of society by promoting these strategies during various local activities and media events to target. Part of their action involves training personnel for door-to-door visits giving households practical advice on waste management. The company also delivers informative sessions to companies who request its services. WasteServ is actively involved in promoting ESD in the formal sector by supporting EkoSkola and Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE) in schools.

The Innovation Challenge: Go Green is a non-formal education project organised by Aġenzija Żgħażaġh in collaboration with The Edward de Bono Institute for the Design and Development of Thinking at the University of Malta. The project is a competition for young people aged between 17 and 30. Individuals or groups of up to three members each are invited to identify an environmental problem that affects Malta, and to come up with an innovative green solution to it. Participants can choose any theme related to green innovation and environmental sustainability (such as water conservation, alternative energy, pollution reduction, waste management, agriculture, architecture, urban planning, traffic management, transportation). As part of this challenge, participants are given the opportunity to attend workshops on idea generation and development, feasibility studies, and intellectual property rights.

I Shop Fair/Proġett Konsum is a formal and non-formal education project on ethical consumption funded by the European Union and represented in Malta by Koperattiva Kummerċ Ġust (KKG). The aim of the project was to inform consumers as well as the media about worker conditions and rights in the countries of the South with a particular focus on the Garment, Toys, Computer, and Flower industry. The project targeted students (mostly post-secondary) through several workshops, activities and the distribution of informative materials. The 'Best Practices Competition on Ethical Consumption Awards' was one of these activities inviting groups of youths to present ideas on how to raise awareness about sustainable consumption and possibly win sponsorship prizes. KKG, in collaboration with the Forum for Global Initiatives, organised the seminar 'Globalising Responsibility - Debating the Principles of Ethical Consumption' aimed at empowering youths, educators and activists to become active citizens in matters concerning ethical consumption.

The Centre for Environmental Education and Research (CEER), University of Malta was specifically set up to promote ESD and research by catalysing change towards a sustainable society by empowering citizens to actively participate in decision making fora and in initiatives that promote a good quality of life for all. CEER is the main ESD agency in the country and its field of action includes organisation of ESD programmes for teacher education and the community; developing curriculum material and methodologies; supervising research; facilitating ESD with governmental and non-governmental organisations; and networking with local and regional groups. One major contribution was the offering of a Masters in ESD aimed at providing expertise to cater for the ESD needs of schools, colleges, adult education centres, government departments, local councils and the wider local community.