A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE FOR YOU
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If I am entrusted to lead the next Government, I will do things differently and I will give new impetus to the protection and enhancement of our environment. And I do not say this lightly.
Our common home is under threat.

Our environment faces massive pressure and we continue to lose irreplaceable elements of our heritage. Slowly but surely, our precious remaining natural spaces are ruined or compromised by inappropriate developments. Architectural traits that characterise our townscape are casually demolished to make way for anonymous apartment blocks. Our aquifers are put under intolerable strain as we squeeze every last drop out of them, transforming them from life-giving sources into barren, salty wells.

Successive governments have not done enough to arrest this decline, to find a way to transcend the conflict between development and environmental protection.

EU accession transformed the way we protect our environment – both in terms of the hugely increased spending devoted to environmental issues and in terms of the EU laws and standards put in place.

We built the necessary institutions, and generally put in the right policies – but all too often we did not ensure they were fully implemented, or we circumvented them, and made too many exceptions.

The PN has its share of responsibility to carry for all this. But this current Government has proven to be a clear and present danger to our environment and our common home.

It has systematically dismantled the checks and balances that had been painstakingly put in place over the previous decade. It has cashed in on prime natural and urban sites and turned them over to a select few for speculative projects. It has concocted policies to suit pet projects, rather than evaluating projects on the basis of objectively drawn up policies. It has regularly sacrificed the common good for the benefit of the select few.

As Leader of the Nationalist Party I pledge that right up to the next election we will do everything in our power to resist this abuse. I invite all citizens and Civil Society to do the same. We must make sure that the damage caused by this Government to our environment is curbed as far as possible. By standing together we saved at least part of Żonqor, for example. We must be ready to do it again, whenever necessary, and we can do even more to protect our common home.

If I am entrusted to lead the next Government, I will do things differently and I will give new impetus to the protection and enhancement of our environment. And I do not say this lightly. Unfortunately, we have had good reason to become cynical about airy pre-electoral assurances in this country.

Here are three defining commitments that I pledge to you, clearly written in black and white so that you may hold me to account.

1. A common, binding, long term vision.

I commit to forging - with citizens, Civil Society, Government and Opposition - a common, long term vision for our country’s environment and our quality of life, an Agenda 2050 that sets out a path that we and our children can follow over the next decades right through to 2050. And we will entrench our commitment to the environment and quality of life into our Constitution, so that we will bind future Governments and no future Government will be able to undo it.

2. Strategic thinking on sustainable development planning

I commit to restore the voice of environmental protection in the planning process, so intentionally and cynically weakened by this Government. And we will put in place a clear and rational Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (SPED) that replaces the current haphazard, self-serving and short-sighted approach to development - from ODZ development to our common skyline - with a more cohesive, transparent and forward-looking plan.

3. The environment is a reflection of our values

I commit to stop once and for all the tension that has resurfaced between economic development and the protection of our environment. If anything, we will ensure that the environment can be a key driver of our economic development and economic success. This will ensure that we give value not just to the generation of wealth but also to our quality of life, including our health, which cannot necessarily be measured in monetary terms. Bluntly put, the environment is a reflection of our values.

We do not need to reinvent the wheel. We have a beautiful country, blessed with talented people, and the tools and policies to achieve our environmental goals of a better quality of life for all persons are within our reach. All we need is the courage and conviction to protect our common home.

We have a duty to do this: for our own quality of life and for our children's.

This document contains a host of ideas and proposals, many of which have come out of our consultations with civil society, and that we are committing to implement once in Government.

Let us implement them together.

Simon Busuttil
Ensuring a better environment for all citizens is a fundamental policy priority for the Nationalist Party and one that cuts across many different sectors.

To this end we felt the need to review our agenda in this sector, to provide a renewed vision and to establish clear principles and goals for a more sustainable living environment. In so doing, we reached out to the various stakeholders of society to develop a policy that is founded on the principles of good governance, responsible citizenship and public participation.

The first step in this process was the Nationalist Party’s General Convention held in January 2016 on the theme “IdeaAmbjent – Kwalita’ ta’ Ħajja Aħjar.” The aim of the Convention was to initiate a public consultation process which would inform the Nationalist Party’s environmental agenda. Participation was wide and truly encouraging, with the Convention attracting various stakeholders and individuals who are external to the Party and who came to discuss ideas and put forward their suggestions in an open and collaborative atmosphere. The General Convention was held over three days and revolved around four workshops on the following themes:

- Environment and health;
- Environment and the economy;
- Mobility and accessibility in the urban environment; and
- Malta in a changing world culture.

We reached out to the various stakeholders of society to develop a policy that is founded on the principles of good governance, responsible citizenship and public participation.
Ten salient points emerged from this General Convention as the most crucial and requiring focus and attention. The Convention showed, in no uncertain terms, that there is a need for:

- the environment to be truly a central priority for the political class, with agreed principles and binding policies, and with clear definitions;
- the development of a coherent and consistent long term national strategy which would be binding on all governments and on civil society to ensure consistency in decision-making;
- a clear understanding by all parties that environmental policy must be science-based and well-grounded in research rather than pandering to popular demand;
- politicians to show a deeper understanding of their role as guardians of our common home and a solid commitment to safeguarding it for future generations;
- good governance in all sectors and particularly in the environmental sector, with a land use planning system that is transparent, participative, sensitive to the natural environment and based on the principles of sustainable development, with strong policies that clearly guide development;
- a more holistic educational system that emphasises mutual respect, discipline and the common good;
- a better understanding of the links between pollution, environmental degradation and the impacts these have on our citizens' health, with a view to formulating policies and regulations that are aimed at safeguarding both the environment and human health;
- an understanding of national progress and development that is founded on both the economy and the environment, in such a way that the two complement each other, and where the environment can be the catalyst of economic growth;
- a deeper understanding of what our attitude towards the environment says about us as a nation;
- effective public participation at all levels and an increased awareness of responsible citizenship.

In addition to these ten salient points, we compiled a compendium of over 100 proposals as proceedings of the Convention, and published them in February 2016. This report was circulated widely, and formed the basis of a series of consultation meetings held over the past months with a number of stakeholders in Malta and Gozo, including representatives of civil society and constituted bodies, environmental NGOs, experts and academics, youth organisations, and various other organisations. A number of internal meetings were also held within the Party structures, including with our Local Councillors, the Policy Fora, and our local committees.

This ongoing consultation process resulted in a consolidation of the outcome of the General Convention, with many more proposals being generated and considered by the Party.

In addition, the process involved the assessment of various existing studies and current policies and action plans, in order to better understand the starting point on which our vision must be based. Baseline data was assessed, and some of it is reproduced in the infographic.

Taking all this on board, this document presents our environmental policy direction for the future – an agenda which is grounded in the acknowledgement of our past and in the current state of affairs, and which proposes a paradigm shift aimed at catalysing significant forward-looking and long-lasting progress in this sector.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of proposals, but a working document which is intended to serve as the foundation for our vision for the environment, and is certainly not to be considered as the end of the policy formulation process. A policy which is not debated and which does not evolve becomes stagnant and obsolete. For this reason, we will continue to consult with the various stakeholders in order to consolidate our vision and develop it further into a workable policy through an iterative and structured process which will aim to establish core principles and to identify focus areas for consideration and action.

Public participation in the formulation of this policy is very important to us, and we look forward to receiving as much feedback as possible, from all sectors of society. We have set up a dedicated email address to be able to receive further comments and suggestions from stakeholders and the public at large:

idea-ambjent@pn.org.mt

The environment belongs to us all, and every person’s contribution to this process is essential and welcome. We therefore look forward to receiving more feedback in the coming weeks and months.
WHERE WE ARE NOW

TOTAL POPULATION
(2014) 429,344

AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION
(2015) >22%

ANNUAL POPULATION INCREASE
1% (2014)

LIFE EXPECTANCY
82.1 years (2014)

CONSTRUCTION & REAL ESTATE SECTORS ACCOUNT FOR
>9.7% (2015)

OF THE COUNTRY’S GROSS VALUE ADDED

NUMBER OF APPROVED RESIDENTIAL UNITS
2,705 IN 2013
2,937 IN 2014
3,947 IN 2015

OF THE POPULATION LIVE IN URBAN AREAS
>80%

OF THE POPULATION ARE REGULAR INTERNET USERS
>75%

TOTAL POPULATION
11,700

UTILISED AGRICULTURAL AREAS IN HECTARES
(2013)

WATER USE
2005 - 45.2 million cubic metres
2013 - 60.7 million cubic metres

>1.8 MILLION TOURISTS (2015)

MODAL SPLIT
8% WALK
11% BY BUS
74% BY CAR

MUNICIPAL WASTE GENERATION
Malta: 600kg per capita
EU average: 475kg per capita

VEHICLES PER 1,000 POPULATION (2015)
759

OF POPULATION IN FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT IN THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES (2015)
5.4%
In achieving this, we have identified five key policy drivers, which will guide our vision and which will ensure that our decisions and actions have, as their ultimate aim, the betterment of our environment. These policy drivers emerged clearly from the consultation process undertaken by the Nationalist Party as the most urgent and important and we are embracing them as the guiding principles which will form the basis of our environmental agenda and which our policy will seek to achieve.

We must move forward from an agenda which revolves around the mere preclusion of decisions that are environmentally irresponsible to one where all our decisions, in all sectors, are based on a sound environmental conscience, which is driven primarily by the ethos of enhancing the quality of life of each and every citizen, without exception.

FIVE POLICY DRIVERS

1. THE ENVIRONMENT AS AN OVERARCHING PRIORITY

While we acknowledge that some decisions and actions we took in the past may not have done enough to protect our natural and built environment, leading to our environmental credentials being brought into question, we are committed to placing the environment as an overarching key priority that cuts across all policy sectors.

Our approach for the purposes of our policy formulation is to define the term “environment” as including the whole of the natural environment and its biodiversity, while also encompassing the man-made environments within which we live, work and play, and which form the backdrop of the daily lives of the majority of the population. This, we believe, will result in a holistic approach which will ensure that human activities are carried out in full respect of our natural heritage and its enhancement, while ensuring the achievement of a better quality of life for all.

2. GOOD GOVERNANCE

The Nationalist Party published a document on good governance which spells out those principles it holds dear in terms of political correctness, political ethics and administrative conduct, as well as a number of proposals on how these principles can be achieved in a more effective way.

But we feel that good governance is also important in the way we formulate our strategies for the future in various sectors. The environment is certainly one sector where good
governance is paramount – we can no longer afford to get things wrong. Good governance dictates that the Nationalist Party should be ready to implement its promises without fear of political repercussions, because the sustainability of our environment transcends political popularity and is too precious to fall victim to political convenience as is happening now.

There is also the urgent need for a long-term national strategy which is forward looking and which binds all future governments to achieve the agreed environmental targets. The formulation of such a long-term strategy, binding on all politicians as well as on civil society, will lead to an attitude which is currently absent, and noticeably so: consistency in decision-making.

3 SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is about the capacity to endure, and the ability to equally sustain current and future societies. It is about supporting development and economic success, and fulfilling social needs, in ways that do not destroy, and indeed may even enhance the natural and built environment. To achieve this we must be ready to look honestly at how we produce and consume, and at the way we define value and progress. This is an enormous challenge and calls for social, political, technological, cultural and behavioural changes.

Our working document titled “An economy for the people” has already identified the environment as a key differentiator in our economic vision for Malta and Gozo, and has placed equity and human dignity at its core. We are committed to ensure a progress model that is founded on the pillars of sustainability, which are essential in achieving a better quality of life for all of society.

4 LIVEABILITY AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING

The environment provides the basis for all life. A healthy environment supports quality of life for all. We need to understand better the impacts of pollution in all its forms, water depletion and contamination, waste generation and its management, and so many other aspects of human activity that impact our health. We also need to give importance to issues such as safety and security in our communities, healthy public spaces, sustainable built areas, mobility and transport, and access to services, among various others. We will therefore place the well-being of the person at the centre of our environmental policy, and will aim to enhance the liveability of our towns and villages, and the enjoyment and valorisation of our natural and built heritage.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL CULTURE FOR THE FUTURE

Culture encompasses all that defines us as a nation, all that distinguishes us from others, those values and traditions we inherit from our ancestors and pass on to our children. It comprises visual arts, music, dance, literature, crafts and traditions, amongst others. It also includes our attitudes and our way of life, as well as the environment which surrounds us and which we create and alter in a way which is a reflection of what we aspire to as a nation.

We are committed towards safeguarding our common resources: air, water, land, sea, open spaces, tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and our natural and man-made landscapes. They are all part of what makes our country, our common home. We understand that these do not belong to the political class or to certain lobby groups, and that, as responsible politicians, we are expected to act as guardians of our common home to safeguard it for current and future generations to enjoy equally.

We are also committed towards enhancing environmental values within our citizens, and to promote the principles of responsible citizenship, in order to nurture an environmental culture which is a clear manifestation of our national pride and desire to progress in a sustainable manner.
Having established the primary Policy Drivers, this document outlines sixteen Focus Areas which we are committing to prioritise, to focus our attention on and to address. This however, in no way, implies that other topics are not important, or that these will be the only sectors that will be addressed by the Party in its agenda. The Focus Areas are:

1. Quality of Life for All - Agenda 2050
2. Research Agenda
3. Environmental Awareness and Innovation
4. Policy Making and Public Administration
5. Guardians of our Common Home
6. Land Use Planning and Development Permitting
7. Urban environment
8. Outside Development Zones
9. Rural Environment and Agriculture
10. Climate Change
11. Biodiversity
12. Mobility and Accessibility
13. Water
14. Waste management
15. Ambient Noise and Air Quality
16. Green Economy and Eco-Innovation

For each Focus Area we have outlined the following:

**Our Goal:** the main target we will seek to achieve in each Focus Area;

**Our Approach:** an overview of the strategy we will adopt in each Focus Area;

**Our Commitment:** one clear pledge which will ensure that we achieve the targets we are proposing;

**Actions:** key tangible proposals, which put into practice the five Policy Drivers outlined above.

171 PROPOSALS

This document includes 171 clear goals, commitments and actions which we believe will achieve material differences in the quality of our environment. Together, they form a canvas of ideas which are interlinked and co-dependent, and comprise our vision for achieving environmental sustainability and a better quality of life for each and every person.
We will give the environment constitutional recognition and protection. We will place it at the centre of our decisions and ensure that our policies in all sectors are guided by the primary target of improving the quality of life for all citizens.
There is a clear need to establish a coherent and consistent long-term national strategy that will sit within the framework of international commitments, in particular the United Nations Global Goals for Sustainable Development, as well as the COP21 Paris Agreement. This national strategy, which we will call the *A Better Quality of Life for All - Agenda 2050*, will be binding on all future governments to achieve a number of environmental goals.

The strategy, which will address environmental issues in a serious and comprehensive manner, will form the basis of a pact which the Nationalist Party in government will enter into together with all the citizens of these Islands, and which it will also invite civil society, including the political parties, to endorse. In this way, it will propose a vision which will enjoy nationwide support, and thus will be a vision to which it can be held accountable.

We believe that the establishment of this long term strategy will ensure consistency in all our policy-formulation and decision-making bodies, since any policy and each decision will necessarily be guided by the principles established in the strategy. Having an established holistic long-term strategy will also ensure that decision-making will be more transparent and democratic, making it easier for the general public to understand how decisions fall within the framework of a strategic policy, rather than being ad hoc decisions taken in a piecemeal fashion. It will also protect our environment from political expediency and electioneering. Efforts need to be integrated across all Ministries, Departments, Authorities and government entities, as well as with all social partners, constituted bodies and NGOs.

We must, however, be clear that long-term planning does not imply that we will procrastinate in view of the time frame to implement this pact, and therefore Agenda 2050 will also set a number of interim milestones and indicators that will need to be achieved in fulfilment of the overall strategy. Agenda 2050 will therefore include target-setting mechanisms which are independent of politicians and of the government of the day, and will create better synergy between Ministries with regard to environmental issues.
“The Nationalist Party will endeavour to strengthen the environmental sector, and to offer hope for a better quality of life. We will empower all those who genuinely have the environment at heart by ensuring that they have a strong voice, and we will collaborate with all of civil society in order to listen to and take on board their ideas.”

SIMON BUSUTTIL (CLOSING SPEECH, IDEA AMBJENT, JANUARY 2016)
The Eurostat Quality of Life Indicators study (2013) indicates that just under a quarter of the Maltese population enjoys a high overall life satisfaction, with over three-quarters of the population having a medium or low level of satisfaction. Our average satisfaction rating is of 7.1, which is exactly the same as the EU average rating.

- **WE WILL** seek to achieve a 7.5 score within 5 years of implementation of our policies in this sector.
A science and research-based vision for the environment will ensure that issues that arise may be addressed holistically.
While in past years efforts have been made to give impetus to RTDI, the transmission of the outcome of such RTDI has often remained on the margins of industry and academia, and has not found its way into the public domain, and more importantly into the policy formulation sphere.

Very often, decisions related to the environment and to development are primarily driven by the need to satisfy international obligations, by individual interests or by political agendas. A sound research base has been lacking, even though there is a vast acumen of under-utilised research at the University of Malta and various other educational institutions, as well as within industry.

Politics must shift from the pronouncement of instant positions with dubious motivations and justifications, because the electorate expects us to change our approach, and indeed deserves that we base our decisions and policies on a sound research footing which ensures that all actions fit within a broader and deeper sectoral understanding. Our knowledge-based economy is well renowned internationally, yet often, in the local context, politicians have generally failed to heed the impartial advice of those who have dedicated their time and effort to carry out studies which are, ultimately, beneficial to the whole nation.

A science and research-based vision for the environment will ensure that issues that arise may be addressed holistically. We will refrain from knee-jerk reactions which are primarily driven by popular opinion, but will favour the taking of positions which are based on a sound research footing.

Priority will be given to actions that are based on research and have been appraised against the government’s long-term strategy. Key Performance Indicators will be set for each initiative, and these will be monitored to assess progress and alignment with goals set in the strategy. Where performance does not match the initial projections, we will implement changes based on the results of evaluation and studies, with the public being updated through participatory approaches at all times.

Priority will be given to actions that are based on research and have been appraised against the government’s long-term strategy.
We will make sure that our environmental policy is science-based, and set up a Quality of Life Research Fund, with an increased focus on those areas of study that can directly contribute towards improving our environment and quality of life.

**ACTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overarching priority</th>
<th>We will establish a digital, publicly accessible Knowledge Platform, where professionals, academics, graduates, social partners and NGOs can contribute their experience and scientific research</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good governance</td>
<td>We will ensure that the implementation of Agenda 2050 is accompanied by ongoing research to (i) monitor and confirm interim targets, (ii) achieve the expected indicators, and (iii) inform any changes at strategy or implementation level that may be required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>We will carry out scientific studies to establish the carrying capacity of the country’s rural and urban environments, as well as its present and predicted demography, and use this as a basis for the formulation of Agenda 2050.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liveability &amp; community wellbeing</td>
<td>We will study the correlation between the carrying capacity of the country and its effects on various social phenomena such as crime rates and drug dependency as well as the social implications of density on community attachment, mobility, accessibility, and the elderly in the community, as examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental culture for the future</td>
<td>We will endeavour to instil an RTDI culture within our educational system as well as within industry, and ensure that there are clear paths to utilise all relevant studies at a national level.</td>
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</table>
Eurostat data on Government Budget Appropriations or Outlays on Research and Development (GBAORD) refers to budget provisions, not to actual expenditure, and measures government support for R&D using data collected from budgets. Malta’s budgeted percentage expenditure is well below the EU average of 1.39% for 2014.

• **WE WILL**, over a five-year period, push up the spend on RTDI to 3% of our GDP largely driven by incentivising private sector investment and complemented by a consistent RTDI spend by government and its entities, in addition to the incremental investments in the higher education sector.
Our policy will involve the whole of society, including all public, private and civil sectors, thus ensuring that its implementation will be meaningful for all persons, and particularly the more vulnerable sectors of society.
Environmental Awareness and Innovation

OUR GOAL

To ensure that all persons are informed of the environmental issues our country is facing, that they understand and appreciate their role in possible solutions, and to approach these challenges by thinking outside the box, using all the tools and technology that science can provide.

OUR APPROACH

All persons have the right to a healthy environment, and to have access to information which increases their awareness of environmental issues such as pollution, contaminants, food sources, waste management and product green credentials. Our policy will encourage innovation and different ways of thinking – we must counter the commonly held assumption that environmental issues can only be solved by the political class or worse, that the political class can hide its decisions from the public. It is important that each and every one of us achieves a deeper level of awareness of the problems which continuously challenge our country and our communities, and understands how they can contribute to the solutions.

Good governance in this sector is crucial, and it is important that responsibilities do not remain fragmented and dealt with in a sectoral manner, where each person believes that it is someone else who should provide a solution to the problems the country is facing. Our policy will involve the whole of society, including all public, private and civil sectors, thus ensuring that its implementation will be meaningful for all persons, and particularly the more vulnerable sectors of society.

The Nationalist Party has already expressed its commitment to the principles of good governance, but it is just as important to talk also about responsible citizenship, which can, in a few words, be described as each person’s responsibility to take an interest in the formulation of national policy, to participate in decision-making processes by submitting proposals and giving constructive criticism, and also to ensure that each person contributes their part, however small, for the good of society.

The consultation process leading up to the drafting of this working document clearly showed that there are many who hold these principles at heart and who are willing to offer their time, ideas and experience as responsible citizens, to work hand in hand with politicians in the formulation of policies and plans in this sector to deliver a better living environment for all. We are indeed humbled by this expression of civic pride and responsibility, and will endeavour to ensure that our policy is driven by a sense of inclusivity, participation and collaboration with all sectors of society.

It is also crucial to ensure an education system that is holistic, and which is a key enabler in achieving our sustainable development goals. In this way, we can instil in our children the values needed to strive to improve our society, be challenged by change and ensure that education goes well beyond the curriculum of subjects taught in our schools, providing the skills necessary to handle future challenges.
OUR COMMITMENT

We will formulate and implement Agenda 2050 in a transparent, inclusive and participative manner which will ensure widespread understanding of its goals and smoother implementation across all sectors.

ACTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overarching priority</th>
<th>We will provide easy access to information on decisions affecting the environment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good governance</td>
<td>We will enhance the role of Local Councils in imparting informal education to the residents of their localities, and in ensuring that the principles of Agenda 2050 are transposed at a local level within all communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>We will ensure that all public schools and public buildings improve their carbon footprint and integrate natural landscaping and environmental initiatives, thus serving as examples of good practice to all citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liveability &amp; community wellbeing</td>
<td>We will introduce Nature Rangers, whose primary role will be to educate the general public, while also having enforcement powers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental culture for the future</td>
<td>We will include sustainable development into formal education at all levels, as well as through informal and non-formal education opportunities and life-long learning.</td>
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“Education was, is and will remain the absolute priority for the Nationalist Party. For many years, PN led governments gave Malta a strong and trustworthy education sector through which the best education possible was provided for thousands of Maltese and Gozitan students. The PN will continue to do its utmost to ensure that education in Malta is safeguarded.”

SIMON BUSUTTIL (MEETING WITH KSU, JULY 2015)
WE WILL promote the expansion of diverse educational facilities aimed at providing different streams of educational services for a globally diverse resident population.

WE WILL attract private investment to enable the utilisation of complex and diverse localities to serve as globally unique prototype sites for the piloting and testing of applications integrating on one common national platform.

WE WILL partner with the local telcos, leading urban technology players and local specialist SMEs to develop a platform for the deployment of sensors across all public infrastructure.

WE WILL create frameworks aimed at blending rapid proliferation of green urban spaces with the application of smart technologies.

WE WILL COMMIT TO THESE OTHER ACTIONS

In December 2015, the National Observatory for Living with Dignity, as part of the President’s Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society, launched a meta-analysis of local, European and international data on early school-leaving and well-being. Titled ‘Early School Leaving and Wellbeing in Malta and Beyond: A Statistical Analysis’, this yielded several trends associated with early school-leaving including its relationship to happiness and satisfaction with life.

• WE WILL work towards achieving higher measurable levels of well-being through a concerted approach towards improving our educational systems across the board.
Good governance in the administration of our legislative measures is paramount in ensuring that our structures truly ensure that the goals we set out to achieve are adopted in principle and in fact.
Good governance in the administration of our legislative measures is paramount in ensuring that our structures truly ensure that the goals we set out to achieve are adopted in principle and in fact. Without good administrative governance we risk a situation where we will not achieve the change in mentality that is required if we are truly to achieve the goals we have set out to attain. It is therefore important to ensure clear lines of responsibility within governmental structures, identifying which entity is responsible for the implementation of each measure in our legislative framework. It is also important that the current state of fragmentation of responsibility is eradicated for the good of our environment which cannot, as is the case today, remain hostage to unclear lines of accountability and continue to be bounced off from one department to another.

In this sense, therefore, coordination across government structures is key to achieve cohesive and holistic governance in this sector. We have grave concerns about the demerger of the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA), which has seriously undermined the effectiveness of the newly established Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) in ensuring that we, as a country, achieve the principles of sustainable development. Furthermore, we are also gravely concerned about the format and content of the Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (SPED) approved in 2015, which fails to establish a long-term strategic vision for the country in this sector or to give detailed or meaningful direction to land-based planning, while also failing to ensure the safeguarding of both our natural and built environments for future generations. Addressing these major deficiencies in our country’s ability to administrate effectively in this sector will be high on our agenda.

Another administrative deficiency that we intend to address concerns the monetary contributions currently paid by developers and commercial entities which are aimed at offsetting the negative environmental impacts of their activities. These are often not transparently managed and it is often unclear where these funds are ending up. One can mention, as examples, the Commuted Parking Payment Scheme, the Urban Improvement Fund, the Environment Fee chargeable on all development planning applications, and various examples of eco-taxation. It is important that the funds gathered through these schemes are clearly used for their intended purpose, and thus clear governance in this sense is paramount.
We will ensure that all government agencies implement the provisions of Agenda 2050, and that enforcement of all legislation and policies is carried out in a transparent and effective manner.

**ACTIONS**

**Overarching priority**
- We will ensure the better utilisation of EU funding, which requires certain environmental standards to be maintained, and employ ISO practices at a governance level.

**Good governance**
- We will ensure that funds gathered through various schemes such as the Commuted Parking Payment Scheme, the Urban Improvement Fund, the Environment Fee chargeable on all development planning applications, and eco-taxation, are ring-fenced for their intended use, namely the protection and upgrading of our environment, that they are clearly accounted for and that their use is monitored and open to public scrutiny.

**Sustainability**
- We will address the legislative deficiencies following the MEPA demerger, and the misplaced priorities of the SPED, in order to ascertain that our country truly begins to achieve the principles of sustainable development.

**Liveability & community wellbeing**
- We will ensure that government tenders are adjudicated on green public procurement criteria, and ensure that quality criteria are given more importance, thus moving away from the practice of adjudicating solely on the basis of the cheapest price, which does not always achieve the desired quality.

**Environmental culture for the future**
- We will establish a National Strategy for the Enforcement of Legislation, which will not be limited only to the environment sector, and which will ensure that each legislative measure is accompanied by details on its enforcement which are easy to implement, immediate, transparent and non-selective.

“(We shall) require, in the interests of ensuring that the interests of the environment are safeguarded in all aspects of legislation, that all laws shall routinely be vetted for their possible impact on the environment before being presented to Parliament.”

RESTORING TRUST IN POLITICS – PROPOSALS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE (NATIONALIST PARTY)
The Eurostat Quality of Life Indicators study (2013) shows that the overall trust of the Maltese population in our legal system is marginally higher than the EU average, albeit being significantly less than the trust levels in certain EU countries.

• **WE WILL maintain our rating above the EU average and improve it by at least 1 point within five years.** While this indicator refers to the legal system as a whole, the administrative measures within the environmental sector can contribute to the overall levels of trust, particularly when it comes to enforcement and transparency in the use of funds obtained through fiscal measures.
We need to ensure control over what is rightfully common to our citizens, so that we can live in a democratic society, free to be open and critical.
The Government of Malta owns around 55% of the Maltese and Gozitan territory. This places significant responsibility on the Government in ensuring that this major asset is utilised in a sustainable manner and that transparency in its administration is maintained at all times.

Even while in Opposition, the Nationalist Party has already been active in this sense, and moved forward a Public Domain Bill with the aim of distinguishing between government land proper and land which is in the public domain. Certain land and assets should be considered as public domain by virtue of their very nature, such as the seabed and subsoil, the coastal perimeter and the first 15m of foreshore, fortifications, valleys, the countryside, cliffs and piazzas, although of course private title will be respected. It also applies to movable property, such as museum collections and libraries. Although existing property rights over land included in the public domain will be safeguarded, any such rights must be registered if they are to be preserved.

The Public Domain Bill, which was enthusiastically welcomed by various sectors of society, served as a concrete manifestation of our commitment in safeguarding our common heritage, a commitment which we will continue to build upon in the coming years in order to include more aspects of that which forms our national identity.

We need to ensure control over what is rightfully common to our citizens, so that we can live in a democratic free society, to be open and critical. We need to embrace the open digital space, not to fear it, to protect and promote our common diverse cultural heritage, and to overcome the many challenges that society faces today including threats to our rights and freedoms. Above all, we need to transform the environment of our cities, towns, and villages, and the environment of our communities through culture, in order to ensure the well-being of our society.
OUR COMMITMENT

We will update the National Cultural Policy, with a particular focus on empowering citizens to organise themselves in bringing about new realities that mirror their attempts to deepen democracy and freedom for those things that we hold in common.

ACTIONS

Overarching priority

- We will empower citizens to be more active and effective in the cultural and creative sectors, to provide more fora and opportunities for informed debate on our cultural heritage, and to promote investment by the private sector in cultural projects.

Good governance

- We will continue to invest in our cultural heritage as one of the most important foundations of our tourism industry, while also focusing on the broader remit of our heritage, particularly as an enabler to achieve greater social cohesion.

Sustainability

- We will establish a publicly available GIS-based cadaster which maps all the properties owned by the Government of Malta and all those forming part of the public domain, including details on title, access rights, and use.

Liveability & community wellbeing

- We will ensure that cultural diversity is celebrated, empowering marginalised communities through the arts and culture, and ensuring that our communities are founded on the principles of shared aspirations and harmonious co-existence.

Environmental culture for the future

- We will improve the appreciation of our cultural heritage from a young age, through appropriate actions in our curricula and extra-curricular activities which engage our young citizens, and focus further on the environmental aspects of our heritage.
We will empower citizens to be more active and effective in the cultural and creative sectors, to provide more fora and opportunities for informed debate on our cultural heritage, and to promote investment by the private sector in cultural projects.

WE WILL COMMIT TO THESE OTHER ACTIONS

- **WE WILL** support the proliferation of more creativity clusters, cultural spaces, public libraries, performing and visual arts to enable more cultural engagement and appreciation.
- **WE WILL** provide fiscal incentives for private owners of scheduled properties in order to assist them in maintaining these buildings which form part of our collective heritage, and encourage such owners to make these properties occasionally accessible to the general public.
A new PN Government will give the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) the proper tools to truly perform its functions as the guardian of the environment.
We have already noted, from the very introduction of this document, that we give significant importance to the issue of land use and development planning. We are gravely concerned about the state of our built environment and in particular about the current government’s apparent inability to stand up for quality. Instead it panders to individual interests quite oblivious of the context of a national strategy. This trend must be reversed immediately, and our pledge is to ensure that our future generations will inherit a modern built heritage of which they can be proud.

We believe in an approach to planning which is more inclusive, representative and democratic. It is evident that we need to acknowledge the interdependent relationship between the professional planner and the policy maker. At the same time, we need to truly valorise planning and the role of the professional planner, both on a macro and a micro level, and to enhance the participatory role of a broad range of professionals, civil society and citizens in the policy formulation process. Public participation, in particular, is paramount, since it encourages a common vision for our territory which is more responsive and proactive, and encourages the exploration of a vast number of alternatives that may not have been contemplated by the politician or the planner.

Planning application processing must be carried out in a transparent manner, and must ensure consistency and equality. In addition, we need to ensure that permitting is guided by the overarching principles of quality and sustainability, since these are the measure of the success of our planning and permitting systems. We will ensure that the development permitting function responds to the overall national long-term vision, and that these decisions are taken within this framework, rather than merely accommodating certain projects or pressures.

To ensure the better integration of sustainability principles in Malta’s land use plans, to enhance the role of the professional planner, and to engage in public participation at all levels of planning policy making and decision making.

**OUR APPROACH**

We have already noted, from the very introduction of this document, that we give significant importance to the issue of land use and development planning. We are gravely concerned about the state of our built environment and in particular about the current government’s apparent inability to stand up for quality. Instead it panders to individual interests quite oblivious of the context of a national strategy. This trend must be reversed immediately, and our pledge is to ensure that our future generations will inherit a modern built heritage of which they can be proud.

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**MEPA DEMERGER**

We will take immediate action to give the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) the proper tools to truly perform its functions as the guardian of the environment. We will review the current setup within the Planning Authority (PA) to ensure that the principles of fairness, transparency and good governance prevail. We will give back their autonomy so as to be able to take their decisions free from the political interference that has all but hamstrung their operations under a Labour Government.
OUR COMMITMENT

Our commitment is to restore a sense of fairness in our land use and development planning; fairness towards citizens today and fairness towards our children tomorrow.

ACTIONS

Overarching priority

We will update the SPED to a more long-term vision up to 2050, eliminate ambiguity and uncertainty from it, and translate it into a spatial plan which will form the basis of all land development application decisions.

Good governance

We will ensure that the entities responsible for the preservation of our environment, for planning policy and development permitting are sufficiently resourced with competent persons, and we commit to a zero tolerance approach towards illegal development.

Sustainability

We will ensure greater transparency, quality and independence in the compilation of studies such as Environmental Impact Assessments, Social Impact Assessments, Traffic Impact Assessments, and Strategic Environmental Assessments and ensure that the findings of these studies feed back into the policy making function and carry due weighting in the decision making process.

Liveability & community wellbeing

We will ensure that the revised SPED places emphasis on the importance of the urban regeneration of degraded areas as a priority and that it valorises quality as an important driver in our spatial vision for the country.

Environmental culture for the future

We will enhance the role of public participation in the planning and permitting processes to render them more transparent, instilling a sense of ownership of and responsibility towards our heritage, and addressing the culture of indifference towards quality in our built environment.

“The current government considers the environment as an obstacle that is standing in the way of doing what it wants. The SPED is intentionally vague and intended to give the government absolute power in development while weakening environmental protection and the possibility of sustainable and balanced development. It will change Malta’s face into one of excess development controlled only by a government that wants to do what it wants and has too many obligations towards people who elevated it to power.”

SIMON BUSUTTIL (MALTA TODAY, JULY 2015)
**HIGH RISE POLICY**

“Changes to planning policy, in particular building height definitions and the Floor-Area Ratio (FAR) policy, have led to increased density and excessive building heights, resulting in the further uglification and lack of liveability of our urban areas.

The issue of high rise buildings is the subject of much controversy, largely owing to the Planning Authority’s insensitivity, its lack of foresight in its policy considerations and its evident intent to accommodate the interests of a handful of select individuals, with no gain for the rest of society.

The skyline is an important part of our heritage and sadly, it is a valuable part of our common home that we often overlook. Yet, just one building too high is enough for everyone to understand why building heights must have a limit in a country as small as Malta. We just cannot afford to continue to allow monetary gain for a select few to dictate the form of such an important aspect of our landscape and ultimately, of our common home.

The 38-floor Townsquare project was mired in controversy after it was approved by a margin of just one vote (the representatives of the PN Opposition as well as the PN-led Sliema local council were among those voting against, whereas the ERA Chairman was conspicuous by his absence). Despite the approval, the PN still hopes that common sense will prevail and calls on the investors to reconsider their plans and reduce the number of floors of the project.

The Paceville Masterplan was a classic example of a plan gone wrong, having clearly been reverse-designed to reach the conclusions that were sought for the select few, completely ignoring in the process the concerns of residents and small businesses alike, some of whom discovered to their horror that their home would be swept away. The PN calls for the Masterplan to be scrapped and sent back to the drawing board.

- **WE WILL** amend policies within a clear approach towards achieving a skyline policy for the whole country, in line with our firm belief that the skyline is part of our common heritage, and we will ensure that this established skyline is respected without exception.

**WE WILL COMMIT TO THESE OTHER ACTIONS**

- **WE WILL** introduce positive discrimination (fees and processing time) in the planning process, aimed at promoting commercial developments with clawback on built-up areas and creation of open green spaces, and which employ innovative environmental criteria in their design.

- **WE WILL** establish schemes specifically designed for retailers to support regeneration in urban areas. The scheme will reward retailers who set up operations in localities which are targeted for urban regeneration, provide investment aid or designated areas which are deprived and rundown. Retail activities in these areas will make them more liveable, more accessible and will help create new jobs.

- **WE WILL** reduce property taxes on the purchase of property in areas earmarked for regeneration and further reduce income tax on rent for the leasing of commercial outlets in such areas.

- **WE WILL** promote the development of specialised themed ‘districts’ aimed at creating a platform to bring together retail businesses operating in similar markets in proximity by supporting their branding, promoting localised large-scale events, adopting specific opening hours to cater for the specific needs of the zone and extending local support facilities.
Our urban landscape is crucial in forming our culture of the aesthetic and in improving the public’s perception and demand for a better quality urban environment.
The urban environment reflects our social and economic aspirations. Architecture is understood to go beyond the physical development of our built environment and is considered to be a cultural reference to sustainable development. The quality of the built environment is key to the success of various economic industries, and in this regard it must be viewed as capturing the spirit of the times, and regarded as an indicator of our way of life.

Well-designed buildings and spaces must complement their context, providing a sense of place and identity, and enabling the creation of memory. This is even more important in the case of projects that are executed through public funds, such as the new Valletta City Gate project and the new Parliament building which are widely considered as new architectural gems in our country. Clearly, the concept of value for money must go beyond the criterion of cheapest price since this does not always achieve quality and sustainability. This concept must permeate the whole of the public realm, including our road infrastructure, walkways, street furniture, soft landscaping, on- and off-street parking areas, roadside areas and also public art. The equal spatial distribution of public space to all users, coupled with better quality design ensures a higher level of accessibility, reduces social exclusion, supports goals for more integrated communities and reduces CO2 contributions from roads used solely by cars. Our urban landscape is crucial in forming our culture of the aesthetic and in improving the public’s perception and demand for a better quality urban environment.

By improving the urban environment, we can improve the liveability of our towns and villages, making them better places in which to live, work and play. This, in turn, encourages a sense of ownership and pride by local communities in their surroundings, and promotes a safer, healthier and more pleasant environment which can be enjoyed by all. In achieving this, we need to nurture creativity at a young age whilst ensuring that tertiary education reflects today’s realities and the pursuit of excellence.

The current lack of valorisation of quality in the built environment is evident in the absence of a National Architecture Policy, with Malta being one of the few EU countries not to have such a Policy.
“We do not agree with turning Malta into Dubai. People are calling this the ‘Dubaification’ of Malta. It is clear that the government views money as a top priority. Should we allow Malta to go through irreversible changes or should we keep the elements that make Malta what it is?”

SIMON BUSUTTIL (RADIO 101, AUGUST 2016)
Malta is one of the few European Union Member States not to have a National Architectural Policy. We will draw up and implement such a Policy with immediate effect.

WE WILL COMMIT TO THESE OTHER ACTIONS

- **WE WILL** reduce the rate of capital gains tax to incentivise high energy efficiency standards in new buildings and for the restoration of properties in areas crying out for regeneration such as Marsa, Hamrun, Qawra and Bugibba.
- **WE WILL** organise yearly courses for Energy Performance of Buildings Assessors, which have not taken place for a number of years resulting in a shortage of professionals able to carry out Energy Performance Assessments of buildings.
- **WE WILL** provide financial incentives for buildings which are designed to meet the NZEB (Near-Zero Energy Buildings) targets, such as reductions in Environment Fees due at the planning permit stage.
- **WE WILL** embark on a consultation process to address situations where new building heights overshadow adjacent existing neighbouring solar energy installations, and will propose measures for discussion such as the idea that the state should compensate the affected party.
- **WE WILL** explore the possibility for the creation of a fund through which government can compensate private owners to make certain areas accessible to the public.
- **WE WILL** address the issue of vacant property and control over-development and over-densification which is not supported by adequate utilities infrastructure and open space.
- **WE WILL** study the option of introducing a time limit for completion of building projects with penalties on sites which are left unfinished for long periods of time since these shell buildings also have a negative visual impact.
- **WE WILL** introduce incentives for roof gardens.
- **WE WILL** create landscaping projects with nature-based solutions - these concepts should be integrated in the planning process.
- **WE WILL** provide legislative support to building professionals, in particular to architects, civil engineers, mechanical and electrical engineers, and planners, in order to ensure that these professions are adequately regulated and in line with EU requirements.
- **WE WILL** incentivise the restoration and regeneration of historic and scheduled buildings in urban conservation areas through their allocation at preferential rental rates to be used as flagship retail and/or concept stores for artisan retailing.
- **WE WILL** ring-fence a percentage of the VAT collected out of retail activities in a locality and allocate it exclusively for the improvement and management of public infrastructure in retail areas in the respective locality. In this way, both retailers and consumers will get immediate return from their own taxes. This fund will be used primarily for cleaning, upkeep, maintenance, street lighting and street furniture, hence reducing the financial burden of these functions on Local Councils.
We will review the SPED to ensure that the protection of our countryside and ODZ leaves no room for ambiguity as is the case today.
The term “Development Zone” is easily defined as that boundary within which development of a certain scale and density is permitted; in other words, it defines our urban areas. We have Local Plans which define, on a street by street basis, the allowable building heights and uses permitted in these urban areas, as well as certain parameters such as the provision of front gardens and open spaces. The term “Outside Development Zone”, or ODZ, therefore, by inference, comprises all those areas which fall outside this boundary. It includes our rural areas, coastal areas, marine environment, valleys and Natura 2000 sites, but also a number of brownfield sites, Areas of Containment (primarily industrial), rural settlements, quarries and legal developments which have taken place over the years.

The urban areas and urban activities in our country are so intense and substantial that they have an impact on the surrounding ODZ areas. This is why we are giving priority to the improvement of the quality of our urban areas, since the more pleasant and liveable our urban areas are, the less pressure there will be on our countryside and coastal areas as the only place where people can escape to for relaxation and leisure. Furthermore, merely safeguarding ODZ will not relieve us from the urgent need to better the urban areas (socially, environmentally and politically).

It is high time that ODZ land is adequately protected. Both main political parties made their share of mistakes but it is now time to draw a line and stop further degradation once and for all. ‘ODZ is ODZ’ has become a cliché. It is time to give it a true meaning. In June 2016, we presented a policy paper on our intended approach towards proposals for development in ODZ, which proposals are being entrenched in this policy document. In particular, we certainly intend to move forward with our radical proposal to render decisions affecting ODZ land truly transparent and open to public scrutiny once and for all.

Controlling development is, however, not enough. There is also a need to adopt a strong landscape strategy which not only safeguards areas of high landscape quality, but also ensures improvements to those existing developments which mar our countryside and the sensitive integration of new developments. We need to start talking about quality in these areas, because that is what is lacking. The concept of value needs to be explored more and integrated in our policy decisions. We need to understand better the intrinsic value of our countryside, and the cost of losing it. We also pledge to continue to support sustainable farming and fishing activities, and to valorise the farming and fishing communities as guardians of our natural environment.
We will review the SPED to ensure that the protection of our countryside and ODZ leaves no room for ambiguity as is the case today, and in particular eliminate the concept of “feasibility” as a criterion for the take-up of vacant land.

Our Commitment

We will propose to shift the final decisions on major projects affecting ODZ land from the Government to Parliament and that Parliament should act by a two-thirds majority. In this way, we can build a national consensus on land-use which is a subject of growing public concern and one of our long-term challenges.

Simon Busuttil, June 2015

Two-thirds majority protection for ODZ land

We will remove the current discretion of the Prime Minister and the Government to authorise the development of ODZ land. Instead, we will give the final word to Parliament so that the process will become truly transparent, free from abuse and can only be approved on the basis of a wide consensus and not by Government alone. Major projects of national importance, whether proposed by the public or private sector, will first go through the normal planning procedures in the Planning Authority. In the case of a positive recommendation only, the project will be submitted to Parliament. In order for the project to be approved, a two-thirds parliamentary majority will be required.

“I will propose to shift the final decisions on major projects affecting ODZ land from the Government to Parliament and that Parliament should act by a two-thirds majority .... In this way, we can build a national consensus on land-use which is a subject of growing public concern and one of our long-term challenges.”

Simon Busuttil, June 2015

Actions

Overarching priority

- We will ensure that publicly-owned ODZ land is given an economic value at least equal to the economic value of the same kind of land in prime development areas, thus eliminating the current ‘incentive’ for Government to give up ODZ land for speculative projects on the grounds that it is ‘cheap’ if not ‘freely available’, as happened in the case of Żonqor.

Good governance

- We will ensure a zero-tolerance approach to illegal development, particularly that which is carried out in ODZ areas, and continue to encourage well-regulated farming activities.

Sustainability

- We will not permit land reclamation projects for speculative purposes, and any other land reclamation projects will only be permitted within a framework for the spatial planning of the coastal zone and the marine area, as required by the SPED.

Liveability & community wellbeing

- We will introduce a landscape policy which establishes a vision for a natural environment which is well curated and ecologically restored, and which seeks to unify our ODZ areas, while addressing those developments which mar the countryside.

Environmental culture for the future

- We will invest in the public’s right to peaceful enjoyment of our ODZ areas, and ensure that these are safe areas which can be appreciated by all.

We will review the SPED to ensure that the protection of our countryside and ODZ leaves no room for ambiguity as is the case today, and in particular eliminate the concept of “feasibility” as a criterion for the take-up of vacant land.

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Simon Busuttil, June 2015
WE WILL remove the current discretion of the Prime Minister and the Government to authorise the development of ODZ land. Instead, we will give the final word to Parliament.

ŻONQOR

The vast ODZ site in Żonqor that was assigned personally - and controversially - by the Prime Minister to a Jordanian investor following a secret meeting for the purposes of the building of an AUM university campus, was one of the key controversies of the Labour Government. Yet, at the time of writing no building activity has taken place yet. We are therefore still in time to save Żonqor.

WE will enter into talks with AUM in order to persuade them to give up the site in Żonqor and save the ODZ land from development.
One of the key issues affecting agriculture in Malta is the lack of economic resilience.
Agriculture plays an important role in maintaining and conserving the Maltese rural landscape, the natural environment and natural resources, as well as contributing to the national economy. Whilst farms are small and fragmented, full time employment in agriculture is decreasing and returns to primary production may often be low. On the other hand, farming has important linkages as both an employer and a generator of value-added products in the wider Maltese economy, including links with the food and tourism and hospitality sectors.

One of the key issues affecting agriculture in Malta is the lack of economic resilience. Farmers are facing increased prices for key inputs (feed, fertilisers, water, etc) yet receiving a modest output value, while facing harsh competition from the importation of agricultural produce and livestock produce. The net value added in livestock is continuously falling, due to the rising feed import costs, increased energy and water costs. A number of livestock farms are not covering their costs though they are trying to improve performance by learning from the most efficient farms. Fruit and vegetable producers are receiving relatively low returns due to inefficiencies in marketing, supply chain organisation and forms of retailing.

Given that Pitkalija is the main wholesale market and that the price elasticity of produce is very low, it is inevitable that when there is too much produce brought to the market, the prices may be very poor and produce may even be unsalable. This naturally gives rise to suspicions among the farmers supplying the market but does not demonstrate abuse of market power, although this may exist mainly through the illegal selling of imported agricultural produce from the Pitkali Market. The lack of traceability also provides no motivation for farmers to grade their produce.

Another limitation is the small size of agricultural holdings, which restricts the total area available for agricultural production. Opportunities are more limited when space is at a premium and without a strong and effective planning policy against the loss of agricultural land, its amount will diminish, production will be lost and it will not be easy to replace. In some cases other activities (mostly recreational) with higher opportunity costs are rapidly taking over farmland, mainly due to lack of proper legislation, enforcement and weak planning institutions. Furthermore, existing legislation which would allow for land transfer or land swapping schemes to counter land fragmentation or encourage more production are not being adopted by competent authorities. Consequently, there is still a large share of agricultural land with little or no cultivation activity taking place.

Additionally, land is continuously being sub-divided through inheritance into very small holdings and very small land parcels. For farmers wishing to expand, existing legislation is not being adopted by the authorities and consequently informal arrangements may lead to considerable insecurity. For tenant farmers wishing to invest, the lack of ownership limits their own willingness to invest, unless there is a fair system of compensation. Those with leases of agricultural land have little incentive to give them up even if they are reluctant or minimal cultivators. For those wishing to exit agriculture there is no land asset to sell, to aid the change of occupation and there is virtually no agricultural land available for young farmers. This situation undoubtedly affects local competition in food markets by limiting farmers’ capacity to exploit economies of scale or to improve productivity by investment in new technologies.
Prepare an agriculture policy that provides a holistic direction for agriculture in Malta with the aim of improving market access to ensure greater profitability of the sector, consolidate advisory services, market research and utilisation of IT systems and web applications to ensure this, and ensure transparency in the distribution of EU funds.

### ACTIONS

#### Overarching priority
- We will address the strengths and weaknesses of the sector, providing a platform to ensure communication between stakeholders, community cohesion, creativity and food innovation, and seek to address the cumbersome and administrative legal framework which is detrimental to small farmers and entrepreneurs.

#### Good governance
- We will facilitate the transfer of agricultural leases by applying existing legislation and where necessary amending laws and policies on landholding and the leasing of public land, and enforce established standards on pesticides, organic certification and food standards to counter any fraudulent trading practices.

#### Sustainability
- We will introduce concrete actions in the Pitkali market to improve the effective operation of agriculture and food markets.

#### Liveability & community wellbeing
- We will roll out initiatives, including financial schemes, to promote the active participation of the farming community in restoring and maintaining the environment in and around their holding thus actively enabling them to take on the role of guardians of the environment and natural habitat. We will also provide training for farmers on the use of renewable energy sources.

#### Environmental culture for the future
- We will promote locally produced food and integrate small farmers’ products into the value chain, while supporting research and innovation into smart and sustainable agriculture.

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**We will promote locally produced food and integrate small farmers’ products into the value chain.**
The Farmers’ Market is an initiative that has seen great success, both for the farmers who can participate directly in the market as well as for the consumer who can enjoy fresh, genuine and local produce. Members of the farming community are an essential part of the value chain, and can act as guardians of our country’s environmental and rural integrity.

SIMON BUSUTTIL, MAY 2014
(DURING A VISIT TO THE FARMERS’ MARKET, TA’ QALI)

**We will seek to reverse this trend within a 5 year period.**

The National Statistics Office (2016) Agriculture and Fisheries 2014 report indicates that the number of full time farmers has decreased by 11% between 2005 and 2013, while those in part time employment in this sector has increased by around 6%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Full Time</th>
<th>Part Time</th>
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<td>1,764</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1,372</td>
<td>17,693</td>
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**Annual Volume (Tonnes) and Wholesale Value (€000) of Fruit and Vegetables Sold Through Official Markets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>2014</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**We will commit to these other actions**

- *We will* introduce a scheme to provide the farming community with a measure of security against risk as a community. As a virtual strategy, close bonds between community members will result in mutual assistance and self-help when required, for instance failure of rainfall or an attack of crop pests which may affect all community members in the same way.

- *We will* ensure that existing legislation regarding land transfer and land swapping schemes to counter land fragmentation or encourage more production are properly implemented, and we will review this legislation with a view towards improving the administrative processes governing such schemes.
We will actively work towards reaching Malta’s climate change targets and we specifically commit to reaching the EU targets on renewable energy by the end of our mandate in office.
Just like any other country, the Maltese Islands contribute their share to climate change. Malta is signatory to international conventions and agreements to curb CO2 emissions, with the target of reducing global warming in the future. Mitigation actions are required to curb the release of anthropogenic CO2 emissions in the environment and adaptation actions are required to prepare Malta to the risks of global warming and climate change.

As an island state, we have a direct interest in climate change, since both sea level rise and extreme weather events, envisaged as direct impacts of climate change, can have severe impacts on the islands now and in the future. Malta led the debate about climate change in international fora, and should continue to do so, by implementing plans and programmes to both mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Malta has successfully reduced its CO2 emissions from energy generation largely through investments in the 2012 BWSC power station and the new interconnector between Malta and Sicily as well as investment in renewable energy schemes and systems. This, however, is not reflected in the transport sector where the contribution to CO2 emissions remains high and is on the increase. Measures for mitigating transport emissions are therefore necessary. Solutions that shift travellers from their car to public transport, walking or cycling are already proposed in this document, however there are also opportunities offered by technology that can further reduce the CO2 emissions from our vehicle fleet.

With regard to adaptation, Malta has been slower in acting on critical infrastructures which might be severely impacted by climate change. Protecting our resources such as water, biodiversity, and even transport infrastructures from changes in sea level, rising temperatures and extreme weather events are paramount if we are to enjoy our standards of living and achieve economic development. Actions must be developed to ensure our resources are protected for this and future generations.
OUR COMMITMENT

We will actively work towards reaching Malta’s climate change targets and we specifically commit to reaching the EU targets on renewable energy by the end of our mandate in office.

LIVING UP TO COMMITMENTS

Malta was one of the first EU Member Countries to ratify the Paris Treaty, which obliges Member States to reduce toxic gas emissions by 40% by the year 2030 as compared to emissions in 1990, and to reduce these further by between 80% and 90% by mid-century. On the other hand, however, Malta is the only EU Member State which is not on track to achieve its targets in all three areas of the EU’s Climate and Energy 2020 directive, namely on greenhouse gas emission reductions, renewables and energy efficiency as reported in the 2016 edition of the European Environment Agency (EEA) Trends and Projections in Europe report. This is the first time ever that a Member State has fallen behind in all three areas of analysis. This is unacceptable.

• WE WILL address this situation of non-compliance immediately and ensure that we adhere and benefit from our international obligations, not just on paper but in fact.

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We will actively work towards reaching Malta’s climate change targets and we specifically commit to reaching the EU targets on renewable energy by the end of our mandate in office.

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• WE WILL address this situation of non-compliance immediately and ensure that we adhere and benefit from our international obligations, not just on paper but in fact.
In June 2016, the 12th session of the EkoSkola Parliament focussed on the theme of climate change. Students from 41 schools, submitted the following declaration to the House:

**CARING FOR OUR FUTURE**

**Climate Change**

We, the students of EkoSkola, as citizens of Malta and the world ...

Worry when we see the effects that climate change is having around us;

Feel that we all have a duty to do our part to control these effects;

Are already implementing measures to reduce these effects in our homes and our schools;

Feel that whoever takes decisions affecting our future must take into account the ideas and suggestions discussed at the Summit.

The very fact that the younger generation is taking us to task on the all-important matter of climate change poses a great challenge, because it reflects a sense of disappointment in the political class by our young citizens – they feel that we are not doing enough to protect their future.

- **WE WILL** commit to take heed of the concerns of these young members of society, because it is our duty to do so, and because we understand that we are responsible for the environment which our children will inherit.

- **WE WILL** ensure that children have their say in our policy-formation processes, because their voice and their concerns are important to us, and deserve our utmost attention and commitment to action.
It is time to set up a national management structure that will oversee all protected natural areas in the Maltese Islands.
The Maltese Islands have a relatively rich biodiversity with native and endemic species, and their habitats, forming Malta’s natural capital. Biodiversity is important as it maintains the functioning of a healthy natural environment and provides us with essential ecosystem services which are crucial for our well being.

Very often we speak about compromise between the needs for development and the preservation of our natural habitats. However, the truth is that once certain development has taken place, the impacts are more often than not irreversible. Where biodiversity is concerned, we need to begin to speak about conservation and protection as a priority, and this means that there will be times when potential individual gains have to be curbed in order to ensure that we limit the degradation of our biodiversity capital.

Urban and rural areas which are coastal must capture the resources offered by the coast and protect access, as well as natural processes which are present in the coastline. Special attention should be given to Marine Protected Areas and coastal areas which could potentially be exposed to high levels of development. We must ensure that we afford adequate attention to local habitats, especially in protected habitats which are crucial to protect Malta’s biodiversity, which is unique. Some of our biodiversity is protected by law but more should be done to identify opportunities to protect nature and natural resources for human well-being.

We also need to understand better the impacts that climate change is having on biodiversity in our Islands, in particular the effects of lesser rainfall and longer periods of dry weather.

It is time to set up a national management structure that will oversee all protected natural areas in the Maltese Islands. Malta still has landscapes of great natural beauty that support often unique ecosystems and habitats. Yet they are not adequately protected and their biodiversity is in decline.

To sustain and enrich the country’s biodiversity through the implementation of policy measures to protect and safeguard habitats, flora and fauna, and to effectively manage all our terrestrial and marine Natura 2000 sites.
We welcome with satisfaction the Planning Authority’s decision to save Wied Għomor from further development. We propose that Government should expropriate the land, and that the valley is rehabilitated for the betterment of the environment of the surrounding localities.

NATIONALIST PARTY, MAY 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUR COMMITMENT</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We will update and implement all the measures contained in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan including proper management of protected areas and enforcement of environmental legislation.</td>
<td>✷ We commit to create a national management structure, Natura Malta, which will oversee all protected natural areas in the Maltese Islands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ We will actively work towards reaching Malta’s biodiversity targets through the implementation of the measures contained in policy documents.</td>
<td>✷ We will designate new protected areas and entrust Natura Malta to oversee the management of all protected areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ We will designate new protected areas and entrust Natura Malta to oversee the management of all protected areas</td>
<td>✷ We will undertake a review of our Marine Protected Areas, and seek to add new areas and extend the existing ones, with a view towards enhancing current fish stocks and support our diving tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✷ We will embark on an education campaign to clearly communicate the value of biodiversity and of protected areas, and to valorise these assets.</td>
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</table>

“We welcome with satisfaction the Planning Authority’s decision to save Wied Għomor from further development. We propose that Government should expropriate the land, and that the valley is rehabilitated for the betterment of the environment of the surrounding localities.”
BIODIVERSITY IN URBAN AREAS

Biodiversity is not something we should look at solely in the context of our natural habitats. The urban environment also holds its fair share of biodiversity, and this also needs to be enhanced, valorised and improved.

- We will embark on an ambitious project to map out all the public green areas within our development zones, take stock of their quality and seek to ensure higher percentages of well maintained areas which contribute towards a greener environment within our towns and villages.

FISH FARMS

The PN is acutely aware of the controversy that erupted on the environmental damage caused by waste generated by fish farms. The concerns and anger expressed by the public was fully justified. The PN is committed to ensure that this industry should only be allowed to continue to operate as long as it fulfills the expected environmental standards and is relocated well off the coast. This will ensure that the industry would have a drastically mitigated impact on the environment and fully address the concerns of bathers and the general public.

- We will ensure the enforcement of strict environmental controls on waste generated by fish farms and the relocation of fish farms well off the coast.

WE WILL COMMIT TO THESE OTHER ACTIONS

- **WE WILL** ensure that our Integrated Maritime Policy will focus on the protection of our sea.
- **WE WILL** embark on a national valley protection plan, with the primary aim of rehabilitating our valley systems to respect, maintain and enhance their resident biodiversity.
We pledge to address the problem of traffic congestion immediately upon election, in order to ensure that the costs of traffic congestion, not just financial, are limited and reversed.
Transport is a critical infrastructure for achieving a better quality of life for all and it has a direct impact on our social, environmental and economic development.

Mobility in Malta is very high with increasing trends for both car and public transport use. This however does not reflect on accessibility because a number of factors are limiting our accessibility to where we want to go or what we want to get. Increasing traffic congestion is regularly singled out as a leading concern in public opinion surveys, but there are other problems too. These include lack of parking management, an inefficient public bus service, sub-standard pedestrian walkways and unsafe roads for those using motorcycles or bicycles.

In 2016, we published a consultation document titled “Reducing traffic congestion - Short term measures” which put forward a number of proposals which were classified under four sets of overarching measures focussed on the need for quality information, providing target commuter segments with modes of transport that meet their commuting needs, infrastructural investment required for short-to medium-term impact, and planning and management approaches. These proposals were received positively by civil society, yet there is still more to be done, particularly in the long-term.

Research carried out by the Institute for Climate Change & Sustainable Development shows that the current state of our traffic was costing the economy €274 million in 2012, rising to a staggering €317 million by 2020 if the current policy status quo persists. The study takes into account factors such as accidents, air pollution, climate change, noise, and congestion but excluded the direct impact on health and the economy. The study also quantified the cost arising directly from congestion. It claims that unless there is a change in policy, the cost will rise from €117.9 million in 2012 to as much as €151.1 million by 2020. The time lost due to congestion was calculated as averaging out at approximately 52 hours per year per commuter, and an additional €25.8 million a year in the cost of fuel. Overall the increased cost to business, in terms of productivity lost as a result of congestion, was estimated at €32.4 million.

This situation is clearly unsustainable and this is also confirmed by the report that expressly states “it is safe to conclude that the level of car use in the islands is not sustainable and results in considerable cost to society, caused mainly by congestion.”

To plan and manage Malta’s mobility needs effectively, with a view to improving quality of life.
**OUR COMMITMENT**

We pledge to address the problem of traffic congestion immediately upon election, in order to ensure that the costs of traffic congestion, not just financial, are limited and reversed. We will immediately implement our set of short-terms measures to address traffic congestion. We will simultaneously embark on a long-term plan for a new multi-modal transport system in Malta. Details on our plans for an alternative public transport system will be published in a separate policy document.

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**ACTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overarching priority</th>
<th>■ We will review the Transport Master Plan 2017-2025 and prioritise measures that effectively address modal shift including prioritisation of public transport, walking and cycling.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good governance</td>
<td>■ We will ensure that land development plans and decisions are evaluated against their impact or contribution to accessibility and sustainable mobility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>■ We will ensure that our transport plans are synchronised with our plans to protect the environment and improve quality of life, rather than allow these plans to conflict with each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liveability &amp; community wellbeing</td>
<td>■ We will initiate a programme to design and upgrade pedestrian routes across all towns and villages through the design of safe pedestrian walkways to town centres, schools and shops, and support Local Councils in projects that promote pedestrianisation - (13% of car trips take place within the same locality).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental culture for the future</td>
<td>■ We will actively promote a culture that encourages people to move away from the use of private cars towards more sustainable - and ultimately more efficient - means of transport</td>
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We will immediately implement our set of short-terms measures to address traffic congestion. We will simultaneously embark on a long-term plan for a new multi-modal transport system in Malta.

“If drastic improvement does not take place, the current state of traffic will directly threaten our economic prospects. The Nationalist Party has never shied away from challenging projects and difficult tasks, no matter how herculean they may be. I give my pledge as Leader of the Nationalist Party that, once in government, the Nationalist Party will launch a strategy to bring Malta’s traffic system into the 21st century.”

SIMON BUSUTTIL (FOREWORD TO REDUCING TRAFFIC CONGESTION – SHORT TERM MEASURES, PN)
The current state of our traffic was costing the economy €274 million in 2012, rising to a staggering €317 million by 2020 if the current policy status quo persists.
We must address the pressing issue of water sustainability and invest in research in order to quantify and better understand the real implications on this sector which is so vital to our quality of life.
Malta is among one of the world’s most water-stressed countries and our groundwater reserves are being depleted and polluted and increasing in salinity. We are increasingly dependent on energy-intensive desalination, yet our groundwater still contributes most of the water demand. Water recycling and rainwater harvesting have lagged behind, and as stated in the report titled “Why Malta’s National Water Plan requires an Analytical Policy Framework” published by The Today Public Policy Institute in April 2015, “the highest priority must be given to the rehabilitation and conservation of the water aquifers, which will require extensive analysis of the rate and causes of deterioration, and an integrated and costed strategy to achieve measurable goals. Alongside, the potential for maximising rainfall harvesting and waste water recycling needs to be analysed to put in place a feasible and affordable set of actions that will win public support.”

We must address the pressing issue of water sustainability and invest in research in order to quantify and better understand the real implications on this sector which is so vital to our quality of life. We need to ensure that we have the most rigorous data collection in various aspects, to enable us to address this sector, for example in establishing the amount of water abstracted from private boreholes, discharge of rainwater into sewerage network, national rainwater harvesting capacity, as well as causes of excessive nitrites and other pollutants in groundwater. We must ensure that enforcement is given priority, and abuse curbed.

We must also ensure the continuous upkeep of our infrastructure, including public cisterns and reservoirs, while at the same time exploring potential new sources for second class water supply to the domestic sector. In addition, we need to instil a better understanding of the critical state of our water supply in the population, to significantly reduce wasteful consumption and to provide a better understanding of the importation of virtual water and our water footprint. Furthermore, we need to address the serious issue of drainage leakages which are infiltrating our ground water and which are contributing to significant increases in the level of nitrites.
## OUR COMMITMENT

We will set up a National Water Policy Framework for data-gathering, assessment and analysis of the current situation, as well as studying future supply and demand, and which will serve as the basis for an updated National Water Plan which will address water conservation and improve water quality in the Maltese Islands.

## ACTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overarching priority</th>
<th>We will introduce measures to reduce water consumption and water footprint and curb abuse.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good governance</td>
<td>We will enforce existing legislation in particular addressing the major water consumers, enforce regulations related to use of fertilisers and pesticides and to rainwater collection in households, and improve capacity building across the public sector to utilise and assess water assets better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>We will provide distribution networks for Treated Sewage Effluent, and invest in the proper management of surface water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liveability &amp; community wellbeing</td>
<td>We will seek to improve the quality of groundwater and surface water, to promote better capture and use of rainwater, and to significantly reduce the use of groundwater.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental culture for the future</td>
<td>We will invest in public perception and awareness towards water conservation and incentivise pilot projects by commercial establishments to include water-related measures as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility. We will also invest in widespread training to sensitise all users to the impact that various sectors have on ground water.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**WATER USE**

Water use has increased by 34.2%, from 45.2 million cubic metres in 2005 to 60.7 million cubic metres in 2013. In addition, studies indicate that Malta imports 900 million cubic metres equivalent of Virtual or Embedded Water, representing a 92% degree of external water dependency. We pledge to introduce the above mentioned measures within five years in order to curb these worrying statistics.

- We pledge to introduce the above mentioned measures within five years in order to curb these worrying statistics.

**WE WILL COMMIT TO THESE OTHER ACTIONS**

- **WE WILL** ensure adherence to the requirement for new buildings to provide water cisterns for water collection as well as for the re-use of second class water, and will provide fiscal incentives to assist in this regard.
- **WE WILL** establish structured programmes intended to support innovation-led water conservation projects.
- **WE WILL** prepare a conservation and preservation strategy in order to ensure the survival of those elements of our cultural landscape such as rock-cut villages and churches, water galleries, water distribution canals and field terraces.
- **WE WILL** provide controlled public access to the culturally sensitive areas of Government-owned giardini, including a limited number of perched aquifer water galleries, with a view towards increasing awareness about this important resource.
- **WE WILL** ensure that these cultural heritage sites are included in tourist itineraries, linked with the promotion of agritourism activities.
We will ensure that the waste management challenges faced by our islands are effectively addressed, and that a clear strategy is adopted to achieve national and European targets.
Waste collection and its treatment are an important issue both on a national scale, as well as at the domestic level. The Local Councils have an important role to play at the local level and they must ensure that the appointed waste collection contractors are adequately equipped with the necessary infrastructure to ensure that they honour their contractual obligations. This includes, for example, the upkeep of bring-in sites which are often left in a deteriorating state. Better planning of waste collection times is also important in order to reduce congestion during rush-hours. There is also scope to review waste collection from commercial establishments, which generate much higher volumes of waste than residential units. Some localities are also experiencing the problems arising from domestic waste generated by medium- and high-rise buildings, which result in higher waste volumes than our traditional urban townscapes, and this too needs to be addressed.

At a national level, the challenges are immense. Municipal solid waste is split roughly in three categories: (i) organic waste, which Malta currently has sufficient capacity to digest and recover energy from; (ii) recyclables, where we are bound by EU obligations; and (iii) residual waste. The latter category is the most difficult to address. Studies show that, by 2022, the existing landfill sites will be exhausted and the current Government has done nothing to plan ahead. Where will our next landfill site be located? How can we instil a mentality which considers waste as a resource rather than a problem, and where can industry operating in the waste management sector be located? These are important challenges that need to be addressed in the short to long term. They are national challenges, and therefore they require a national and concerted approach. We all, to some extent, suffer from nimbism, and this is understandable – however, if we do not achieve national consensus on these matters we may be facing serious problems which will affect each person on a daily basis. It is therefore imperative that these issues are tackled immediately and in a holistic manner. In this regard, we are still awaiting the studies that have been commissioned by the current Government on the possibility of thermal treatment.
There is an urgent need to improve waste management. The State of the Environment report advocates the use of educational campaigns to help achieve the 50% recycling target for household paper/board, glass, metal and plastic waste. In addition to public campaigns, there is also a need to improve waste-treatment infrastructure.

**WASTE GENERATED IN MALTA**

Published statistics indicate that the total amount of waste generated in Malta fell by 34% between 2008 and 2012. The amount of municipal waste recycled increased by an average of 8 percentage points between 2012 and 2015. However, with 82% of total municipal waste generated still being landfilled, Malta cannot be considered resource-efficient in this respect.

In 2011, 593 kg of municipal waste was generated per person, a decrease of 1% from the previous year, but still high in comparison to the EU average of 503 kg/person in the same year. The current government has made no efforts to achieve improvements in this sector, and 2014 data shows that while the EU average has decreased to 475kg, waste generated per capita in Malta has now increased to a staggering 600kg per person.

This is shameful.

Our pledge is to curb these statistics within five years and to meet our EU and international obligations within the stipulated time-frames. We also pledge to embark on a national consultation process in order to identify the most appropriate waste disposal options, including the waste to energy option being currently studied by this government.

“There is an urgent need to improve waste management. The State of the Environment report advocates the use of educational campaigns to help achieve the 50% recycling target for household paper/board, glass, metal and plastic waste. In addition to public campaigns, there is also a need to improve waste-treatment infrastructure.”

SOER 2015 — THE EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT — STATE AND OUTLOOK 2015

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### ACTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overarching priority</th>
<th>■ We will provide a clear path towards the attainment of targets through the implementation of the waste management plan, and will clearly communicate to the public the progress on the attainment of these targets.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good governance</td>
<td>■ We will implement measures that address waste collection for the commercial sector, increase the frequency of the collection of the organic waste fraction and study better collection options for residual waste (black bag).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>■ We will create economic initiatives to encourage waste prevention and separation at the household as well as the commercial level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liveability &amp; community wellbeing</td>
<td>■ We will ensure better access to bring-in sites and civic amenity sites, ensure their proper upkeep and maintenance, and introduce schemes to achieve locality-based targets for the separate collection of waste.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental culture for the future</td>
<td>■ We will invest in a nation-wide ongoing educational campaign targeting all sectors of society which instils in the population a sense of responsibility in being part of the chain of actions that need to be undertaken in order to achieve our national targets in waste reduction and segregation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**OUR COMMITMENT**

We will review, update and implement the waste management plan, and prepare and implement a waste prevention plan.
Our pledge is to meet our EU and international obligations within the stipulated time-frames. We also pledge to embark on a national consultation process in order to identify the most appropriate waste disposal options, including the waste to energy option being currently studied by this government.

WE WILL COMMIT TO THESE OTHER ACTIONS

- **WE WILL** establish structured programmes intended for supporting innovation-led waste management projects.
- **WE WILL** ensure better regulation of the management and collection of waste generated from medium and high-rise buildings.
- **WE WILL** ensure that waste collection is not carried out during rush-hours to reduce traffic congestion.
- **WE WILL** introduce better regulation of medicines and medical waste disposal.
We will reduce noise and air pollution, which are two of the significant contributors to reduced quality of life.
Environmental noise is a hazard to our health and well-being. It can affect people in both physiological and psychological ways, interfering with basic activities such as sleep, rest, study and communication. A 2016 report by the European Environmental Agency, entitled “Quiet areas in Europe — The environment unaffected by noise pollution”, identified Malta as one of the noisiest EU countries, offering practically no potential for quiet.

Noise regulation in Malta is highly fragmented. The Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) is responsible for the monitoring and regulation of environmental noise; work-place noise is regulated by the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA); the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (MCCAA) regulates noise from products placed on the market; Transport Malta (TM) is responsible from traffic-generated noise; the Building Regulation Office is responsible for controlling noise emanating from construction works; the Police, the Trade Department, the Malta Tourism Authority and Local Councils are to varying degrees responsible for controlling noise emanating from places of entertainment and trading activities, while the Police are responsible for the regulation of explosives.

We recognise noise pollution as one of the issues which heavily affects the quality of life of our citizens. In fact, during 2012, although late in the day, the Nationalist Government had prepared a draft Legal Notice titled the Noise Prevention and Control (Framework) Regulations, 2012. The primary purpose and scope of this Legal Notice were to recognise that unreasonable noise is a form of pollution, to prevent and control those sources of noise that are not regulated by existing legislation, to provide guidelines to determine reasonable and unreasonable noise levels applicable to particular activities or products, and to set up a Noise Control Board which would have the function to co-ordinate the regulation of noise between the various regulatory bodies already tasked with this role, and to establish the necessary administrative and regulatory procedures for dealing with all issues related to the various forms of noise pollution. This aimed to address the huge fragmentation of noise control regulations described above. Regrettably, this government has not given this matter any attention and noise pollution has continued to increase uncurbed as a result of this shameful neglect.

Air pollution harms human health and the environment. In Europe, emissions of many air pollutants have decreased substantially over the past decades, resulting in improved air quality across the region. However, air pollutant concentrations in urban areas are still too high, and air quality problems persist in areas with high concentrations of traffic.

Greenhouse gas emissions in Malta increased by over 57% since 1990, mainly as a direct result of the increase in vehicle use and ownership, as well as the increased demands of industrial processes. Levels of particulate matter (PM10) have been exceeded since they started being recorded in 2004. It is recognised that the major sources of PM10 in the Maltese Islands are the construction industry, power generation and traffic. These present serious concerns for the health of our population. The European Environment Agency has estimated that in 2012 there were over 220 premature deaths related to air pollution in Malta. This is a very high cost for the islands’ population and highlights the need for action.

Although this is a daunting task, we are committed to work towards reducing our air pollution levels to well within the EU acceptable levels.
OUR COMMITMENT

We will review and implement the Noise Prevention and Control (Framework) Regulations, including the establishment of a Noise Control Board, and update and implement the Air Quality Plan.

ACTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overarching priority</th>
<th>We will prepare and implement far-reaching action plans to reduce noise and air pollution levels.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good governance</td>
<td>We will carry out an audit of all government-owned vehicles and plant, and ensure that they comply with all relevant standards on emissions and noise levels, while also implementing a government-vehicle replacement strategy to electric vehicles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>We will legislate and enforce excessive noise generating and particulate emitting activities in particular at construction sites and major developments that generate such pollution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liveability &amp; community wellbeing</td>
<td>We will provide fiscal incentives to construction industry companies to assist them in upgrading their environment standards, in particular regarding plant, vehicles and equipment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental culture for the future</td>
<td>We will increase awareness about the impacts of human activities on the comfort of neighbourhood residents and promote a more caring society which understands its responsibility in curbing abuse. We will also provide a platform where complaints on noise and air emissions can be made without having to be redirected several times to various entities.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

EXPOSURE TO POLLUTION

According to Eurostat, the share of people in Malta who report being exposed to pollution is more than twice the EU average, with more than 40 per cent of the population complaining about air quality compared to the European average of 15 per cent. In 2011, about 20.0 per cent of the EU-28 population reported perceived exposure to noise pollution, while as much as 30.4 per cent of the population in Malta suffered from noise pollution.

- We will strive to reduce these worrying statistics and bring them down closer to the EU average.
We will increase awareness about the impacts of human activities on the comfort of neighbourhood residents and promote a more caring society which understands its responsibility in curbing abuse. We will also provide a platform where complaints on noise and air emissions can be made without having to be redirected several times to various entities.
We are committed to ensure a progress model that is founded on the pillars of sustainability, which are essential in achieving a better quality of life for all of society.
Being on the periphery of the EU, Malta cannot rely on the benefits of a central location. It must recognise its own advantages, specific to its position and context and build on them in order to compete in a more targeted manner. The investment we seek to attract or support must be compatible with these same qualities. Our commitment to our urban and rural environment is therefore an integral part of our social and economic development. Our goals should be to invest in strategic tangible projects capable of providing enduring dividends in the medium to long term. Our development strategy will prove more successful if it reflects the needs and aspirations of all the community rather than those of specific interest groups. It is this approach that will prove to be the most socially, economically and environmentally sustainable, for ourselves and for future generations.

The National Environment Policy presented by the Nationalist Government identified the green economy as one of the six objectives on the basis of which Malta’s environment is to be managed. In our 2015 pre-budget document we had identified the green economy as “an area of significant potential for the Maltese Islands, for beyond the economic impact, it can support our efforts and obligations towards a better managed, cleaner and more sustainable environment. It can be a significant source of economic activity directed at the creation of ways to supply efficient, eco-friendly products to assist green businesses... Past experiences show that simple, tailor-made incentives are likely to drive significant chunks of the population to make lifestyle changes—the take up of solar energy schemes or even the tax rebates on energy saving household appliances are clear evidence of this. Such schemes could be further extended to the concept of green buildings and green businesses, which would significantly reduce the energy cost while creating opportunity for workers with such skills. Evidently, this will require a deep look at the educational and training necessities, which so far still appear to be lacking in this regard. Despite the lack of formal policy on the Green economy, over the past decade our country has seen a gradual “green” shift in a number of fields, ranging from energy to tourism, from transport to manufacturing. Both businesses and enterprises have started to – at least to some extent, think green.”

We need to be bold in this aspect, and our policy working document entitled “An Economy for the People” has already identified the environment as a key differentiator in our economic vision for Malta and Gozo, placing equity and human dignity at its core. We must curb environmental degradation which is a direct result of unsustainable economic practices. We are committed to ensure a progress model that is founded on the pillars of sustainability, which are essential in achieving a better quality of life for all of society.
“I am not attracted by an economy which is intended to transform my country into a playground for the rich but one in which knowledge, innovation and entrepreneurship is given equal if not more importance to personal wealth. My economic inspirations are derived from the ambition to create an indigenous economic environment which secures a bright and prosperous future for our children and their children: handing them back a proud nation state with its head held high in the world.”

SIMON BUSUTTIL (INTRODUCTION TO “AN ECONOMY FOR THE PEOPLE”, 2016)
**SOLAR ROADS**

International research shows that solar power is becoming the cheapest form of energy generation, and technological advances have led to the development of photovoltaic cells that can be an integral part of various man-made structures, such as building facades and roofs. Tests are also being carried out on the suitability of such cells for use in paved areas and road surfaces. The latter development is currently being tested abroad, and offers exciting possibilities within our local context, particularly in view of our space limitations and abundant sunshine.

- **We will closely follow these developments, and will immediately launch studies to explore the possibility of adopting innovative developments, such as solar roads, in Malta and indeed, transform Malta into a leading country in this area.**

**GREEN JOBS IN MALTA**

According to “Green Employment in Malta” by the National Statistics Office (February 2015), green jobs in Malta amount to 2,121. The data also indicates that 72% of total employment within these industries relate purely to the green job activity, with the strongest sectors being the water supply industry (47%) and the solid waste management services (32.5%).

There is a possibility of 19% green jobs growth over the next three years. We commit ourselves to ensuring that this potential is achieved.

**GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

Green infrastructure is strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services such as water purification, air quality, space for recreation and climate mitigation and adaptation. This network of green (land) and blue (water) spaces can improve environmental conditions and therefore citizens' health and quality of life. It also supports a green economy, creates job opportunities and enhances biodiversity.

- **We will identify areas where green infrastructure can be implemented and undertake pilot projects that showcase the benefits of such systems.**

**WE WILL COMMIT TO THESE OTHER ACTIONS**

- **WE WILL** promote urban energy-efficiency, technology-led projects, leveraging the smart metering infrastructure.
- **WE WILL** promote investment by the private sector in environmental and cultural projects.
- **WE WILL** introduce incentives to create new sustainable sectors and attract new economic sectors operating in synergy with and in favour of the environment.
- **WE WILL** provide better incentives for agro-tourism projects as a clear example of how the economy and the environment can complement each other.
- **WE WILL** employ sustainable tourism principles, as opposed to promoting tourism at the expense of everything else, as this affects the environment. We will focus more on quality, rather than quantity.
The Nationalist Party wishes to thank all those individuals who came forward with their ideas and who participated in the various events organised as a run-up to the formulation of this document.

The following is a list of the main references used in the compilation of this document, including published documents, papers presented to the Nationalist Party by various stakeholders as part of the consultation process launched in January 2016, as well as the various consultation meetings carried out over the last months. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who, in any way, assisted in and contributed to the preparation of this document.

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