

Destination SMEs

Action Plan

Presented by Project Partner 3

MINISTRY FOR GOZO



MINISTRY FOR GOZO

**Destination
SMEs**
Interreg Europe



Destination SMEs project

PP3 – MINISTRY FOR GOZO

Action plan 04/2019 – 03/2021

During the Phase 1 of the Destination SMEs project (April 2016 – March 2019), all partners identified interesting practices and initiatives which could be inspiring enough to lead to an improvement of public policy, or to the duplication of this experience in their territory.

Following these three years, a two years long second phase of the project is starting, when project partners will improve their policies and use the outcomes of the project. This document is the road map of this second phase.

1 GENERAL INFORMATION

Partner organisation: **Ministry for Gozo**

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant): **not applicable**

Country: **Malta**

NUTS2 region: **Malta**

NUTS3 region: **Gozo and Comino / Għawdex u Kemmuna**

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2 IMPROVEMENT OF THE TARGET POLICY

At the application stage of the project, all partners identified a public policy which needed improvement. This section is dedicated to this target policy only.

Name of the target policy: EcoGozo – the Local Sustainable Development Strategy for Gozo

Nature of the target policy:

- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
- European Territorial Cooperation programme
- Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the managing authority of the target policy: Ministry for Gozo

Further details on the policy context and the way the action plan should contribute to improve the policy instrument:

At application stage of the Destination SMEs project, all partners identified a public policy which needed improvement. In Gozo's context, the target policy to be improved is the EcoGozo Local

Sustainable Development Strategy for Gozo.¹ This strategy is managed by the Ministry for Gozo. Established in 2008, the ecoGozo vision aims to improve the quality of life in Gozo through the promotion of a holistic approach to development, by considering the economic, social, and environmental aspects of the island.



The ecoGozo policy is based on a wide Public Consultation process which was held in 2010. The results of this consultation are published as a vision document for this policy – the vision of the people of Gozo for their island.² The scope of the ecoGozo policy is to implement this vision. In it, consultees speak, among others, on the need for quality investment for more sustainable jobs, the development of the traditional crafts sector in Gozo, the promotion of crafts cooperatives, the certification of handmade Gozo Craft, and the promotion of the potential of local produce and craft making to the local tourism product. In brief they wanted the craft industry to be rendered more competitive and to contribute to the island’s tourism offer, as well as provide adequate local job opportunities.

The EcoGozo policy is in practice the tool which the Government devised to help it implement the People’s vision for a sustainable future of their island. This Action Plan will assist Government in finding the right tools to improve the target policy thus continuing to implement the people’s vision quoted above by:

- a. Providing an adequate collective body that can be supported (single SMEs cannot be supported individually)
- b. Create a brand that can be incorporated in all destination management measures, and
- c. identifying measures and schemes to foster increased competitiveness of the craftmaking industry.

Gozo’s strong tradition of arts, artisan and crafts work is currently being severely challenged by the importation of goods sourced outside the island and falsely marketed as being produced locally. These counterfeit items are usually mass produced and sold cheap meaning that local artists, artisans, and craftspeople are short-changed, and struggling to compete against such products. This is discouraging people in this sector from investing further in their trade and, as a result, their craft is being seriously threatened.

Gozo’s identity and heritage have always been what made the island so attractive to foreign settlers, day-trippers and tourists alike. The mass-produced products that have crept into the market are now

¹ http://ecogozo.com/docs/Eco-Gozo_proposed_action%202010_2012.pdf

²

http://www.ecogozo.com/index.php?option=com_phocadownload&view=category&download=118%3Aa-vision-for-an-eco-island&id=13%3Avision-2020&lang=en

replacing the authentic, high quality, Gozo product and this is harming an important element of the island's identity.



This action plan proposes measures to support the authentic Gozo product.

This Action Plan proposes measures that would help producers of authentic products team up in a network, share ideas, and devise strategies to put to the fore Gozo's products. It also provides for the setting up of a prototype Label linked with the territory, its development, branding and marketing.

The proposed actions will cause the target policy to change and become a more holistic action plan for the island of Gozo. Success of this Action Plan will invariably lead the target policy to evolve by taking into consideration the existence of the Network and Label, and to develop policy actions intended to support and foster them. Policy Actions introduced to this effect may include, among others:

- a. The inclusion of the brand (based on the label) in the overall Destination Strategy through the ecoGozo policy, the National Tourism Strategy and the Gozo-specific Tourism Strategy,
- b. An investment in the promotion of the label in local and international markets,
- c. Provision of funding for the participation of the network in international events, conferences and fairs,
- d. Funding of educational and professional development initiatives for the benefit of the network.
- e. Assist the network in developing an collective online selling portal

The target policy (in tandem with other regional policies) will also need to change to introduce the label as part of the territorial tourism product. Through the experiences and the knowledge gained from the Destination SMEs project, the Ministry will be in a position to make the right choices in amending the policy instrument, taking into consideration the best practices and experiences of the other Regions. The actual changes to be made to the policy instrument will naturally take shape in the course of the implementation of the Action Plan which will also provide the opportunity for detailed discussion and study by the SMEs involved and Public Officials. In order to provide a tangible demonstration of commitment towards the Action Plan, the Ministry for Gozo will cover all the human resources cost of its staff required for this Action Plan from its own resources.

From an economic perspective, the primary role of the Ministry for Gozo is to foster the island's business community, nurture the creation of sustainable jobs and improve further the image of the island as a quality destination. To these aims, it will surely support all initiatives, which have to do with the subject matter of this proposal; i.e. formal SME networks, quality labels and facilitating business for artisans and craft makers.

There are scant resources for the testing of new setups like those being recommended in this Action Plan, but once these are already established and proven to work, they can tap into existing funding opportunities. This is why this Action Plan is of strategic importance. If the network and label created in the Action Plan are successful, there are numerous public measures, policies and opportunities that can assist the SME Network in attaining the resources required for its continued durability and sustainability.

As said earlier, from the part of the public sector, including the Ministry for Gozo, there are numerous funding opportunities for support after the pilot period and possibly even before, among which:

- a. The provision of human resources to established not-for-profit organisations through the Secondment of Public Officers to registered Voluntary Organisations administered by the Office of the Prime Minister
- b. The provision of financial resources to established networks to take part in international Fairs and Events such as "L'Artigiano in Fiera, Milan" in which the Ministry for Gozo participates already.
- c. Having an autonomous Legal and Juridical personality, the Network, once transformed from a pilot to a permanent organisation, would be eligible to tap into ERDF, ESF, EAFRD, LEADER+, INTERREG cross-border programmes, COSME, and many other funding programmes
- d. Assistance, mentorship guidance and access to opportunities through Business First administered by Malta Enterprise
- e. Schemes, training and programmes offered by the Malta Craft Council, or other bodies.

It would not be possible for a public body to promote individual SMEs or any of their products. The existence of the Made in Gozo label will make it possible for the Ministry for Gozo and other entities such as the Malta Craft Council to provide financial resources for the marketing of the certified products and services through the promotion of the label itself. Indeed, it is already the policy of the Ministry for Gozo to promote quality and territorial labels as a means of promoting its products of excellence and promoting the island as a quality destination.

The provision of funding from the Ministry for Gozo will be easier to attain since the framework of the proposed actions will be enshrined in the EcoGozo policy. Moreover, the Ministry also includes within its structure a Department for Tourism and Economic Development which is responsible to support and guide local operators, networks, and quality brands. Further support from this Department to both Network and quality brand are envisaged.

2.1 Action 1

ENCOURAGE THE SETTING UP OF A NETWORKING INITIATIVE FOR ARTISAN AND CRAFTMAKING SMES IN GOZO

Strategic objective: To encourage operators in these often micro-SMEs to network and group together to obtain strength in numbers, become more visible, attain economies of scale and overall become more organised and competitive.

a. Relevance to the project

In the course of the Destination SMEs project, PP3 officers participating in Study Visits, observed time and again, that in coming together to create networks and other types of associations, small and relatively dispersed SMEs managed to overcome a number of problems they faced. Collaboration is a key factor for increased visibility, competitiveness and clout, and has proven to be successful in other countries, beyond Gozo, in places such as Slovenia, Finland, Italy, and Ireland. During the exchange of experience, the Project Team often observed the fact that other craftspeople and artisans in other regions suffer from many of the same disadvantages and limitations similar SMEs in Gozo face. In most cases, these were overcome when SMEs and local players came together and formed various styles and forms of networks in response to the local needs and cultures, often resulting in quality labels and joint branding and marketing initiatives. In Finland, stakeholders formed the Koli Tourism Association and the Karelia a la Carte brand; in Italy, operators formed the Intro Network, the Tascapan Network and the Gran Paradiso Quality Label. In Ireland, initiatives such as Meet the Makers, Ring of Cork and Taste Cork provided opportunities for organisation, growth and joint initiatives. In Slovenia, the Regio Vitalis network brought new opportunities and exposure, using simple, yet effective methodologies.



One of the Stakeholder Group meetings

Stakeholders who participated in the various Stakeholder Group meetings carried out throughout this project also noted from the study of these best practices that networking and collaboration is key for the long-term sustainability of the artisan and crafts sector. They noted that the majority of day-trippers to Gozo (which form the largest proportion of tourists there – 83.2% in 2017 [MTA, 2018]) are typically directed in the usual mainstream places, without any room for them to explore the rest of the island. They essentially have ‘very little time on the island’. Tourists are typically rushed through the Cittadella; the main landmark of Victoria (the main town) and other important places of interest, without any real time to go around and explore authentic, local shops scattered around the island.

The good practices observed were presented during the Stakeholders’ Meetings held in the course of Phase 1. Stakeholders commented that even in Gozo, as observed in the different partner Regions, local producers should come together through a networking initiative such as an association or foundation, in order for the local artisans and craft makers to collaborate on various fronts. Collaboration may include marketing initiatives and promoting their business and traditions, not only by word of mouth, but by also collaborating in creating their own brand. Furthermore, the artisans and craftspeople could come together through the networking initiative, hire specialised services collectively and market their products in domestic and international markets.

Furthermore, a networking initiative is essential to ensure the sustainability of traditional trades and to render them more competitive in a modern world. Otherwise, skills may be lost in the years to come.

Stakeholders also expressed concern that there is little or no attention to enforcement on so-defined ‘local’ products that are not genuinely artisanal or locally-produced. Moreover, national legislation protecting local artisan products is weak and needs to be strengthened. Stakeholders feel that change can be brought about, in the medium to long term, if they organise themselves and be in a position to lobby with the national authorities. In the meantime, however, action is needed also in the short term and hence the proposed action on self-regulation which will be treated under Action 2.

Both the project team and the stakeholders group feel that these networking initiatives observed elsewhere may also be an ideal solution in the Gozo context. These best practices are described in detail further on in this Action Plan in Section 4.

b. Nature of the Action

The setting up of the networking initiative may be in the form of an association or foundation, whose membership will be Gozitan SMEs producing artisan and craft products. The members themselves will

be responsible to select the name of the networking initiative, and they will decide on the name of the sub-brand, which is proposed to be closely linked and feed into the ecoGozo Strategy. Members of the networking initiative will determine the criteria for joining the association as well as the product requirements for products to be eligible to display the “Made in Gozo” label (which is the subject of Action 2 below).

The members will also decide on the tasks of the initiative, which could include:

- a. the promotion of the newly created quality brand relating to artisan or craft products with a view of increasing visibility, attracting new members and become more prominent as a tourist offer.
- b. determination of the membership criteria and hence determination of which SMEs are eligible to display the quality label.
- c. Adopt a set of improvement criteria to achieve compliance with membership criteria.
- d. Lobbying government and constituted bodies in favour of SMEs operating in the artisan and crafts sector.

The members will decide the modus operandi. In the context of this Action Plan, it is proposed that:

- a. Gozo artisan and crafts SMEs will have full control on the setup. It is envisaged that the networking initiative and the consequent quality label will be successful only if a bottom-up approach is adopted. Individual operators are more likely to join if they feel they have some level of control over the eventual outcomes.
- b. Any operator within Gozo’s artisan and crafts industry will be entitled to be a member of the initiative if he/she fulfil the membership criteria.
- c. Members will elect officials and a board to run the initiative.
- d. Members will be required to sign a declaration of; (i) commitment to training and development (ii) of support and for sustaining the “Made in Gozo” label initiative.
- e. Membership will be against a yearly fee, which together with other proceeds, will allow the initiative to become self-sufficient in terms of funding.
- f. The board may sign an agreement with the Ministry for Gozo and other Gozitan, National or foreign public agencies/entities to define frameworks of collaboration.

Other criteria may also be taken into consideration by the networking initiative, among which:

QUALIFYING GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

1. Have a registered business address in Gozo
2. Have their workshop/operations located in Gozo (for at least a year prior to application)

COMPLIANCE

3. Business must be compliant with the relevant trading standards and consumer protection legislation
4. In the case of businesses which produce artisan food products, their business must be compliant to the relevant regulations issued by the Superintendence of Public Health and any other body responsible at law.

COMMITMENT

5. Be willing to provide their details to the networking initiative for publication in its directory
6. Adhere to the aims and objectives of the quality brand
7. Provide the network with the necessary information on their trade, including written content (where feasible) and photographs
8. Provide information about the business, such as performance data to the networking initiative in order to assess the effectiveness and impacts of the quality brand across time

PROCESS

9. Artefacts/products must be produced according to local traditional methods and processes and ideally be made from traditional raw materials.
10. Local artisan food products must contain ingredients which are sourced locally.

RETAIL

11. All packaged products sold must include the quality brand logo. The logo should be adequately visible.
12. Businesses forming part of the network must make the logo publicly visible to customers on their premises, social media accounts and webpage.
13. The network may develop communal retail strategies.



One of the major advantages of this initiative is the assurance of having adequate organisational capacity and access to expert services (e.g. marketing, design etc) which is a weakness in most local SMEs. For most small SMEs it is not financially feasible to employ professional staff dedicated solely to marketing and networking, and thus this set up would allow SMEs access to resources, services or initiatives which would otherwise be too difficult for them to implement on their own.

Another significant advantage relates to the networking between the SMEs. Most SMEs focus only on their specific product without adequate consideration that they can actually join forces to market their products in a comprehensive manner, by for example: selling a package and offering discounts or other benefits for consumers who buy artisanal and traditional products from the network. Networking would also be beneficial as it allows for greater innovation and flexibility to respond to changing and emerging scenarios and client needs, particularly when it comes to contemporary designs, which are typically requested by younger generations (thus creating a new market).

Furthermore, this proposed networking initiative in the form of an association or foundation would be instrumental from a lobbying perspective, providing strength in numbers.

c. Stakeholders involved

Main players:

- **Gozitan SMEs producing art, artisan products or crafts** – responsible for the setting up of the networking initiative, adopt governance rules and appointing board members.
- **Ministry for Gozo** – enabler, link with Destination SMEs project, monitoring and reporting, and alignment with the target policy.

Relevant stakeholder/s:

- Gozo Tourism Association
- Gozo Business Chamber
- Gozo Action Group Foundation (Leader+)
- Gozo Region
- Local Councils
- Malta Tourism Authority
- Destination Management and Tourism Services operators in Gozo

The Ministry for Gozo may have the following roles:

- Liaise with the network and act as a support function, predominantly through the process of formally setting up the association/foundation
- Assist in the provision of support services
- Any other support into tapping into the relevant Regional, National and EU funds as deemed possible.

d. Timeframe

Estimated start date: May 2019

Main milestones*:

- May 2019 – Ministry for Gozo to liaise with stakeholders that took part in the focus group meetings to fill-in the request for the Pilot Action.

- September 2019 – Ministry for Gozo to liaise with artisans and craftspeople to facilitate the setting up of their own networking initiative.
- November 2019 – initiate process for formally setting up the network, members, establish an adequate name for the initiative and the quality brand
- February 2020 – setting up of the networking initiative

(* Timeframes are subject to the timing of approval of the Action Plan and Pilot Action)

Estimated Approval / enforcement date: February 2020

e. Indicative costs

Indicative budget - €21.300 in relation to constitution expenses, registrations, management and administrative support services for a period of 2 years (until the organisation becomes self-sufficient)

f. Indicative Funding sources

The Ministry for Gozo will provide the Staff Cost necessary for its own officers (the Destination SMEs project team) to help members of the Stakeholders Group to organise themselves better in the form of a Network and explore the creation of a quality label based on the knowledge and experience gained by the Project Team during Phase 1 of the project. At present, there are no related local, regional or national funding instruments that can provide these external costs. Therefore PP3 will be presenting a proposal for a Pilot Action to cover this funding gap.

If the proposed Pilot Action is approved, the funds will take the initiatives listed in this Action Plan an important step forward – it will provide the resources for the external expertise needed to test and evaluate in real setting the added value of a network of SMEs operators; and it will provide a concrete framework for the network to operate professionally.

2.2 Action 2

ASSIST THE NEW NETWORK TO DEVELOP THE 'MADE IN GOZO' CONCEPT AND LABEL UNDER A SELF-REGULATORY REGIME

Strategic objective: Authentic regional products which are typically of higher quality but more expensive and labour-intensive are not competitive with mass produced 'local' souvenirs. This label will help the local authentic souvenirs become more competitive due to better marketing, higher exposure, client awareness and certification for authenticity.

a. Relevance to the project

Gozitan artisanal products are renowned and used extensively in the marketing of the island as a quality tourism destination. These products are appealing to visitors. Yet, at present, there is nothing which can guarantee to the tourist that the item being offered for sale is genuinely made in Gozo and not a cheap fake. In certain types of crafts and products, the differences are glaringly obvious. In others, the differences – although significant – are more subtle. It is essential for the competitiveness of the destination that the tourist is guided towards authentic products and experiences. This is felt to be a major principle in the destination management of the island, and to foster growth and competitiveness of tourism SMEs.

Discussions in the Stakeholder Group referred continuously to this issue and operators held it as one of the major issues which is hindering their competitiveness. This, they feel, is an obstacle that they cannot overcome individually, and in the absence of a clearly recognisable quality mark that can distinguish the genuine from the fake for the benefit of the visitor and the uninformed.

In the course of the study visits, the Project Team encountered several best practices which have these same aims, and make it easier to communicate with the visitor on the quality and the authenticity of the local products. Of particular great interest was the practice adopted in Cork County, Ireland, whereby a network between producers, restaurants, cafes, hotels, distributors and retailers was created and a subsequent brand was developed for producers who are passionate about the quality of their produce. The initiative is branded under the 'Taste Cork' mark. Taste Cork is a regional branding initiative representing many of the outstanding artisan food and drink producers based throughout Cork. Taste Cork is part of an ongoing effort to harness the power of the 'collective', to ensure that Cork's unique food heritage fosters the attention it deserves. The 400 members of Taste Cork enjoy many benefits that make it very appealing for producers to produce a high quality product and join in

the initiative. Moreover, a full time Project Co-ordinator was appointed at the start of this initiative with several administrative and marketing responsibilities to push the Taste Cork brand forward.

The Gran Paradiso quality mark is an identification that the National Park assigns to tourism operators who are engaged in the process of quality and sustainability to guarantee the quality of workmanship, trade, and hospitality in the tourism sector. All the producers and local entrepreneurs can obtain the trademark of Gran Paradiso upon the verification of several requirements in relation to arts, handicrafts, artisanal products and other tourism activities. Beside these mandatory criteria, producers and local enterprises need to meet other standards related to territorial peculiarity, network activity, and other environment sustainability procedures.

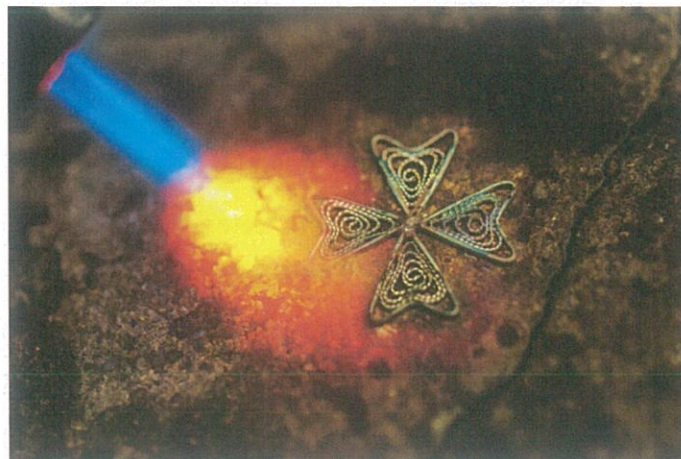
These best practices were presented to the Stakeholders' Group and discussed in detail. The ensuing discussion enforced the belief of both project team and stakeholders that a strong initiative for the valorisation of local produce, its linking with the terroir, and awareness on its distinctiveness, are key elements for an increased competitiveness of Made in Gozo products.

All the best practices mentioned have some common aims which Gozo tourism SMEs need urgently, among which, an identifiable brand guaranteeing authenticity and quality. These best practices are expounded further in the latter parts of this document.

b. Nature of the Action

The above can be achieved by developing and launching a 'Made in Gozo' label.

The launching of the "Made in Gozo" label and self-regulation depend very much on setting up the organisation proposed in Action 1. Ideally, self-regulation is to be developed by this Stakeholders association.



Proposal for the development of a "Made in Gozo" label for products produced local SMEs forming part of the networking initiative

The 'committee' is to include at least two members who are artists or artisans operating an SME in Gozo. The committee will be tasked with the:

- a. preparation of criteria for products to be granted the "Made in Gozo" mark
- b. the proposal of legislation that will safeguard and reinforce the "Made in Gozo" label
 - set up check controls to maintain the quality of operators and thus implement a "warning system" against those who sell items that are not genuinely made in Gozo by local producers. The following are some of the criteria which may be adopted by the networking Initiative for its members to display the "Made in Gozo" label:
 - all products displaying the "Made in Gozo" label must be produced by SMEs forming part of the networking initiative
 - products displaying the label must be genuinely produced in Gozo
 - artisan food products must include ingredients which are sourced locally
 - the logo must be clearly displayed on all packaged products
 - the "Made in Gozo" sign must be displayed at the producers' workshop or premises.
- c. Marketing and promotion of the brand:
 - Identify market openings for the visibility of the label through physical presence in outlets, fairs, social media, tourism establishments and members' workshops
 - Work towards the possibility of establishing a permanent space close to the tourism hotspots providing a high exposure to labelled products.
 - Work towards the affiliation of the quality brand with broader destination brands such as EcoGozo, VisitGozo, VisitMalta, and others, thus increasing the label's visibility.

c. Stakeholders involved

Main players:

- **Members of the Networking Initiative (Gozitan SMEs producing art, artisan products or crafts)** who, after setting up the association, will establish criteria for the establishment, governance, award and policing of the "Made in Gozo" label.
- **Ministry for Gozo** – enabler, link with Destination SMEs project, monitoring and reporting of implementation process, and integration in the target policy.

Relevant stakeholder/s:

- Gozo Tourism Association
- Gozo Business Chamber
- Gozo Action Group Foundation (Leader+)
- Gozo Region
- Local Councils
- Malta Tourism Authority
- Destination Management and Tourism Services operators in Gozo

d. Timeframe

Estimated start date: March 2020

Main milestones*:

- March 2020 – Initiate discussion on the criteria for award of label, design, organisation and policing
- May 2020 – engage branding and marketing consultants
- June 2020 – consultation with external major stakeholders such as the Ministry for Gozo, the Gozo Business Chamber, the Gozo Tourism Association, and with potential regulatory institutions
- September 2020 onward : soft-launch and drive for membership
- November 2020 – official launch of Label

(* Timeframes are subject to the timing of approval of the Action Plan and Pilot Action)

Estimated Approval / enforcement date: November 2020

e. Indicative costs

Indicative budget - €32,700 in relation to the development of a labelling scheme, branding, registrations, fees and launching campaign.

f. Indicative funding sources

The Ministry for Gozo will provide the Staff Cost necessary for its own officers (the Destination SMEs project team) to help members of the Stakeholders Group to organise themselves better in the form of a Network and explore the creation of a quality label based on the knowledge and experience gained by the Project Team during Phase 1 of the project.

If the proposed Pilot Action will be approved, the funds will provide specialist support towards the development of a quality label, knowledge to support the brand in the market, lay out strategic objectives, and describe expected benefits and outcomes.

3 OTHER RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

Thanks to the Destination SMEs project, many interesting practices, initiatives and policies were observed. Some of them offered inspiration to improve the main policy instrument tackled by the project as presented in part 2 of this action plan.

But these learnings can also benefit to other policy instruments or local and regional strategies. Destination SMEs partners intend to make use of as many interesting learnings from the project as possible, to make the most of this project.

This is the reason why, in addition to the actions presented in Part 2 dedicated to the main policy instrument target, we tried to identify all possible contributions from our project to improve other regional, national or EU policies, of course always in relation to the main topic of the project: Destination management.

Apart from improving the EcoGozo policy directly, the experiences gained in the context of the Destination SMEs project have also provided knowledge that can contribute towards the improvement of the Regional Development Policy of Malta (2014-2020).

Through Action 3, the partner aims to provide a strong case for the setting up of a financial instrument funded through the ERDF, which will assist the target SMEs in strengthening their competitiveness and sustainability.

- Name of the improved policy

Regional Development Policy (Malta), 2014-2020

- Name of the managing authority

Planning and Priorities Coordination Division

- Description of the policy

Being the EU's main investment policy and one of its most concrete expressions of solidarity, the EU Regional policy targets EU regions and cities, boosting economic growth and improving quality of life through strategic investment. It is also an active form of solidarity, which focuses support on the less developed regions.

EU regional policy funding focuses on four priorities:

- Research and innovation
- Information and communication technologies
- **Making small and medium-sized businesses more competitive**
- Moving towards a low-carbon economy

The Action envisaged in this Plan is being taken in the context of the priority of increasing the competitiveness of SMEs.

Given the timing of the present Action Plan at the final stages of the current OP which ends in 2020, and the status of funds commitment, should it prove difficult to influence changes in the present programming period, the Ministry for Gozo will propose that the Managing Authority considers taking it up for inclusion in the next programming period 2021-2027.

- Source of inspiration from the project

During the project's Study visits, time and again, PP3 observed how major limitations faced by micro SMEs in various countries (among which remoteness, very small size, limited resources, poor accessibility) were overcome by these SMEs coming together, often also pooling their resources, to become more visible, invest together, present their products in a more attractive way, be closer to their target clients and offer added value, thus becoming more competitive. This also created a location - an address - that became famous and synonymous with these SMEs themselves and their products.

This concept was observed both in Joensuu, Finland with the Taitokortteli Arts and Crafts Centre and in Valle d'Aosta with the Maison Bruil. These are described in more detail below.

- Description of the expected improvement

CREATE A NEW HUB FOR ARTISAN AND CRAFTMAKING SMES CLOSE TO THE ESTABLISHED TOURISM ROUTES

Strategic objective: Artisan and craft SMEs are located in workshops which are dispersed and beyond reach of most tourists visiting Gozo. They need a new hub; i.e. a new 'address' close to the established tourist routes, which will become synonymous with local genuine products and a destination in itself. There is a strong opportunity for such a hub of workshops, boutiques or casa-bottega to be created in the Victoria historic quarter.

a. Introduction – Project and Local Context

In the course of the Destination SMEs study visits, the PP3 project team observed a number of cases when SMEs find themselves far from the established tourism routes and hotspots, and thus face problems of accessibility, volume, visibility, added value (it takes visitors too long to reach them), and so on. Especially in remote and/or small tourist centres where tourists do not spend too long a time, the visitor's time schedule becomes very much full. Thus, the SME hoping to reach the tourist needs to be within efficient reach; either in terms of space or of attractiveness of the tourism offer.



This principle was adopted in different manners in both Italy and Finland. In Valle d'Aosta, Fondation Grand Paradis was entrusted with the restoration and management of a traditional house in Introd, for the purpose of transposing it into a museum to exhibit crafts, traditional food and wine making. The museum is entitled "Maison Bruil" and similar to the action being proposed in this action plan, it managed to refurbish an old and traditional house in the area and transform it to the benefit of local artisans. It brings different artisans together to create a network of artisans all offering their products in one location. Therefore, for the visiting tourist, it is like visiting ten, twenty or more local producers all at the same time. Getting together also gives rise to economies of scale and thus the possibility to invest together in services that would otherwise be out of reach, such as the selling of products online.

Furthermore, in Joensuu, Finland, the Taitokortteli Arts and Crafts Centre accommodates traditional and modern crafts, creating a cultural quarter in the centre of Joensuu where artisans and craftsmen sell and exhibit their own products. More importantly, the quarter is a central hub for travellers, city dwellers, handicraft professionals and also amateurs. It has become an important and attractive hub in the urban area – one may say, a trendy location and address. The centre also hosts high-quality exhibitions and other related events that are organised within the premises across the year. This example of best practice shows that the hub created in Joensuu is an excellent example of how the local artisan and crafts people community can benefit and gain competitive advantage by coming together in a geographical hub (with the bonus of a historical setting) and showcasing their work, the processes involved to visitors, whilst possibly involving them in particular activities.

Many SMEs in Gozo complain of difficulties for access to suitable workshop, display and customer interaction facilities that could render them more 'visible', attractive and an experience in themselves to the potential tourists that could visit them. Most SMEs in the artisan and craft categories operate from workshops close to their homes, which more often than not are scattered all over the island, and far from the established tourism routes and hotspots. They are difficult to reach by tourists – particularly those who do not have access to private transport (taxi or car hire).

On the other hand, most of Gozo's historic cores still retain many characteristics of the traditional architecture of the Maltese Islands. Although some have been marred by dissonant developments, many historic centres in Gozo still offer huge potential for the local tourism product – in them one feels as travelling back in time. Yet, many properties within these historic

cores, lie derelict and abandoned, with owners preferring more modern housing on the outskirts, resulting in a negative impact for both the ambience (ergo tourism product) and financial losses for the owner. Needless to say, that there is pressure for the redevelopment of derelict properties within these cores, arising from the need of owners to make some financial sense out of these properties. These two problems can be matched to create a resounding opportunity.

Linking this authentic heritage, its potential for tourism and artisan activity may provide a solution for the regeneration of these historic urban cores and turn them into vibrant spaces which offer an experience for both the visitor and the local community. This Action proposes the launching of a Grant Scheme through ERDF funding, that would assist Artisans and Craftspeople to restore derelict properties within Historic Cores and use these properties as their workshops, boutiques, visitor interaction facilities, and also perhaps in the traditional Casa-Bottega style where the ground floor would be taken up by the economic activity, and the upper floors serving as the family's domestic quarters.



Work of a local artist displayed at the Rabat (Victoria) historical core

The Rabat (Victoria) historic core lends itself particularly well as a test-bed for this initiative which can then be extended to all the other urban conservation areas in Gozo. The development of a hub of artisans and craftspeople in such a historic location which is mostly pedestrian would practically result in the creation of an open-air museum which may become an extremely important asset for the conservation and valorisation of local cultural heritage and the sustainability of its practicing as a realistic business venture.

b. Action

In the Destination SMEs application form, the Ministry for Gozo (PP3) had stated that “The project will also provide the necessary knowledge which will assist the Ministry for Gozo in presenting mid-term amendments to the Operational Programmes and in providing feedback for the drafting of the Operational Programme for 2020-2026”

The Ministry for Gozo will recommend to the National Authorities responsible for the development of the Operational Programmes for the inclusion in the OP of a provision for the setting up of a Financial Incentive scheme under the priority ‘Making small and medium-sized businesses more competitive’ which will provide an incentive for properties within Historical Centres (also known as Urban Conservation Areas) to be developed into Artisans’ workshops, display areas and other uses related to crafts, traditional produce and artisan activity. Appropriate criteria are to be established and funding awarded following the assessment of applications for funding. The precise criteria will need to be studied in significant detail and are suggested to include:

- Rehabilitation / restoration of a property that does not involve any new extensions, other than minimal or extensions that do not alter the streetscapes and viewsheds thus safeguarding the historic aspect of the area
- The property is to be located in an Urban Conservation Area
- The property is to be used mainly as a workshop for the production of authentic Gozitan crafts, artisan products or objets d’art, with the workshop being open for visitors, or the setting up of specialised boutiques with display areas such as for lace and other handicrafts or traditional products, and possibly visitor interaction (hands-on) spaces.
- The sale of goods will be considered acceptable but the predominant use will have to be that of a workshop.
- The scheme may also consider allowing for the use of properties as traditional ‘casa-bottega’, where part of the property is used as the ‘bottega’ (workshop) and the rest is used as the operator’s home.

- Players involved

Main players:

1. Ministry for European Affairs and Equality
2. Parliamentary Secretariat for EU funds and Social Dialogue

3. Ministry for Gozo
4. Planning and Priorities Coordination Division, Government of Malta

The Ministry for Gozo will be responsible to:

- Seek and lobby to acquire funds for the scheme from the ERDF
- Fund the preparatory work required for this project
- Will prepare the criteria for assessment of applications
- Will process applications for funding.

The Ministry and Parliamentary Secretariat responsible for EU Affairs and Funds will be required to accept the inclusion of the scheme in the forthcoming Operational Programme at the political level.

The Planning and Priorities Coordination Division is responsible for the development of the draft Operational Programme, its sponsoring up to approval and adoption and then for its implementation.

Supporting players:

1. The networking initiative (assist the Ministry for Gozo in the drawing up of criteria and subsequently to provide advice and guidance to SMEs who wish to apply)
2. Gozo Tourism Association
3. Gozo Business Chamber
4. Planning Authority

- Expected timeframe of the improvement

Estimated start date: September 2019

Main milestones:

- Start date: September 2019
- Discuss proposal with relevant internal stakeholders: September 2019
- Discuss proposal with relevant external stakeholders : November 2019
- Conclude draft proposal: January 2020
- Meet with the Planning and Priorities Coordination Division (responsible for ESIF and Cohesion Policy) and present proposal: January 2020

- Obtain comments / requests for revision: March 2020
- Submit proposal in final draft: April 2020

Estimated Approval / enforcement date: Q3-2020

- Costs

The Funding Instrument establishing this scheme could be in the region of € 5 million in order to be able to fund 30-40 applications to some significant extent.

- Funding sources

Preparatory and proposal costs: Ministry for Gozo

Funding Instrument: ERDF 2014-2020 or ERDF 2021-2027

4. Sources of Inspiration for Policy Improvements

During phase one of the Destination SMEs project, the Ministry for Gozo experienced several good practices implemented by project partners. The inspiration and good results obtained by these best practices have led the Ministry for Gozo to find inspiration to propose the development of a network for SMEs active in the art, artisan and craft sectors and the creation of a 'Made in Gozo' label to aid the producers of authentic products become more visible, attractive, and an experience within themselves for the tourist.

Below is a detailed review of the best practices which inspired the Ministry for Gozo to propose the three initiatives making up this Action Plan.

Best Practices inspiring Action 1

The Networking initiative being proposed draws inspiration mainly from the three best practices described below. In the case of the Living the Sheep's Head Way – 'Meet the Makers' Tour, PP3 saw success in a group of craftspeople coming together to create an experience where the visitor witnesses the manufacturing process in the workshop itself. The Ring of Cork promoters managed to bring together tourist SMEs and managed to combat competition and bring more tourists to their destination. Operators in Introd also grouped together and managed to attract more tourists to this emerging destination. In all three cases, SMEs achieved success by networking and working together.

Good Practice	Living the Sheep's Head Way - 'Meet the Makers' Tour
Owner of Good Practice	Sheep's Head and Bantry Tourism Co-operative, Cork, Ireland
Description	<p>The local tourism Co-op - Sheep's Head and Bantry Tourism Co-operative was set up as a voluntary group of members in 2013 with the support of the Sheep's Head Way Ltd which manages the walking route.</p> <p>The local tourism Co-op's main role is working with and supporting local SMEs and networks to help them manage tourist-based opportunities effectively. The co-op engages a marketing coordinator with grants from Cork County Council and yearly subscriptions from members. The co-ordinator runs the 'Living the Sheep's Head Way' marketing campaign. This co-op works closely with Failte Ireland (National Authority for Tourism), assists local producer to develop unique products and services that compliments the brand development of the Wild Atlantic Way. The aim is to build a community that draws on everyone's skills and provides an authentic experience to visitors.</p> <p>The tourism Co-op promotes the artisan and craft makers along the Sheep's Head route. It involves members from the grassroots so that communities will own the concept and create genuinely distinctive arts and crafts, and artisanal products.</p>



	<p>The Co-op collaborates with 'Meet the Makers' Tour - a demonstration of the crafts and foods of the Sheep's Head Way. 'Meet the Makers' Tour is a network of family run small businesses keeping alive and demonstrating the crafts and artisanal foods of the Sheep's Head route. The tourists can visit the workshops, which are usually <i>casa bottega</i>, see the products in the making, while they participate and learn in the process. Classes in arts and crafts for tourists are also organised.</p>
Organisation Implementing the Transfer	Ministry for Gozo
Description of the transfer	<p>The network initiative being proposed in Action 1, will have a marketing strategy and approach similar to the local tourism Co-op's process of animating and promoting a local community through a bottom-up approach. The aim is to plan and implement collaboratively to connect, network, share resources, and cross-refer as partners to give visitors inspiring experiences.</p> <p>The artisan and craft makers will benefit from improved collaboration and cross promotion between members. The network initiative can assist them to develop ways how to access other marketing initiatives and tourist organisations.</p> <p>'Meet the Makers' Tour is a set-up that demonstrates arts and crafts, and artisanal products in the making. The network initiative proposed in the Action Plan, will assist the artisan and crafts people to develop products and experiences that can attract more visitors to their artisanal shops or <i>casa bottega</i>, and market their business in a more distinctive way.</p> <p>'Meet the Makers' Tour concept can be adopted by the artisan and crafts makers. It can inspire the production of genuine products, keep traditions alive and sustainable, while respecting the environment.</p>
Players involved	Gozo SMEs producing arts and crafts and artisanal products; local entrepreneurs; Ministry for Gozo; Gozo Tourism Association; Malta Tourism Authority; Gozo Business Chamber; Malta Enterprise; Local Councils; Malta Crafts Council; and other Voluntary organisations.
Expected timeframe of the transfer	May 2019 – September 2019
Costs	€ 28,000
Funding Sources	Pilot Action proposal

Good Practice	Ring of Cork,
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Owner of Good Practice	Cork County Council, Ireland
Description	<p>Ring of Cork is a network of businesses working collectively to bring visitors to the East Cork and Cork Harbour destination. The network helps member SMEs in product promotion, and encourages business to business training, and attending events and seminars.</p> <p>Ring of Cork is made up of Cork’s best tourist activities, attractions, restaurants and accommodation providers. It provides the mechanism through which businesses connect and support each other to foster growth. Since its establishment, Ring of Cork has supported its members through the development of innovative promotional material, providing adequate customer care and marketing training, and organising seminars and events to increase awareness about this network.</p> <p>Ultimately, Ring of Cork aims to support existing jobs and create new jobs in the tourism and related industries within the area. It achieves this by working collectively with its network of members to continually increase the number of visitors to the Cork Harbour Destination.</p>
Organisation Implementing the Transfer	Ministry for Gozo, Malta

Description of the transfer	<p>The network initiative being proposed in Action 1 will be set up similar to Ireland's Ring of Cork. Local artisan and craftmakers will be entitled to become members in this network. Here, members can work collectively through marketing campaigns, similar to what is done in Ireland. Individual artisan and craftmakers do not have the financial means and the knowhow to market their product to a local and international audience. By working collectively, costs are split, ideas may be shared, and a marketing campaign may be designed using the umbrella brand marketing strategy. Through such an initiative, these SMEs will be making their presence felt in the market and render themselves more competitive.</p>
Players involved	Ministry for Gozo
Expected timeframe of the transfer	May 2019 – September 2019
Costs	€ 28,000
Funding Sources	Pilot Action proposal

Good Practice	Introd Network
Owner of Good Practice	Local entrepreneurs – Introd – Aosta Valley - Italy
Description	<p>Introd is a new developing tourist area, with proximity to Cogne which is a more mature touristic destination near the National Park. Therefore, operators in Introd felt the need to set up the network to attract more tourists to the area and offer a more authentic experience of the character of the place.</p> <p>Introd Network is an informal network of small-scale tourist operators working in accommodation facilities, arts and crafts, and artisanal products. Apart from aiming to promote and market local products and services, the network promotes the sites of interest while creating events and experiences to attract more tourist to the area.</p> <p>The members of the network are affiliated as well with the Quality Brand of the Gran Paradiso National Park established in 2009, and includes accommodation, artisanal food products and handicrafts of the five valleys in the National Park.</p> <p>To market and promote the area and local products and services, the network created the yearly event 'La Nuit des Temps' which is</p>

	<p>proving to be very popular. They also turned the old milk factory into a local heritage tourist attraction. There is also Maison Bruil, an ancient farmhouse with a permanent exhibition dedicated to the local traditions of wine and food managed by a local entrepreneur at Introd. Maison Bruil serves as a marketing and selling hub to the local artisan and crafts products.</p> <p>Introd network also associates with Tascapan, a private company involving local providers of traditional food and crafts managed by a local entrepreneur. They sell the products on line and from an artisanal shop situated at Maison Bruil. At the same time, the company manages the museum as a central tourist attraction. Local handcraft workshops visits are also promoted by Introd Network. This has contributed to turn Introd into a real tourist destination and helped the growth of small businesses located in this area.</p>
Organisation Implementing the Transfer	Ministry for Gozo
Description of the transfer	<p>The network initiative being proposed in Action 1 will be set up similar to Introd Network. Local artisan and craftmakers will be entitled to become members and they can cooperate with other local entrepreneurs, associations, and other established public and private entities in Gozo, while creating their own brand.</p> <p>The Intro Network is a good example how the network imitative proposed in our Action Plan can help set up a private-public cooperation, with a long-term vision, common goals, and using a bottom-up approach.</p> <p>As it is, artisans and craft makers in Gozo have not enough power to lobby for the creation of conditions where arts and crafts makers can excel and become more competitive. The network can have the coordination effect needed to create a long-term collaboration between the public and private sector, and other managing authorities in the tourism sector, to establish frameworks and facilities to promote the arts and crafts sector.</p> <p>Apart from the marketing and promotion of its members, the network can create activities and promotional events to attract more tourists to the artisanal shops, casa bottega and historical centres. The collaboration and promotion between members will also have a positive effect on the creation of genuine products and experiences that complement each other and mirror the rural and traditional character of Gozo.</p>
Players involved	Gozo SMEs producing arts and crafts and artisanal products; local entrepreneurs; Ministry for Gozo;
Expected timeframe of the transfer	May 2019 – September 2019
Costs	€ 28,000
Funding Sources	Pilot Action proposal

Best Practices inspiring Action 2

The proposal for the establishment of a quality label was inspired by many cases observed throughout the project, but mainly through the three cases quoted in detail below. Through ‘Taste of Cork’, SMEs collaborated to create a mark that ensures that the visitor gets an authentic experience of Cork and its products. The Gran Paradiso Quality Label and Karelia a la Carte, both present and guarantee the authenticity of the products and services in relation with the territory and the identity of their respective regions. In each case, PP3 observed the value of a discernible mark of quality in the region, which made it easy for visitors to trust with guaranteeing the quality and authenticity of the product or service they were buying.

Good Practice	Taste Cork, Ireland
Owner of Good Practice	Cork County Council, Ireland
Description	<p>Taste Cork is a regional branding initiative whereby a network between producers, restaurants, cafes, hotels, distributors and retailers was created and a subsequent brand was developed for producers who are passionate about the quality of their produce.</p> <p>Taste Cork is part of an ongoing effort to harness the power of the ‘collective’, to ensure that Cork’s unique food heritage fosters the attention it deserves. The 400 members of Taste Cork enjoy many benefits that make it very appealing for producers to produce a high quality product and join in the initiative. Moreover, a full time Project Co-ordinator was appointed at the start of this initiative with several administrative and marketing responsibilities to push the Taste Cork brand forward.</p>
Organisation Implementing the Transfer	Ministry for Gozo, Malta



Description of the transfer	The networking initiative proposed in the Action Plan will include members from the artisan, and craft sector. Just like Taste Cork, the creation of a brand is being proposed and a member directory is being proposed for this initiative that will complement an informative website launched to provide details about the network and its product. Through this practice transfer, local SMEs in the artisan and craft sector are expected to become more competitive as they will be grouping together, obtaining strength in number and attaining economies of scale when marketing their product. This will not only minimise marketing costs for these SMEs, but also make them more visible through the marketing strategies adopted.
Players involved	Gozo SMEs producing arts, artisan work or crafts and Ministry for Gozo (supportive role).
Expected timeframe of the transfer	January 2020 – November 2020
Costs	€ 25,000
Funding Sources	Pilot Action proposal

Good Practice	Gran Paradiso Quality Label, Italy
Owner of Good Practice	Foundation Grand Paradis, Italy
Description	In Valle d'Aosta, a quality brand was established in 2009 entitled "Marchio di Qualita' Gran Paradiso". The quality mark "Gran Paradiso" is an identification that the National Park assigns to tourism, crafts and food operators who are engaged in the process of quality and sustainability to guarantee the quality of workmanship and hospitality from various fronts. All the producers or local enterprises can obtain the trademark of Gran Paradiso upon the verification of several requirements in relation to agri-food, handicraft and the tourism sector. The

	<p>operators need to have the activity inside the protected area (Park Zone) or in the surrounding areas (Gran Paradiso Area). For producers or local enterprises to obtain the quality label, they need to meet a number of standards, including those in relation to territorial peculiarity, internal management aspects and other environmental sustainability procedures. Therefore, the Gran Paradiso quality label also aims to provide consumers piece of mind on the products' quality. Operators and producers of agri-food products such as jams, honey, dairy products, local crafts including wood, cooper and bronze, as well as hospitality services, apply strict rules and procedures that ensure their quality.</p>
Organisation Implementing the Transfer	Ministry for Gozo, Malta
Description of the transfer	<p>A "Made in Gozo" brand/label is recommended to be established by the proposed networking initiative. The brand shall be very similar to the best practice experienced in Gran Paradiso, Italy. The proposed quality mark 'Made in Gozo' will aim at certifying the quality of the products produced in the Gozo. This will help authentic regional products combat the entry of mass produced items competing in the market. This practice will educate the buyer on what is authentic and what is not. Increased awareness should result in increased competitiveness for local producers, as clients will seek certification of authenticity (made in Gozo label) before making a purchase. The label will also help local authentic products become more competitive due to better marketing and thus higher exposure.</p>
Players involved	Gozo SMEs producing arts, artisan or crafts and Ministry for Gozo (supportive role).
Expected timeframe of the transfer	January 2020 – November 2020
Costs	€ 25,000
Funding Sources	Pilot Action proposal

Good Practice	Karelia a la Carte, Finland
Owner of Good Practice	ProAgria Association, North Karelia
Description	<p>Karelia à la carte is a network of North Karelian restaurants and Companies in travel, foodstuff and accommodation industries. Originally, the network included only rural tourism enterprises, catering companies and restaurants. From 2007 onwards, also enterprises in food sector have been accepted in the network. The aim of this was to increase the use of local products in member companies.</p> <p>The objective of the network is to create a collaboration platform for restaurants, tourism and food companies that commit themselves to the following values: locality, Karelian culture, originality, hospitality, and nature.</p> <p>The network intends to provide economic benefits to its members. It develops common Karelia à la Carte brand, cooperation, joint marketing, procurement of raw materials, logistics, Karelia á la Carte menus, products, services, business activities, and operational environment.</p> <p>In addition to building up cooperation between different sectors, the project developed production, marketing, logistics and utilisation of local ingredients in the companies of the network. A uniform look was created for marketing the brand, which makes it easier for consumers to recognize local products, for example at fairs and in grocery stores.</p>
Organisation Implementing the Transfer	Ministry for Gozo, Malta



Description of the transfer	<p>This good practice will be transferred to Gozo as part of action 2 of the Action Plan. The inspiration and good results obtained by this practice have led the Ministry for Gozo to propose the creation of a 'Made in Gozo' label to aid producers of authentic products become more visible, attractive, and an experience within themselves.</p> <p>The uniform look that was created for marketing the 'Karelia a la Carte' brand will be used in the 'Made in Gozo' initiative. Just like 'Karelia a la Carte', the 'Made in Gozo' brand will have its own product criteria, logo, and marketing campaigns. Products that are eligible to include the brand logo on their packaging will be marketing locally and internationally through the practice of umbrella branding, whereby a single brand name is used to market two or more related products. This practice is similar the one presented in North Karelia.</p> <p>It is challenging for an SME to build success on its own. Through the proposed transfer of practice, local artisan and craftmaking SMEs will group together to present one brand that becomes well known among the public. This will make local SMEs more competitive due to brand awareness and the subsequent increase in visibility and sales.</p>
Players involved	Ministry for Gozo
Expected timeframe of the transfer	January 2020 – November 2020
Costs	€ 25,000
Funding Sources	Pilot Action proposal

Best Practices inspiring Other Policy Improvements

In addition to the inspiration for the improvement of the target policy, PP3 also observed numerous instances where information gained through the Destination SMEs can be used to improve other policies. In this particular case, the concept of bringing together in a physical location a number of SMEs to create an address or location of repute was observed being implemented in different ways in Italy and Finland. PP3 feels that this best practice can influence the funding of similar ventures through policies addressed at managing EU funding.

Fondation Grand Paradis in Valle d'Aosta through Maison Bruil, managed to refurbish an old and traditional house in the area; bringing different artisans together to create a hub of artisans all offering their products in one location. The Taitokortteli Arts and Crafts Centre project in Joensuu, Finland, brought about the creation of a cultural quarter in the centre of Joensuu where artisans sell and exhibit their own products in a location that has become a central hub for travellers, city dwellers, and craftspeople.

Good Practice	Maison Bruil, Italy
Owner of Good Practice	Fondation Grand Paradis, Italy



Description	<p>In the municipality of Grand Paradiso in Valle d'Aosta, Foundation Grand Paradis was entrusted with the restoration and management of a traditional house in Introd intended to become a hub and focal point for local traditional producers. The house was subsequently transposed into a museum to exhibit traditional food and wine making, named "Maison Bruil". This initiative was financed by the municipality together with the support of public funds. Subsequently, the management of the museum was passed on to the company named "Tascapan", which is a private company involving a network of local providers of traditional food and crafts. The company sells its products online and from a shop situated at "Maison Bruil", whilst simultaneously manages the museum as a central tourist attraction. Similar initiatives are adopted to assist this new emerging tourist destination and the growth of small B&B businesses operating in the area.</p>
Organisation Implementing the Transfer	Ministry for Gozo, Malta
Description of the transfer	<p>Similar to Maison Bruil in Valle d'Aosta, many properties in Gozo's historical centres lie derelict and abandoned, resulting in a negative impact on the ambience of the area and creating opportunity costs to owners. Herein lies an opportunity for local artisans and craft makers to rehabilitate such buildings and convert them into workshops, in a setting provided by these historic quarters, which is very suggestive. Through a financial incentive, property owners will be motivated to sell or rent out their property to be converted into a workshop in a bid to create a hub for artisan and craft making SMEs in a historic quarter, close to established tourism routes. In this manner, a good number of SMEs will be located very close to each other, resulting in a hub very similar to Maison Bruil.</p> <p>This practice is being transferred as per Action 3 of the Action Plan. The idea is to rehabilitate a historical core, preserve its</p>

	<p>features and adding value to it by introducing an artisan and craft-making hub.</p> <p>Similar to Maison Bruil, this action aims at transforming old and traditional houses in Gozo into workshops where local artisans and craftmakers can display their product.</p> <p>This good practice will make the local product more visible through the creation of a hub and thus render artisan and craft-making SMEs more competitive.</p>
Players involved	Ministry for Gozo and Ministry responsible for EU funds and programmes.
Expected timeframe of the transfer	April 2019 – February 2020
Costs	Difficult to quantify (staff time cost)
Funding Sources	Ministry for Gozo to cover cost of transfer up to inclusion in Operational Programme

Good Practice	Taitokortteli Arts and Crafts centre, Finland
Owner of Good Practice	City of Joensuu, Région de la Carélie du Nord – Finland
Description	<p>The Taitokortteli arts and craft centre is situated in Joensuu, where it accommodates traditional and modern crafts. The local crafts association manages the quarter and rents shops to artisans and artisans in order to sell and exhibit their own products. More importantly, the centre has become a central hub for travellers, city dwellers, handcraft professionals and amateurs. To complement the centre is a cafeteria as well as multiple boutiques and shops, and a craft centre. The latter offers a number of short courses to locals and tourists. The Ministry for Education and the regional council of the city of Joensuu provides funding in order to encourage the take up of these courses on local crafts. Furthermore, the centre offers a 30-minute guided tour to its visitors against a fee.</p>

	<p>Furthermore, the centre also hosts high-quality exhibitions and other related events that are organised within the premises across the year. This case study is a good example of the cooperation between the city of Joensuu and the private sector. Through the availability of rental space and promotion of the artisan and cultural sector, the city of Joensuu manages to keep alive the traditions, arts and crafts of the region in a sustainable manner.</p>
Organisation Implementing the Transfer	Ministry for Gozo, Malta
Description of the transfer	<p>Part of this best practice will be transferred to the region of Gozo. This practice has created a centre whereby artisans and artisans sell and exhibit their own products. The centre also hosts high-quality exhibitions and other related events. This is an excellent example of how the local artisan and crafts people community can benefit and gain competitive advantage by showcasing their work to the centre's visitors.</p> <p>This best practice indicates that Gozo artisans and craft makers can also benefit through a similar initiative whereby traditional houses are converted into modern workshops. These workshops shall be designed in a way that enables visitors to experience the process of creating a local product.</p> <p>Through action 3, the Ministry for Gozo is proposing the introduction of a financial incentive to assist in the regeneration of a Gozo historical centre through the renovation of old houses, which can be transformed into workshops. This incentive will not just restore this historical centre, but it will also help local artisan and crafts people increase the visibility and accessibility of their products through the creation of a hub.</p>



Players involved	Ministry for Gozo and the local artisan and craft producers forming part of the proposed networking initiative
Expected timeframe of the transfer	April 2019 – February 2020
Costs	Difficult to quantify (staff time cost)
Funding Sources	Ministry for Gozo to cover cost of transfer up to inclusion in Operational Programme

Date: 21 March 2019

Name of the organisation(s): **MINISTRY FOR GOZO**

Signature(s) of representative of the relevant organisation(s):



Anthony Zammit
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