

**Data Flow 7 Supplementary report
Noise Action Plan
(Summary)**

May 2011



1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Report

This report gives a brief summary of the Noise Action Plan. The noise action plan was drafted by the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) on the recommendations given by the noise consultants, Acustica Ltd. The Noise Action Plan contains strategic noise maps showing noise levels close to major roads, in line with the first round of reporting guidelines, implementing the Environmental Noise Directive (END) 2002/49/EC. In Malta the END is transposed by the “*Assessment and Management of Environmental Noise Regulations*”, L.N. 193 of 2004, They were subsequently amended by Legal Notice 426 of 2007, which resulted in Subsidiary Legislation 435.59 of 2007, Assessment and Management of Environmental Noise Regulations. The Regulations were issued by the Minister for Rural Affairs.

1.2 Contents of Report

This report contains a summary to the Noise Action Plan, in line with the European Commission reporting guidelines.

2 Summary of Noise Action Plan

2.1 Description of major roads

For the first round of reporting Malta has no railways and no major airports, neither does it have an agglomeration. Thus the only source qualifying for END reporting are major roads. A road is considered as a major road if vehicle passages are over 6 million per year.

Major roads were identified by MEPA supported by Acustica Ltd. and Transport Malta (TM). Those roads with more than 6 million vehicle passages per year were identified from auto-count surveys and TEN-TM feasibility study reports held by the relevant authorities. Where data gaps were identified, estimates were made based on the recommendations from WG-AEN GPG v2. There are 545 roads falling under this category making up about 173km.

The strategic noise mapping included areas exposed to noise from the major roads above a level of L_{den} 55dB (A) or L_{night} 50dB (A).

It is important to note that the noise action plan will apply to the identified major roads. The noise action plan sets out a proposed approach to undertake a study for

any necessary noise reduction measures. The plan also outlines a method by which noise mitigation measures will be assessed for feasibility. This is in line with the requirements of the Directive and Regulations.

The major roads go through rural and urban areas as well as through industrial areas. The roads are both arterial roads and distributor roads including other strategic roads performing an urban and rural linking function.

2.2 The Authority Responsible

The Authority responsible for the action planning is the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA). MEPA will draw up a draft action plan for public consultation, carry out a public consultation and finalise the action plan taking into consideration comments made by the public. The noise action plan will include a strategy to manage environmental noise with objectives spanning a 5-year cycle.

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2.3 The Legal Context

The Environmental Noise Directive is transposed separately in each Member State of the EU into local legislation. In Malta, the END is transposed by the "*Assessment and Management of Environmental Noise Regulations, 2004*", L.N. 193 of 2004. The Regulations were made by the Minister for Rural Affairs and the Environment under the Environment Protection Act, 2001 (CAP. 435). They were subsequently amended by Legal Notice 426 of 2007, which resulted in Subsidiary Legislation 435.59 of 2007, *Assessment and Management of Environmental Noise Regulations*. The scope of the Regulations is the same as for the END. That is they do not have to regard neighbourhood noise, noise at work and noise inside means of transport or due to military activities in military areas.

Prior to the introduction of the Regulations there was no legislative framework established in Malta to manage environmental noise. The Regulations transpose the Directive in Maltese law, and bestow certain powers and responsibilities on MEPA. The Regulations state that the designated authority for the making of strategic noise maps, the publication of information on environmental noise and the drawing up of action plans, is MEPA. This is in line with the activities of the Authority, which is responsible for environmental enforcement. The Regulations empower MEPA through the development of action plans to set up noise management zones, or to designate quiet areas either inside agglomerations or in open countryside, or to establish noise reduction programs where necessary.

2.4 Noise Limit Values

Prior and after to the adoption of the Environment Noise Directive 2002/49/EC there are no limit values in force or under preparation.

2.5 Summary of the results of the noise mapping

Set out below are strategic noise maps for the major roads in Malta.

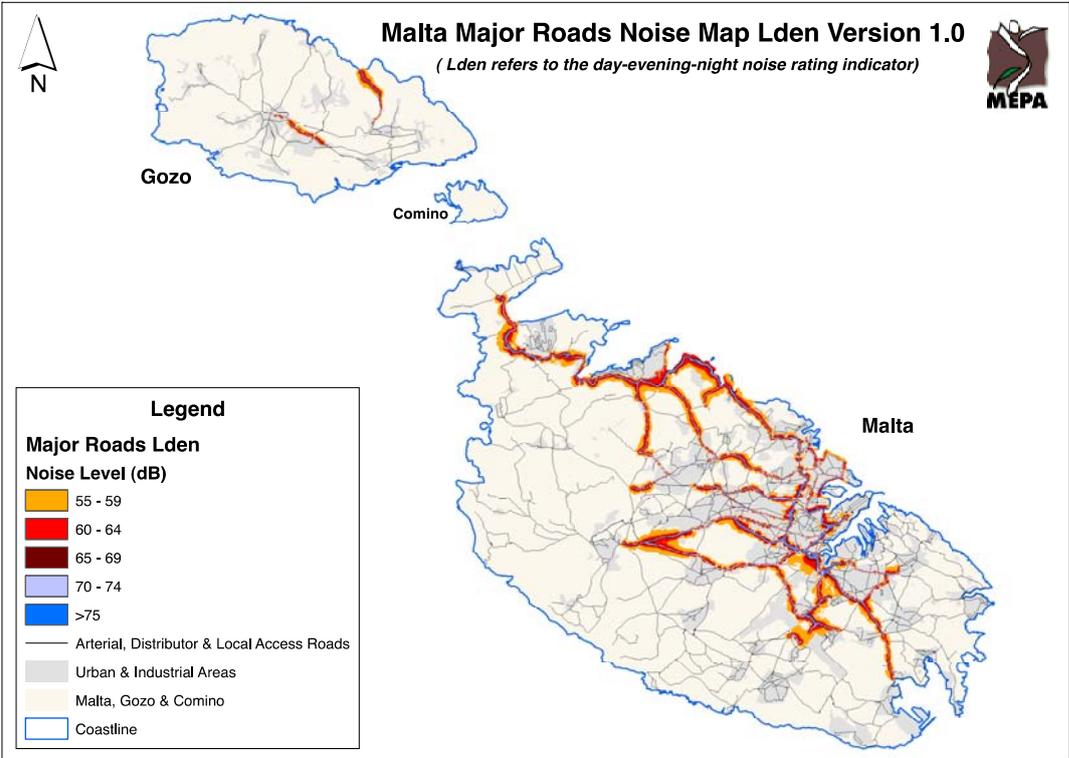


Figure 1 Major Roads Noise Map Lden

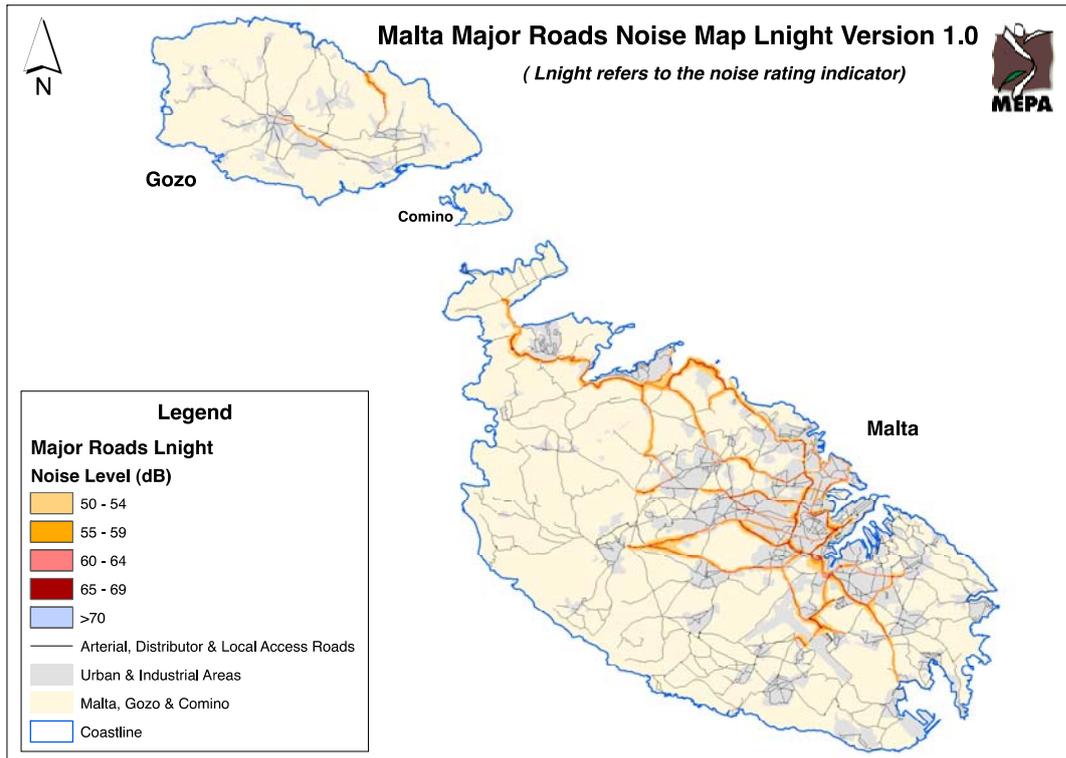


Figure 2 Major Roads Noise Map L_{night}

Noise band (L _{den})	Number of population	Number of hospitals	Number of schools
55-59	8800	1	6
60-64	6100	2	2
65-69	5700	1	-
70-74	2600	-	2
>=75	100	-	-

Table 1: Estimation of population exposure and number of noise sensitive premises per noise level contour bands (L_{den})

Noise band (L _{night})	Number of population	Number of hospitals	Number of schools
50-54	6300	2	2
55-59	5700	1	-
60-64	2800	-	2
65-69	100	-	-
>=70	0	-	-

Table 2: Estimation of population exposure and number of noise sensitive premises per noise level contour bands (L_{night})

Area (km ²) exposed to L _{den} > 55	Area (km ²) exposed to L _{den} > 65	Area (km ²) exposed to L _{den} > 75
29.1	9	1.4

Table 3: Exposed Area

Dwellings exposed to L _{den} > 55	Dwellings exposed to L _{den} > 65	Dwellings exposed to L _{den} > 75
9700	3600	0

Table 4: Number of dwellings exposed

2.6 An evaluation of the estimated number of people exposed to noise, identification of problems and situations that need to be improved

The strategic noise mapping results for the major roads will be processed through the decision support matrix during the first phase of the implementation of the noise action plans. A decision support matrix is a table enabling identification, analysis and rating of the strength of relationships between various sets of information. It enables a number of different factors to be examined and facilitates the assessment of the relative importance of each.

Priority Matrix				
Location:				
Decision Selection Criteria		Score Range L _{den}	Score Range L _{night}	SubTotal
Noise Band(dB(A))	<45	5	6	
	45 - 49	4	5	
	50 - 54	3	4	
	55 - 59	2	2	
	60-64	1	3	
	65-69	2	4	
	70-74	3	5	
	75 - 79	4	6	
>=80	5	7		
Type of Location	City Centre	1	1	
	Commercial	1	2	
	Residential	2	3	
	Noise Sensitive Location	3	3	
	Quiet Area	3	3	
	Recreational open space	2	2	
Type of Noise Source	Air	3	4	
	Industry	2	3	
	Rail	2	3	
	Road	3	4	
Total Score				0

Figure 3 Priority Matrix

This decision matrix is designed such that a score of approximately 17 or above indicates threshold levels that have been exceeded and thus highlights locations that should be included in the shortlist for further assessment.

2.7 Public Consultation

The Draft Noise Action Plan was published for public consultation on the MEPA website www.mepa.org.mt. The public was informed that their comments about this plan are welcome. The public consultation process started on 1st of June 2011. The public consultation initiative also included a number of presentations with key stakeholders. A presentation organised for the general public by the Malta Environment and Planning Authority in collaboration with the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC) is also planned for the 13th June 2011. The public consultation process will be open formally for a 4 week period. A number of media events were organized targeting information on the Draft Noise Action Plan.

2.8 Noise reduction measures already in force and any projects in preparation

Before 2001, the then Planning Authority requested EIAs only on the basis of a Policy and Design Guidance document published in 1994. This problem has been solved, through the publication of EIA legislation whereby all development including the development of new roads and alterations to road is subject to planning legislation. The planning process takes care of assessing noise impacts of roads before decision are taken. In the case of major roads development and where a proposal falls under the requirements of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) regulations, noise assessment is undertaken as part of the EIA process. The Action Plan sets out a strategy spanning 5 years on ways how to manage environmental noise.

2.9 Actions envisaged for the next 5 years, including preservation of quiet areas

2.9.1 General Measures

- a) Improve stakeholder engagement and improve collaboration by establishing a cross-departmental working group on strategic noise mapping;
 - o Encourage the development of a national policy statement on noise;
 - o Encourage the adoption of noise as a public health issue; and
 - o Encourage the development of guidance on the assessment of neighbourhood noise, entertainment noise and noise nuisance.
- b) Utilise improved input data delivered via GIS enabling of Government agencies, the proposed Inspire portal and especially the wider environmental monitoring programme, specifically LiDAR survey results;
- c) Develop capacity within MEPA to deliver the requirements of the noise action planning process set out within the strategy,

- Procure the noise measurement equipment and noise mapping software
 - Introduce additional trained personnel who are required to undertake the specialised work set out; and
 - Provide staff training to enable effective use of the technical measurement equipment and noise mapping software procured.
- d) Develop planning guidance to help protect the future noise environment:
- Guidance on assessment of noise on proposed residential developments; and
 - Guidance on control of envisaged noise impacts from proposed developments on existing residential areas.
- e) Work closely with the Planning section to ensure all applications with a noise aspect, whether being a noise producer or a noise recipient, are assessed by specialist staff within the noise team.

2.9.2 Quiet Areas

The Regulations empower MEPA through the development of action plans to set up noise management zones, or to designate quiet areas either inside agglomerations or in open countryside, or to establish noise reduction programs where necessary. The identification and noise preservation of the quiet areas in the vicinity of a major road is considered to be below the proposed onset level at (a) L_{den} ; 55 dB and (b) L_{night} : 45 dB. The preservation of relatively quiet areas in open countryside will be also considered.

Areas having noise levels below thresholds are identified such that the action plan notes the need for preserving Quiet Areas.

2.9.3 Timetable

The Noise Action Plan is to be implemented through a staged process over a period of 5 years.

Year 1: Extent of noise exposure when assessment is considered necessary

- Confirm onset of assessment criteria
- Confirm preservation criteria for good noise levels

Year 2: Review strategic noise maps to identify priorities

- Decision support matrix
- Draw up a list of potential areas for action, both above the onset values and below the level for preservation to help identify quiet areas.

Year 3: Confirmation of extent of impact

- Following the prioritization exercise based upon the results of the strategic noise mapping, an ordered shortlist of areas may be drawn up. The aim of this stage is to confirm that the noise levels assessed by the strategic noise mapping are experienced by the properties and population within the areas being addressed.

Year 4: Review possible mitigation measures and cost benefit analysis undertaken for each mitigation measure

Year 5: A recommendation for action

- Following the cost-benefit analysis the locations under review may be prioritized to form a list of beneficial and achievable actions for noise mitigation. With the cost and timescale implications of each action resulting from the analysis carried out, the mitigation measures may then be put forward to the relevant departments and fund holders to be incorporated within their future plan.

It is important to note that these actions are subject to availability of funding and human resources.

2.10 Long Term Strategy

MEPAs long-term strategy regarding the management of noise is to (a) avoid significant adverse health impacts from environmental noise; (b) mitigate and minimise adverse health impacts from environmental noise (c) preserve environmental noise quality where is good; and (d) where possible, contribute to the improvement of health and quality of life through the effective management and control of environmental noise.

2.11 Financial information: budgets, cost-effectiveness assessment, cost-benefit assessment

Financial information is not available at present.

2.12 Provisions envisaged for evaluating the implementation and the results of the Action Plans

A steering committee composed of representatives from three authorities in Malta; Transport Malta, Department of Health and headed by Malta Environment and Planning Authority (including environment / planning directorate and mapping unit) is expected to be set up and tasked with overseeing the implementation of this plan. The objectives of this steering committee is (a) to review the effectiveness of noise

action planning activities on on-going activities by performing an annual review of the progress made in relation to programmed activities (b) to improve stakeholders engagement and improve collaboration on strategic noise mapping and noise action planning and (c) to consider the effectiveness of the proposed measures for combating local environmental noise exposure.

In an effort to ensure the proper achievement of the objectives of the plan, it may be opportune to adjust the timing of planned activities in order to optimise delivery.

2.13 Estimates in terms of the reduction of the number of people affected

It is not possible to estimate the reduction of the number of people affected by major roads.

2.14 Further Information

More detailed information on the Noise Action Plan can be found on www.mepa.org.mt. Any queries should be sent to noiseplan@mepa.org.mt