



**GOVERNMENT
OF MALTA**



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GAL XLOKK FOUNDATION

**Local Development Strategy
for the Xlokk Territory
2023 – 2027**

December 2023



**European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development:
Europe Investing in Rural Areas**



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List of Abbreviations

CAP SP	Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan
CLLD	Community-Led Local Development
ERA	Environment and Resources Authority
ETS	Emissions Trading Scheme
GXF	GAL Xlokk Foundation
LAG	Local Action Group
LDS	Local Development Strategy
LEADER	'Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale'
MA	Managing Authority
NSO	National Statistics Office
RDP	Rural Development Programme
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
UAA	Utilised Agricultural Area
VO	Voluntary Organisation

1. Introduction

The LEADER Programme (LEADER – Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale) was established in 1991 and is financed through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)¹. It was introduced locally in the 2007-2013 Rural Development Programme (RDP). The main objectives of the programme are:

- To support small-scale community projects which are innovative in nature.
- To increase capacity of local rural community and business networks to build knowledge and skills.
- To encourage innovation and cooperation to tackle local development objectives.

Locally, there are three territories each covering several localities, with each territory having its own Local Action Group (LAG) which manages LEADER funding for its respective territory. For each territory, the funding priorities are listed in a Local Development Strategy, and eligible entities - such as non-governmental organisations, businesses, local councils, and natural persons - can apply for funding under a specific priority.²

The GAL Xlokk Foundation or Grupp Azzjoni Lokali Xlokk (hereinafter referred to as “GAL Xlokk”, the “Foundation”, “Fondazzjoni GAL Xlokk” or “GXF”) was set up in 2008 to implement the LEADER programme in the South-East territory of Malta (as defined in the following section). The GXF is submitting this document, in line with the requirements of the LEADER Programme, as a Local Development Strategy (LDS) under LEADER (2023-2027) through which it will continue to attain its objectives.

This strategy serves to provide a framework with strategic priorities, objectives and recommendations to consolidate development within this rural area and improve the quality of life in this region through a holistic approach, in line with the principles set forth in the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan (CAP SP) 2023-2027. This report is being presented on the basis of information provided within the guidance document.

¹ https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/european-agricultural-fund-rural-development-eafRD_en

² <https://sem.gov.mt/eu-funding-programmes/european-agricultural-fund-for-rural-development-eafRD>

2. Definition of the Area and the Population

This section lists the localities falling within the GAL Xlokk territory. It also sets out the area, population, area characteristics, natural and cultural resources which are relevant for the LDS and which must be covered by GXF. This section further identifies the structure of the relevant businesses, associations, services and infrastructure and the characteristics of the population affected by the strategy.

2.1 Defining Rural Localities

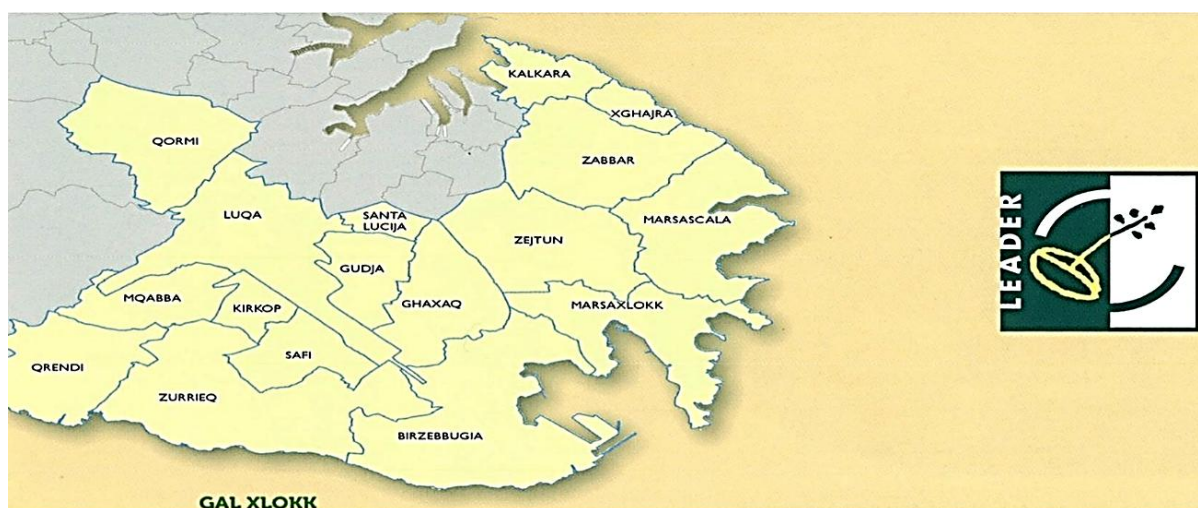
Annex I of the Expression of Interest LEADER Local Development Strategy Intervention: 77.3 document set out in the Common Agriculture Policy Strategic Plan (CAP SP) 2023-2027 version 1.0 issued by the Managing Authority (EAFRD) on the 15th of May 2023 identifies the following localities as falling under the GAL Xlokk territory.

Xlokk			
Birzebbugia	Ghaxaq	Gudja	Kalkara
Kirkop	Luqa	Marsascala	Marsaxlokk
Mqabba	Qormi	Qrendi	Safi
Santa Lucija	Xaghra	Żabbar	Zejtun
Żurrieq			

2.2 The GAL Xlokk Territory

The GAL Xlokk territory is made up of seventeen localities, as seen in Figure 1 below. The seven localities forming the perimeter are the coastal localities of Qrendi, Żurrieq, Birzebbugia, Marsaxlokk, Marsascala, Xgħajra, and Kalkara. The other localities forming part of the GXF territory are the inland towns of Qormi, Luqa, Mqabba, Kirkop, Safi, Gudja, Santa Lucija, Għaxaq, Zejtun and Żabbar.

Figure 1: The Xlokk Territory



Source: GAL Xlokk

Eleven of these localities (Zejtun, Birżebbugia, Gudja, Ғal Għaxaq, Kirkop, Marsascala, Marsaxlokk, Mqabba, Qrendi, Ғal Safi, Żurrieq) are found in the South-Eastern district as defined by the Eurostat classification of Local Administrative Units (LAU1). Another five (Ғaż Żabbar, Kalkara, Luqa, Santa Luċija, Xgħajra) are found in the Southern Harbour District³, while Qormi is located in the Northern Harbour district.

The total area covered by the GAL Xlokk territory adds up to 71km². In total, as per the latest Census of Population and Housing 2021⁴ by the National Statistics Office (NSO), there were 128,358 residents in the GAL Xlokk territory, making up 24.7% of the Maltese population.

The territory supports important national infrastructures, such as the Malta International Airport, the Malta Freeport and many industrial estates such as the Bulebel, Ғal Far and Luqa Industrial Estates.

³ As per Eurostat's classification of LAU1

⁴ <https://nso.gov.mt/events/census-of-population-and-housing-2021-final-report-population-migration-and-other-social-characteristics/>

3. Analysis of the Territory

This section provides a description of the current socio-economic situation of the GAL Xlokk territory. It also presents a SWOT analysis through an assessment of the development needs and the potential of the area, which includes analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the territory.

This section also comprises the outcomes of discussions held with different stakeholders, their understanding of their respective sector, their ideas and their suggestions.

3.1 Demographic Indicators

The following section presents a socio-economic assessment of the Xlokk territory and provides key demographic indicators with respect to population trends and characteristics, education, employment, and dependency levels. The main aim of this chapter is to provide a clear description of the territory, its population and other information that helps provide the background to the pillars and measures that will be proposed in subsequent sections of the Strategy.

3.1.1 Population Size and Density

The table on the following page presents an overview of the total population in each of the localities falling within the GAL Xlokk territory, the respective area of the locality, and the population density.

Between 2011 and 2021, the absolute number of residents in the GAL Xlokk territory increased by 17.8%, while the population density increased from 1,541 to 1,815 inhabitants per km². In comparison, the Maltese resident population increased by 24.5%, and the population density across Malta increased from 1,325 to 1,649 inhabitants per km².

Birżebbuġia (9.2 km²), Żurrieq (8.5 km²) and Luqa (6.7 km²) are the largest localities in the territory in terms of area, while Qormi (18,099 inhabitants), Żabbar (17,148 inhabitants) and Marsascula (16,804 inhabitants) have the largest populations. Eight out of seventeen localities have a population density higher than the average of 1,649 persons per km² for Malta (marked in bold in the table).

Between 2011 and 2021, Marsascula and Xgħajra registered the highest increases in population of 51.9% and 39.5% respectively. On the other hand, Santa Luċija was the only locality to register a decrease in population over the period – between 2011 and 2021, the population decreased by 11.9%. Nonetheless, Santa Luċija remains the most densely populated locality in the territory with 3,623 inhabitants per km².

Table 3.1 - Movements in Population and Population Density					
	Population		Area 2021	Population Density	
	2011	2021		2011	2021
	<i>Number of Inhabitants</i>	<i>Number of Inhabitants</i>	<i>km²</i>	<i>Number of inhabitants per km²</i>	<i>Number of inhabitants per km²</i>
Coastal Localities					
Kalkara	2,946	3,105	1.8	1,675	1,765
<i>Movement on Previous Census (%)</i>		5.4			5.4
Xghajra	1,571	2,192	1.0	1,627	2,270
<i>Movement on Previous Census (%)</i>		39.5			39.5
Birżebbuġia	10,412	11,844	9.2	1,130	1,285
<i>Movement on Previous Census (%)</i>		13.8			13.7
Marsascala	11,059	16,804	5.4	2,057	3,126
<i>Movement on Previous Census (%)</i>		51.9			52.0
Marsaxlokk	3,366	3,988	4.7	714	846
<i>Movement on Previous Census (%)</i>		18.5			18.5
Qrendi	2,667	3,148	4.9	544	642
<i>Movement on Previous Census (%)</i>		18.0			18.0
Żurrieq	10,287	12,295	8.5	1,216	1,454
<i>Movement on Previous Census (%)</i>		19.5			19.6
Total Coastal Localities	42,308	53,376	35.4	1,195	1,508
<i>Movement on Previous Census (%)</i>		26.2			26.2
Inland Localities					
Luqa	5,911	7,249	6.7	879	1,078
<i>Movement on Previous Census (%)</i>		22.6			22.6
Żabbar	14,916	17,148	5.3	2,788	3,206
<i>Movement on Previous Census (%)</i>		15.0			15.0
Santa Luċija	2,970	2,617	0.7	4,112	3,623
<i>Movement on Previous Census (%)</i>		-11.9			-11.9
Qormi	16,394	18,099	5.0	3,259	3,598
<i>Movement on Previous Census (%)</i>		10.4			10.4
Gudja	2,994	3,229	2.3	1,331	1,435
<i>Movement on Previous Census (%)</i>		7.8			7.8
Għaxaq	4,577	5,538	3.9	1,188	1,438
<i>Movement on Previous Census (%)</i>		21.0			21.0
Kirkop	2,283	2,527	1.1	2,001	2,215
<i>Movement on Previous Census (%)</i>		10.7			10.7
Safi	2,074	2,641	2.3	908	1,157
<i>Movement on Previous Census (%)</i>		27.3			27.4
Mqabba	3,223	3,525	2.6	1,238	1,354
<i>Movement on Previous Census (%)</i>		9.4			9.4
Żejtun	11,334	12,409	5.4	2,112	2,312
<i>Movement on Previous Census (%)</i>		9.5			9.5
Total Inland Localities	66,676	74,982	35.3	1,888	2,123
<i>Movement on Previous Census (%)</i>		12.5			12.5
GAL Xlokk Territory	108,984	128,358	70.7	1,541	1,815
<i>Movement on Previous Census (%)</i>		17.8			17.8
MALTA	417,432	519,562	315.2	1,325	1,649
<i>Movement on Previous Census (%)</i>		24.5%			24.5%

Source: NSO - Census of Population and Housing 2021

Commentary: The high population density in the GAL Xlokk territory gives rise to a number of challenges that impact both the residents and the environment. One of the foremost challenges is the strain on infrastructure, such as roads and public transportation, resulting in chronic traffic congestion and extended commute times. Environmental degradation is another issue, as the territory may struggle to manage waste disposal and maintain adequate green spaces. Balancing the needs of the growing population while preserving the region's character, cultural, and natural heritage demands thoughtful urban planning, sustainable development strategies, and efficient resource management.

3.1.2. Gender

Table 3.2 disaggregates the population by locality and gender and presents the male-to-female ratio for 2011 and 2021. In Malta, the male-to-female ratio increased from 0.99 in 2011 to 1.08 in 2021, meaning that there are 108 males for every 100 females living in the country. In the GAL Xlokk territory, the male-to-female ratio increased from 1.01 in 2011 to 1.06 in 2021. In line with national trends, there are more males than females in all the localities forming part of the GAL Xlokk territory, except for Santa Luċija, which saw the ratio decrease from 1.10 to 0.99 over the period. Birżebbuġia (1.37), Safi (1.24) and Marsaxlokk (1.12) are the localities with the highest male-to-female ratio. Such a gap has widened from the census in 2011 to that in 2021 and is more pronounced in coastal localities.

It is pertinent to note that presence of the open centre in Safi and the St Vincent de Paul long-term care facility in Luqa, which generally accommodate circa 1,000 residents each, may result in some skewness in gender ratios.

Table 3.2 - Male-to-Female Ratio						
	Males		Females		Male-to-Female Ratio	
	2011 Number of Males	2021 Number of Males	2011 Number of Females	2021 Number of Females	2011 Ratio	2021 Ratio
Coastal Localities						
Kalkara	1,499	1,618	1,447	1,487	1.04	1.09
Xgħajra	777	1,153	794	1,039	0.98	1.11
Birżebbuġia	5,641	6,850	4,771	4,994	1.18	1.37
Marsascula	5,503	8,759	5,556	8,045	0.99	1.09
Marsaxlokk	1,688	2,109	1,678	1,879	1.01	1.12
Qrendi	1,329	1,601	1,338	1,547	0.99	1.03
Żurrieq	5,120	6,279	5,167	6,016	0.99	1.04
Total Coastal Localities	21,557	28,369	20,751	25,007	1.04	1.13
Inland Localities						
Luqa	2,788	1,618	3,123	3,617	0.89	0.45
Żabbar	7,559	8,821	7,357	8,327	1.03	1.06
Santa Luċija	1,449	1,300	1,521	1,317	0.95	0.99
Qormi	8,189	9,471	8,205	8,628	1.00	1.10
Gudja	1,483	1,627	1,511	1,602	0.98	1.02
Għaxaq	2,316	2,859	2,261	2,679	1.02	1.07
Kirkop	1,147	1,309	1,136	1,218	1.01	1.07
Safi	1,047	1,461	1,027	1,180	1.02	1.24
Mqabba	1,626	1,786	1,597	1,739	1.02	1.03
Żejtun	5,670	6,288	5,664	6,121	1.00	1.03
Total Inland Localities	33,274	36,540	33,402	36,428	1.00	1.00
GAL Xlokk Territory	54,831	64,909	54,153	61,435	1.01	1.06
MALTA	207,625	270,021	209,807	249,541	0.99	1.08

Source: NSO - Census of Population and Housing 2021

Commentary: The emergence of a high male-to-female ratio in the GAL Xlokk territory, and indeed Malta overall, can be attributable to migration patterns. The high male-to-female ratio could potentially give rise to a range of societal and economic challenges. The gender imbalance can be more pronounced among specific age cohorts or specific minorities within the community. A high male-to-female ratio imbalance can skew demographic trends and impact long-term population stability. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, including promoting gender equality, enhancing educational and economic opportunities for all, and fostering inclusive social environments that encourage healthy relationships and cooperation.

3.1.3 Age Structure

Table 3.3 assesses the underlying age structure of the GAL Xlokk territory by locality. The number of inhabitants aged 65+ in the GAL Xlokk territory amounts to 24,369 or 19.0%, when compared to 18.8% of the total Maltese population aged 65+. Santa Luċija is the locality with the highest number of residents aged 65 and over and the average age in the locality stands at 48.6 years. On the other hand, Xgħajra is the locality with the largest share of the resident population aged below 15 years (17.0%) and the average age stands at 37 years. In comparison, the average age in Malta stands at 41.7 years.

Commentary: An ageing population across localities can potentially give rise to strains of a social and economic nature and on healthcare systems. While Malta has one main public hospital, healthcare facilities in localities or regions with a high proportion of elderly residents may be overburdened. The ageing population might also experience social isolation, impacting their mental well-being and overall quality of life. To address these challenges, careful planning is essential, including fostering age-friendly communities, developing robust healthcare and support systems, and implementing policies that encourage active ageing and intergenerational engagement.

Table 3.3 - Age Structure									
	Average Age Years	0-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
		Number of inhabitants							
Coastal Localities									
Kalkara	43.6	365	291	460	475	418	472	624	3,105
<i>Share of Total Locality Population (%)</i>		11.8	9.4	14.8	15.3	13.5	15.2	20.1	
Xghajra	37.0	372	256	397	406	305	197	259	2,192
<i>Share of Total Locality Population (%)</i>		17.0	11.7	18.1	18.5	13.9	9.0	11.8	
Birżebbuġia	39.4	1,416	1,867	2,139	1,698	1,524	1,378	1,822	11,844
<i>Share of Total Locality Population (%)</i>		12.0	15.8	18.1	14.3	12.9	11.6	15.4	
Marsascula	38.9	2,551	1,856	2,825	2,963	2,578	1,779	2,252	16,804
<i>Share of Total Locality Population (%)</i>		15.2	11.0	16.8	17.6	15.3	10.6	13.4	
Marsaxlokk	41.8	531	386	639	667	513	528	724	3,988
<i>Share of Total Locality Population (%)</i>		13.3	9.7	16.0	16.7	12.9	13.2	18.2	
Qrendi	40.7	513	269	498	558	370	362	578	3,148
<i>Share of Total Locality Population (%)</i>		16.3	8.5	15.8	17.7	11.8	11.5	18.4	
Żurrieq	40.4	1,935	1,179	1,889	2,205	1,520	1,347	2,220	12,295
<i>Share of Total Locality Population (%)</i>		15.7	9.6	15.4	17.9	12.4	11.0	18.1	
Total Coastal Localities	40.3	7,683	6,104	8,847	8,972	7,228	6,063	8,479	53,376
<i>Share of Total Locality Population (%)</i>									
Inland Localities									
Luqa	48.3	747	599	1,186	948	697	793	2,279	7,249
<i>Share of Total Locality Population (%)</i>		10.3	8.3	16.4	13.1	9.6	10.9	31.4	
Żabbar	40.7	2,628	1,822	2,638	2,819	2,093	1,924	3,224	17,148
<i>Share of Total Locality Population (%)</i>		15.3	10.6	15.4	16.4	12.2	11.2	18.8	
Santa Luċija	48.6	262	241	297	306	281	390	840	2,617
<i>Share of Total Locality Population (%)</i>		10.0	9.2	11.3	11.7	10.7	14.9	32.1	
Qormi	42.0	2,575	1,794	2,942	2,827	2,000	2,258	3,703	18,099
<i>Share of Total Locality Population (%)</i>		14.2	9.9	16.3	15.6	11.1	12.5	20.5	
Gudja	42.4	433	274	533	529	340	458	662	3,229
<i>Share of Total Locality Population (%)</i>		13.4	8.5	16.5	16.4	10.5	14.2	20.5	
Għaxaq	40.5	879	546	919	923	648	587	1,036	5,538
<i>Share of Total Locality Population (%)</i>		15.9	9.9	16.6	16.7	11.7	10.6	18.7	
Kirkop	40.7	349	284	449	358	313	362	412	2,527
<i>Share of Total Locality Population (%)</i>		13.8	11.2	17.8	14.2	12.4	14.3	16.3	
Safi	38.7	397	311	494	442	319	281	397	2,641
<i>Share of Total Locality Population (%)</i>		15.0	11.8	18.7	16.7	12.1	10.6	15.0	
Mqabba	39.9	546	413	540	565	489	399	573	3,525
<i>Share of Total Locality Population (%)</i>		15.5	11.7	15.3	16.0	13.9	11.3	16.3	
Żejtun	43.0	1,766	1,138	1,831	1,973	1,450	1,487	2,764	12,409
<i>Share of Total Locality Population (%)</i>		14.2	9.2	14.8	15.9	11.7	12.0	22.3	
Total Inland Localities	42.5	10,582	7,422	11,829	11,690	8,630	8,939	15,890	74,982
<i>Share of Total Locality Population (%)</i>		14.1	9.9	15.8	15.6	11.5	11.9	21.2	
GAL Xlokk Territory	41.6	18,265	13,526	20,676	20,662	15,858	15,002	24,369	128,358
<i>Share of Total Locality Population (%)</i>		14.2	10.5	16.1	16.1	12.4	11.7	19.0	
MALTA	41.7	67,816	51,681	91,339	85,287	65,134	60,663	97,642	519,562
<i>Share of Total Locality Population (%)</i>		13.1	9.9	17.6	16.4	12.5	11.7	18.8	

Source: NSO - Census of Population and Housing 2021

3.1.4 Nationality

According to the Census of Population and Housing 2021, a total of 115,449 residents or 22.2% of the total population in Malta were non-Maltese nationals. As seen in Table 3.4, the percentage of non-Maltese nationals as a total of the GAL Xlokk territory population stood at 12.8%, which is significantly lower than the national average. Nonetheless, the percentage of foreign nationals in Birżebbuġia (28.9%) and Marsascula (27.7%) is well in excess of the averages for the territory and the nation.

Table 3.4 - Maltese to Non-Maltese Nationality						
	Maltese		Non-Maltese		% of Non-Maltese of Total Population	
	2011 <i>Number of inhabitants</i>	2021 <i>Number of inhabitants</i>	2011 <i>Number of inhabitants</i>	2021 <i>Number of inhabitants</i>	2011 %	2021 %
Coastal Localities						
Kalkara	2,895	2,793	51	312	1.7	10.0
Xgħajra	1,548	1,836	23	356	1.5	16.2
Birżebbuġia	8,426	8,419	1,986	3,425	19.1	28.9
Marsascula	10,387	12,157	672	4,647	6.1	27.7
Birżebbuġia	3,298	3,484	68	504	2.0	12.6
Qrendi	2,620	2,955	47	193	1.8	6.1
Żurrieq	10,183	11,546	104	749	1.0	6.1
Total Coastal Localities	39,357	43,190	2,951	10,186	7.0	19.1
Inland Localities						
Luqa	5,822	6,197	89	1,052	1.5	14.5
Żabbar	14,815	16,030	101	1,118	0.7	6.5
Santa Luċija	2,951	2,551	19	66	0.6	2.5
Qormi	16,262	15,963	132	2,136	0.8	11.8
Gudja	2,970	3,004	24	225	0.8	7.0
Għaxaq	4,534	5,190	43	348	0.9	6.3
Kirkop	2,265	2,390	18	137	0.8	5.4
Safi	2,024	2,211	50	430	2.4	16.3
Mqabba	3,197	3,384	26	141	0.8	4.0
Żejtun	11,242	11,772	92	637	0.8	5.1
Total Inland Localities	66,082	68,692	594	6,290	0.9	8.4
GAL Xlokk Territory	105,439	111,882	3,545	16,476	3.3	12.8
MALTA	397,143	404,113	20,289	115,449	4.9	22.2

Source: NSO - Census of Population and Housing 2021

Commentary: The presence of a high number of foreign nationals living in small communities may result in cultural and social differences. Language barriers may hinder effective communication and access to services, potentially isolating certain groups. Economic disparities might emerge, as employment opportunities can vary. Overcoming these challenges and maintaining a sense of community cohesion demands proactive efforts to foster understanding, provide language support, and promote equitable access to services and resources. An inclusive environment is one that values the contributions of all nationalities while addressing potential divides.

3.1.5 Education

Table 3.5 illustrates the level of educational attainment in a given scholastic year being 2020/2021, disaggregated by region. The South-Eastern⁵ area boasts substantial levels of educational achievement among individuals aged 10-29. While Gozo & Comino, and the Western region exhibit the highest overall educational attainment amongst the indicated cohort, it's worth noting that the South-Eastern region, encompassing eleven of the seventeen localities within GAL Xlokk, follows closely behind.

Table 3.5: Educational Attainment Level							
2020/21	MQF 1-3 (SEC Level)	MQF 4 (Matriculation Certificate)	MQF 5 (Undergraduate Diploma/Certificate)	MQF 6 (Bachelor's Degree)	MQF 7 (Masters, Post-graduate Diploma/Certificate)	MQF 8 (Doctoral Degree)	Total
<i>Number of people</i>							
Southern Harbour	447	571	387	1,280	712	18	3,415
<i>% of region population in the 10-29 age cohort</i>	2.4%	3.0%	2.1%	6.8%	3.8%	0.1%	18.1%
Northern Harbour	529	681	633	2,371	1,702	81	5,997
<i>% of region population in the 10-29 age cohort</i>	1.4%	1.9%	1.7%	6.5%	4.7%	0.2%	16.4%
South Eastern	394	498	405	1,407	909	23	3,636
<i>% of region population in the 10-29 age cohort</i>	2.2%	2.7%	2.2%	7.7%	5.0%	0.1%	19.9%
Western	196	372	309	1,390	932	30	3,229
<i>% of region population in the 10-29 age cohort</i>	1.4%	2.6%	2.2%	9.8%	6.5%	0.2%	22.7%
Northern	350	405	454	1,578	904	32	3,723
<i>% of region population in the 10-29 age cohort</i>	1.7%	1.9%	2.2%	7.5%	4.3%	0.2%	17.8%
Gozo and Camino	93	221	141	884	637	14	1,990
<i>% of region population in the 10-29 age cohort</i>	1.1%	2.6%	1.7%	10.5%	7.6%	0.2%	23.7%
MALTA	2,008	2,748	2,328	8,909	5,796	198	21,987
<i>% of region population in the 10-29 age cohort</i>	1.8%	2.4%	2.0%	7.8%	5.1%	0.2%	19.3%

Source: NSO - Regional Statistics Malta 2023

3.1.6 Unemployment and Labour Participation

Table 3.6 below compares the unemployment rate in the GAL Xlokk territory with the unemployment rate in Malta⁶.

Table 3.6: Unemployment Rate		
	2021	2022
	%	%
GAL Xlokk Territory	2.9	2.1
MALTA	3.4	2.9

Source: NSO

Table 3.7 examines the extent of labour force participation by taking the pool of employed and unemployed (i.e., those working and those willing and able to work) as a proportion of the population aged between 15 and 64.)

⁵ This includes Birżebbuġia; Il-Gudġa; ̄Hal Għaxaq; ̄Hal Kirkop; ̄Hal Safi; Marsascula; Marsaxlokk; L-Mqabba; Il-Qrendi; ̄Zejtun; ̄Zurrieq

⁶ The unemployment rate refers to unemployed persons (15-74 years) as a percentage of the labour force (15-74 years) (NSO).

Table 3.7: Labour Force Participation Rate	
	2021
GAL Xlokk Territory	<i>Number of people</i>
Employed	65,189
Unemployed	1,933
Labour Force: GAL Xlokk Territory	67,122
<i>Population aged 15-64 years</i>	85,724
Labour Force Participation Rate (%): Gal Xlokk Territory	78.3
MALTA	
Employed	269,562
Unemployed	9,471
Labour Force: MALTA	279,033
<i>Population aged 15-64 years</i>	354,104
Labour Force Participation Rate (%): MALTA	78.8%

Source: NSO

Commentary: The unemployment rate in the GAL Xlokk territory is markedly lower than that for Malta. Despite lower unemployment rates, overall levels of participation in the labour market within the localities in the GAL Xlokk territory is lower than the average for Malta. Thus, regional policy could be implemented in this regard to encourage more participation in the labour force, also considering poverty and social exclusion rates, as well as migration patterns.

3.1.7 Level of Dependency

Table 3.8 on the following page presents an overview of the dependency and old-age dependency ratios for the localities falling within the GAL Xlokk territory.

3.1.7.1 Old-Age Dependency Ratio

The old-age dependency ratio refers to the population aged 65+ as a percentage of the working-age population (15-64). The old-age dependency ratio is an indicator of the make-up of a population compared to its workforce.

The old-age dependency ratio for Malta stood at 27.6%, meaning that there were less than four adults (3.6) of working age (15-64) for every person aged 65 years or more. In comparison, the old-age dependency ratio for the GAL Xlokk territory stood at 29.4% - meaning that there were 3.4 adults of working age (15-64) for every person aged 65 years or more. A considerable distinction is also evident between the coastal (24.0%) and inland localities (33.3%). For context, the European average for the old-age dependency ratio stands at 32.5%.

3.1.7.2 Overall Dependency Ratio

The Dependency ratio is the sum of the population aged 0 to 14 and 65+ as a percentage of the working-age population (15-64).

The dependency ratio in Malta stands at 46.7% meaning that the GAL Xlokk territory has a higher dependency ratio (50.5%), which puts an additional strain on already limited resources. The European average stands at 56.0% for the dependency ratio.

Among the coastal localities, Marsascula and Xgħajra have a higher dependency from the 0-14 cohort than the 65+ while the remaining localities have significantly high old-age dependency ratios. This is in line with previous findings in Table 3, where these two localities have two of the highest percentages of the population aged under 15.

For Inland Localities, Luqa and Santa Luċija have the highest dependency ratio of 71.7 and 72.7 respectively, both arising due to old-age dependency ratios of over fifty percent. This has implications on employment in these areas and the policies that should be put in place to cater for such demographics.

Commentary: Similar to the age structure, a high old-age dependency ratio points towards an above average elderly population in the territory which poses challenges to the healthcare and welfare systems.

Moreover, a high overall dependency ratio, including both young and old dependants, can hinder workforce growth and economic development, exacerbating social welfare demands. Policy-makers can address these challenges by promoting sustainable healthcare reforms, investing in education and skills development, and encouraging workforce participation to mitigate the economic and social consequences of demographic shifts.

Table 3.8 - Dependency Ratios		
	Dependency Ratio	Old-age Dependency Ratio
	%	%
Coastal Localities		
Kalkara	46.7	29.5
Xghajra	40.4	16.6
Birzebbuga	37.6	21.2
Marsascala	40.0	18.8
Marsaxlokk	45.9	26.5
Qrendi	53.0	28.1
Żurrieq	51.0	27.3
Average Coastal Localities	44.9	24.0
Inland Localities		
Luqa	71.7	54.0
Żabbar	51.8	28.5
Santa Luċija	72.7	55.4
Qormi	53.1	31.3
Gudja	51.3	31.0
Għaxaq	52.9	28.6
Kirkop	43.1	23.3
Safi	43.0	21.5
Mqabba	46.5	23.8
Żejtun	57.5	35.1
Average Inland Localities	54.4	33.3
GAL Xlokk Territory	50.5	29.4
MALTA	46.7	27.6

Source: Census of Population and Housing, 2021

3.1.8 Property Prices

Table 3.9 below illustrates the median property prices for apartments, maisonettes, as well as penthouses. In order not to skew the results, properties with sea views (or other views) and/or properties forming part of a Special Designated Area, were excluded from the analysis, while including all finishing conditions – i.e. finished, shell, on plan etc.

Table 3.9 - Property Prices*			
	Apartments	Maisonettes	Penthouses
	<i>Median Price</i>	<i>Median Price</i>	<i>Median Price</i>
	<i>in €</i>	<i>in €</i>	<i>in €</i>
GAL Xlokk Territory	250,000	266,000	313,500
MALTA	259,000	285,000	320,000
<i>% difference in prices</i>	<i>3.6</i>	<i>7.1</i>	<i>2.1</i>
* In order not to skew the results, a 'No Views' filter and a 'No Projects' filter were applied. Otherwise, all finishing conditions are included.			

Source: KPMG Analysis

Commentary: Median prices for all property types considered appear to be below the median average prices for Malta. The consequences of lower property prices can vary. Home-owners may experience diminished property value appreciation. This can affect household wealth and the ability to access credit. On the positive side, lower property prices may increase affordability, which in turn might attract further population movement to the territory resulting in price adjustments in the future.

Table 3.10: Final Deeds	
	2021
	<i>Number of final deeds</i>
Coastal Localities	
Kalkara	56
Xgħajra	87
Birżebbuġia	165
Marsascala	498
Marsaxlokk	138
Qrendi	74
Żurrieq	334
Total Coastal Localities	1,352
<i>% of permits in Malta</i>	<i>9.41%</i>
Inland Localities	
Luqa	289
Żabbar	457
Santa Luċija	31
Qormi	420
Gudja	45
Għaxaq	143
Kirkop	37
Safi	53
Mqabba	102
Żejtun	349
Total Inland Localities	1,926
<i>% of permits in Malta</i>	<i>13.40%</i>
GAL Xlokk Territory	3,278
MALTA	14,368

Source: NSO; Residential Property Transactions: July 2023

Commentary: In 2021, the percentage of final deeds registered in the GAL Xlokk territory amounted to 3,278 and made up 22.8% of the total final deeds registered in Malta in that year. The percentage of final deeds registered in the territory is in line with the area occupied by the territory (22.4%).

3.2 Economic Overview

The following section provides an overview of the economic activity, and the business characteristics present in the GAL Xlokk territory with a specific focus on the agricultural sector.

3.2.1 Economic Activity

The GAL Xlokk territory is home to 21.0% of active business units⁷ in Malta. Table 10 shows that in line with national trends, 94.9% of active businesses in the GAL Xlokk territory are small business units employing less than 10 people and are thus small businesses.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a pivotal role in the economic and social fabric of any territory. Firstly, SMEs are integral to employment generation, serving as major job providers, thereby reducing unemployment rates and enhancing the overall socio-economic well-being of the community. These businesses also play a crucial role in the local economy by generating income, supporting other local businesses, and promoting economic growth, effectively keeping wealth circulating within the region. Their diversity spans across various industries, thus mitigating risks associated with economic downturns in specific sectors.

SMEs also function as catalysts for entrepreneurship, enabling individuals to turn their innovative ideas into tangible ventures and contributing to the entrepreneurial spirit of the region. Beyond economic contributions, SMEs often promote social cohesion by actively engaging in community initiatives and supporting local events, further solidifying their role as vital cornerstones of regional development. Lastly, they offer opportunities for skill development and training, fostering personal and professional growth within the workforce.

⁷ Active business units are defined as businesses that had either turnover or employment at any time during the reference period.

Table 3.11: Number of Active Business Units by Size				
	0-9	10+	Total	Share of SMEs
	<i>Number of active business units</i>	<i>Number of active business units</i>	<i>Number of active business units</i>	<i>%</i>
Coastal Localities				
Kalkara	237	13	250	94.8
Xgħajra	160	2	162	98.8
Birżebbuġia	1,617	127	1,744	92.7
Marsascalea	1,138	23	1,161	98.0
Marsaxlokk	397	13	410	96.8
Qrendi	276	4	280	98.6
Żurrieq	964	23	987	97.7
Total Coastal Localities	4,789	205	4,994	95.9
Inland Localities				
Luqa	625	74	699	89.4
Żabbar	1,320	32	1,352	97.6
Santa Luċija	175	2	177	98.9
Qormi	1,984	185	2,169	91.5
Gudja	269	11	280	96.1
Għaxaq	471	21	492	95.7
Kirkop	194	7	201	96.5
Safi	196	4	200	98.0
Mqabba	331	11	342	96.8
Żejtun	1,013	63	1,076	94.1
Total Inland Localities	6,578	410	6,988	94.1
GAL Xlokk Territory	11,367	615	11,982	94.9
MALTA	53,791	3,342	57,133	94.2

Source: NSO; Business Demography: 2022

In terms of business prospects going forward, Table 3.12 clearly shows that business births are more than double (sometimes three times as much) the business deaths, which means that the overall active business units are increasing in the GAL Xlokk territory. This is also in line with national trends, although to a lesser degree in the GAL Xlokk territory.

Table 3.12: Business Births and Deaths				
	Business Births	Share of Total Businesses	Business Deaths	Share of Total Businesses
	<i>Number of businesses</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number of businesses</i>	<i>%</i>
Coastal Localities				
Kalkara	58	23.2	28	11.2
Xgħajra	43	26.5	13	8.0
Birżebbuġia	367	21.0	189	10.8
Marsascala	335	28.9	132	11.4
Marsaxlokk	61	14.9	36	8.8
Qrendi	48	17.1	35	12.5
Żurrieq	185	18.7	81	8.2
Total Coastal Localities	1,097	22.0	514	10.3
Inland Localities				
Luqa	128	18.3	56	8.0
Żabbar	297	22.0	106	7.8
Santa Luċija	37	20.9	16	9.0
Qormi	350	16.1	230	10.6
Gudja	53	18.9	19	6.8
Għaxaq	114	23.2	36	7.3
Kirkop	36	17.9	12	6.0
Safi	45	22.5	15	7.5
Mqabba	64	18.7	30	8.8
Żejtun	186	17.3	79	7.3
Total Inland Localities	1,310	18.7	599	8.6
GAL Xlokk Territory	2,407	20.1	1,113	9.3
MALTA	11,906	20.8	8,673	15.2

Source: NSO

3.2.2 Agricultural Sector

The GAL Xlokk territory has a significant agricultural sector, with land area that supports local production of fruits, vegetables, and fodder, as well as livestock production which is present and varied in terms of output.

Most of the total hectares for Malta are utilised agricultural area⁸, as seen in Table 12 below. In fact, in the GAL Xlokk territory, 95.5% of Total Hectares are Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA) which is marginally higher than the percentage for Malta and Gozo. It is worth noting that 78.4% of UAA consists of land parcels which have less than 0.5 hectares.

⁸ Utilised Agricultural Area refers to "all land used by the holding for agricultural production, whether rented or family owned. This includes arable land and permanent cropping."
<https://metadata.nso.gov.mt/ConceptDetails.aspx?id=2044>

Out of the UAA in Malta, the 2020 Census of Agriculture by the NSO shows that the highest proportion of UAA (30.3%) pertained to the Western district, followed by the Northern District (23.7%) and Gozo and Comino (22.8%) as defined by LAU1. In comparison, 21.5% of UAA was located in the GAL Xlokk territory.

	Total Hectares <i>Hectares</i>	Utilised Agricultural Area <i>Hectares</i>	Other Area		Utilised Agricultural Area <i>%</i>
			Unutilised Agricultural Land <i>Hectares</i>	Land occupied by buildings etc... <i>Hectares</i>	
Total Area: GAL Xlokk Territory	2,451.4	2,342.0	49.6	59.8	95.5
Irrigated Area: GAL Xlokk Territory	973.0	973.0	-	-	100.0
Total Area: MALTA	11,403.1	10,731.4	345.6	326.1	94.1
Irrigated Area: MALTA	3,891.3	3,891.3	-	-	100.0

Source: NSO

Assessing the distribution of arable land, Table 3.14 shows that the main agricultural produce includes fodder, kitchen garden, and permanent crops, with fodder by itself accounting for 51.8% of the total area in this territory. Fodder production is an important land use feature in the GAL Xlokk territory, with such fodder production sustaining the dairy sector and contributing to landscape management. Fodder production also means less dependency on the importation of such an input, which would make, for example, milk prices subject to increased volatility.

	Potatoes <i>Hectares</i>	Flowers (Greenhouse) <i>Hectares</i>	Flowers (in the open) <i>Hectares</i>	Fodder <i>Hectares</i>	Set aside <i>Hectares</i>	Vegetables (Greenhouse) <i>Hectares</i>	Vegetables (in the open) <i>Hectares</i>	Permanent Crops <i>Hectares</i>	Kitchen Garden <i>Hectares</i>	Total <i>Hectares</i>
Total Area: GAL Xlokk Territory	289.6	3.0	7.9	1,212.5	111.1	7.4	124.4	75.1	510.8	2,342.0
Irrigated Area: GAL Xlokk Territory	272.5	3.0	6.8	97.9	-	7.4	109.4	69.8	406.1	973.0
Total Area: MALTA	570.3	6.8	61.0	5,251.7	727.1	75.7	1,090.3	952.9	1,995.6	10,731.4
Irrigated Area: MALTA	519.0	6.8	51.9	250.9	-	75.7	909.6	686.5	1,390.9	3,891.3

Source: NSO

Table 3.15 below shows an assessment of livestock holdings and their population for the South-East region as defined by LAU1 In terms of livestock holdings, cattle have the highest share of livestock holdings to the total for Malta and Gozo. The same holds true for the share of the cattle population.

Table 3.15: Livestock Holdings and Population - South East District		
2021	Livestock Holding* Number of units	Animal Population Number
<i>Pigs (% in South East)</i>	26.6	21.2
South East	25	8,474
MALTA	94	40,047
<i>Cattle (% in South East)</i>	38.1	23.6
South East	104	3,304
MALTA	273	14,016
<i>Sheep (% in South East)</i>	25.3	21.8
South East	326	2,780
MALTA	1,291	12,730
<i>Goat (% in South East)</i>	25.8	22.2
South East	204	1,250
MALTA	790	5,635
<i>Total Livestock (% in South East)</i>	26.9	21.8
South East	659	15,808
MALTA	2,448	72,428
* The number of holdings is based on the individual licences as there could be the case that on one holding, there are more than one type of livestock		

Source: NSO Census of Agriculture 2020

Table 3.16 shows the male-to-female ratio of workers in the labour force the agricultural sector. Historically, agriculture in Malta, like in other Western countries, has been male dominated, with men primarily engaged in land ownership and farming activities.

Table 3.16: Male-to-Female Ratio in Agricultural Labour Force			
	Males	Females	Male-to-Female Ratio
	<i>Number of males</i>	<i>Number of females</i>	<i>Ratio</i>
Southern Harbour	886	97	9.1
South Eastern	2,551	349	7.3
Nothern Harbour	813	97	8.4
MALTA	11,544	1,797	6.4

Source: NSO Census of Agriculture 2020

⁹ The South East district includes: Birżebbuġia; Il-Gudja; Ғal Ghaxaq; Ғal Kirkop; Ғal Safi; Marsasala; Marsaxlokk; L-Mqabba; Il-Qrendi; Żejtun; Żurrieq

Table 3.17 assesses workers in the agriculture sector by age group and number of hours – those working less than 1,800 hours are taken to be involved in the sector on a part-time basis, while those working in excess of 1,800 hours are considered as being engaged on a full-time basis.

Table 3.17: Agricultural Labour Force by Age Group & Number of Hours							
<1800 hours							
	<25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
	<i>Number of workers</i>	<i>Number of workers</i>	<i>Number of workers</i>	<i>Number of workers</i>	<i>Number of workers</i>	<i>Number of workers</i>	<i>Number of workers</i>
Southern Harbour	8	53	138	159	197	282	837
<i>% of Region</i>	1.0	6.3	16.5	19.0	23.5	33.7	100.0
South Eastern	79	199	415	440	607	801	2,541
<i>% of Region</i>	3.1	7.8	16.3	17.3	23.9	31.5	100.0
Nothern Harbour	1	42	123	149	215	265	795
<i>% of Region</i>	0.1	5.3	15.5	18.7	27.0	33.3	100.0
MALTA	208	856	1,649	2,113	2,942	3,776	11,544
<i>% of Region</i>	1.8	7.4	14.3	18.3	25.5	32.7	100.0
≥1,800 hours							
	<25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
	<i>Number of workers</i>	<i>Number of workers</i>	<i>Number of workers</i>	<i>Number of workers</i>	<i>Number of workers</i>	<i>Number of workers</i>	<i>Number of workers</i>
Southern Harbour	4	17	27	19	33	46	146
<i>% of Region</i>	2.7	11.6	18.5	13.0	22.6	31.5	100.0
South Eastern	7	17	49	52	93	141	359
<i>% of Region</i>	1.9	4.7	13.6	14.5	25.9	39.3	100.0
Nothern Harbour	1	8	24	24	31	27	115
<i>% of Region</i>	0.9	7.0	20.9	20.9	27.0	23.5	100.0
MALTA	44	141	276	319	502	515	1,797
<i>% of Region</i>	2.4	7.8	15.4	17.8	27.9	28.7	100.0
TOTAL							
	<25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
	<i>Number of workers</i>	<i>Number of workers</i>	<i>Number of workers</i>	<i>Number of workers</i>	<i>Number of workers</i>	<i>Number of workers</i>	<i>Number of workers</i>
Southern Harbour	12	70	165	178	230	328	983
<i>% of Region</i>	1.2	7.1	16.8	18.1	23.4	33.4	100.0
South Eastern	86	216	464	492	700	942	2,900
<i>% of Region</i>	3.0	7.4	16.0	17.0	24.1	32.5	100.0
Nothern Harbour	2	50	147	173	246	292	910
<i>% of Region</i>	0.2	5.5	16.2	19.0	27.0	32.1	100.0
MALTA	252	997	1,925	2,432	3,444	4,291	13,341
<i>% of Region</i>	1.9	7.5	14.4	18.2	25.8	32.2	100.0

Source: NSO Census of Agriculture 2020

In Malta, 86.5% of the agricultural workforce worked for less than 1,800 hours. The percentage of the agricultural labour force engaged on a part-time basis was similarly high in all the regions within the GAL Xlokk territory – Southern Harbour (85.1%); South-Eastern (87.6%); and Northern Harbour (86.5%).

A greater share of part-time workers in agriculture means that such workers are less dependent on the agricultural output, which may in turn result in a decreased interest towards farming. The absence of full-time employment opportunities can also further discourage younger generations from pursuing careers in agriculture. Together these factors may potentially jeopardise the sector's long-term viability.

Relying predominantly on a part-time labour force can lead to reduced productivity and efficiency as the primary focus of part-time workers is often their primary employment. Seasonal fluctuations and unpredictable weather further exacerbate this issue. Additionally, part-time workers may result in a less skilled and experienced workforce, impacting overall agricultural sustainability. Addressing these challenges often requires policy measures to provide more stable and attractive employment options within agriculture and the improvement of the profitability of the sector.

Table 16 also clearly shows an ageing workforce within the agricultural sector. In Malta, 76.2% of agricultural workers were over the age of 44. This also held true for all the regions within the GAL Xlokk territory – Southern Harbour (74.9%); South-Eastern (73.6%); and Northern Harbour (78.1%).

Agriculture is generally regarded as a physically demanding job and an ageing labour force can lead to a decline in productivity due to physical limitations and a lack of technological adaptation among older workers. There's a potential knowledge gap as experienced farmers retire without passing down their expertise to the younger generation. This jeopardises the sector's long-term sustainability and food security of the country.

Finally, it is worth noting that when comparing the Census of Agriculture in 2020 to that performed in 2010, most statistics have decreased. In fact, the number of holdings has decreased by 16.2%, the number of workers has seen a decline of more than 30.0%, while livestock population have similarly registered a decrease of 23.6%. Also, while 58.6% sold a share of their produce, the remaining 41.4% kept their produce for personal consumption, which sheds light on the alarming decline of the sector and the potential to stimulate economic output.

Commentary: From an agricultural point of view, the territory remains important for agricultural activity, which in turn is important to provide a green lung to the area. Agriculture is threatened by other economic activities, such as infrastructure, construction and the manufacturing industries. The persistent urban sprawl, coupled with the already limited agricultural land in the area, make it the more important to preserve the remaining land.

Land use issues such as fragmentation, degradation, complicated land tenureships, and also lack of diversification need to be addressed urgently in order to ensure the sustainability of rural areas as well as food security. Competitiveness, and diversification, coupled with education and training are deemed to be key drivers of change according to the National Agricultural Policy 2018-2028. Moreover, stimulating employment within the territory in light of the ageing workforce is also well-aligned with the Lisbon Strategy, as well as the Farm to Fork Strategy, given the importance of people managing the limited land available.

3.3 Environmental Overview

The following section provides an assessment of Malta's environmental profile. Apparent main points include the loss of biodiversity, exceeding air pollution targets, and unsuccessful waste management practices. These are, in fact, resulting in significant infringement fines imposed by European courts in this regard¹⁰. Climate change is also an issue where more action is required.

3.3.1 Land Use

Urbanisation is a main feature characterising land use in the GAL Xlokk region and surrounding areas right outside the territory. Various localities in the region, together with pollution emanating from the transport sector have been shaped by industry and infrastructure which changed their rural features. To mention the most prominent:

- Bulebel Industrial Estate
- Hal Far Industrial Estate
- Kirkop Industrial Estate
- Luqa Industrial Estate
- Safi Aviation Park
- The Malta international Airport
- The Freeport Terminal
- The Power Station found in Marsaxlokk Harbour

- Kordin Industrial Estate (adjacent to GAL Xlokk region)
- Marsa Industrial Estate (adjacent to GAL Xlokk region)

The Agricultural Census (2020) demonstrates pressing issues on rural areas in Malta and Gozo. The utilised agricultural area (UAA) decreased by 6.2 per cent from 11,445 hectares in 2010 to 10,730 hectares in 2020. The number of agricultural holdings decreased by 14.8 per cent over a decade. The majority of holdings (69.7 per cent) managed a UAA of less than one hectare. There is a strong element of subsistence farming with 41.4 per cent of holdings producing agricultural products solely for the consumption of their producers. The remaining 58.6 per cent of holdings sell part or all of their produce.

3.3.2 Biodiversity

Malta's National Strategy for the Environment, titled 'Well-being First'¹¹ advocates the need for biodiversity protection to permeate sectoral policies, for there to be better management of Natura 2000 sites (as also emphasised in the previous LDS), to improve local awareness and value biodiversity services, as well as the need to enforce illegalities ensuring timely conservation actions.

The role for environmental education is fundamental to this strategy and is also recognised by the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA), through encouragement of environmental initiatives by NGOs, which would equip both the public and stakeholders to participate actively within the decision-

¹⁰ <https://era.org.mt/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/NSE-Wellbeing-First-Vision-Final.pdf> p.56

¹¹ <https://era.org.mt/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/NSE-Wellbeing-First-Vision-Final.pdf> p.18

making process in order to take informed decisions¹². Interestingly, the role of citizens and potential for collaborations between NGOs in protecting biodiversity was also highlighted within Malta's first National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan (NBSAP).

Looking at the mean area that is protected in marine sites in terms of SDG15 shows that such area has remained largely consistent over the period 2016-2021¹³.

On a more positive note, 40.0% of species and 43.0% of habitats are reported to have a favourable conservation species¹⁴. Nevertheless, invasive alien species such as plant pests impose threats to many sectors, including the agricultural sector.¹⁵

Finally, it is worth considering the impact of the landmark Kunming Montreal Biodiversity Framework. This Framework is the outcome of the 2022 United Nations Biodiversity Conference which includes four goals for 2050 and 23 targets for 2030¹⁶.

3.3.3 Air Quality (refer to Appendix 1)

The State of the Environment Report shows that Malta's most significant pollutants are ozone and particulate matter (PM₁₀), whereby traffic is a significant polluter, and most ozone is transboundary, arriving from Europe. In fact, the main sources of particulate matter are fuel combustion in power generation, fuel combustion in road transport, incineration, tyre and break wear, and road wear, while ozone is "a secondary pollutant that results from reactions involving precursor gases such as volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides"¹⁷.

The high level of pollution in the territory can easily be identified from the several Industrial areas (mentioned in section 3.3.1). These areas are sometimes identified as a source of noise pollution for the community residing in their vicinity.

Conversely, Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) levels were reported to be mainly within imposed limits, save for Msida, where at times, such levels have exceeded the hourly limit. Levels of benzene have always remained within limits, even when congestion levels were at their highest¹⁸.

Pressures include the high number of vehicles on the Maltese roads, as well as having the highest percentage of built-up area in the EU. High air pollution levels may also lead to respiratory diseases and impose higher costs to the health sector.

Moreover, not only is air quality in Malta not at a desirable level, but it was also perceived to be the top environmental challenge Malta will face in the next 30 years by stakeholders, alongside "curbing excessive construction and use of private vehicles."¹⁹

¹² <https://era.org.mt/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Recognising-Maltas-Env-Challenges.pdf> p.28

¹³ <https://dashboards.sdindex.org/explorer?metric=mean-area-that-is-protected-in-terrestrial-sites-important-to-biodiversity&visualization=line>

¹⁴ <https://dashboards.sdindex.org/explorer?metric=mean-area-that-is-protected-in-terrestrial-sites-important-to-biodiversity&visualization=line>

¹⁵ <https://era.org.mt/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Recognising-Maltas-Env-Challenges.pdf> p.26

¹⁶ <https://www.cbd.int/gbf/>

¹⁷ https://era.org.mt/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/3_Chapter2_AmbientAir_9Aug18.pdf p.7

¹⁸ <https://era.org.mt/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SoER-Summary-Report-2018.pdf> p.60

¹⁹ <https://era.org.mt/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/NSE-Wellbeing-First-Vision-Final.pdf>

However, the EU, as part of Fit for 55²⁰, has recently adopted the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), a ‘cap-and-trade’ system which targets reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by allowing a maximum emissions level and trading of emissions occurs once that is reached. Moreover, this maximum level is also gradually decreased over time²¹. Malta’s air quality also suffers from transboundary impacts, particularly those arising from Saharan dust.

However, in terms of relevance to the GAL Xlokk territory, the National Agricultural Policy highlights the environmental benefits of targeting fertiliser for significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from farming.

3.3.4 Climate Change

Climate change poses significant challenges in terms of the resources required for both mitigation and adaptation. The latest State of the Environment Report by ERA highlights the difficulties faced by Malta in the context of it being a small island state, with regards to the potential for mitigation, as well as the geophysical, social and economic vulnerability to the impacts of climate change²². Malta’s National Agricultural Policy also makes reference to these challenges.

Progress in this regard can be monitored through the thirteenth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), which is precisely Climate Action. The latest Sustainable Development Report with data for 2018 shows that although the score for Malta is moderately improving, progress is insufficient to meet this goal, and significant challenges remain²³.

Assessing the main indicators within this SDG, the area where major challenges remain for Malta is CO₂ emissions embodied in imports. This is corroborated by ERA’s “Recognising Malta’s Environmental Challenges Report”. Nevertheless, despite major challenges remaining in this indicator, it is on track to maintaining SDG achievement by 2030.

3.3.5 Waste

In terms of waste, Malta has a very high rate of landfilled waste. ERA have highlighted this as one of Malta’s main challenges with 80% of waste generated being Construction and Demolition (C&D) Waste in 2015²⁴. In 2021, an average of 611kg of waste per capita were generated, and 73% of all waste was landfilled²⁵. This is one of the highest rates in Europe, making the EU Landfill Directive’s target of reducing this to 10% by 2035 further out of reach. Notwithstanding such statistics, the exports of plastic waste per capita are witnessing a declining trend, with an average of 5.5 kg/capita being exported in 2021²⁶.

ERA have also highlighted the data gaps in terms of waste data, both quantitatively as well as qualitatively, with no data available on waste and its composition and the cost of waste management

²⁰ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/733513/EPRS_BRI\(2022\)733513_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/733513/EPRS_BRI(2022)733513_EN.pdf)

²¹ https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/eu-emissions-trading-system-eu-ets/emissions-cap-and-allowances_en

²² https://era.org.mt/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Chapter3_ClimateChange-26Nov2018.pdf

²³ Within the SDG framework, countries are rated on their performance in one of the following ways: SDG Achieved (Green), Challenges remain (Yellow), Significant challenges remain (Orange), or Major Challenges Remain (Red)

²⁴ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20180328STO00751/waste-management-in-the-eu-infographic-with-facts-and-figures>

²⁵ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20180328STO00751/waste-management-in-the-eu-infographic-with-facts-and-figures>

²⁶ <https://dashboards.sdindex.org/explorer?metric=exports-of-plastic-waste&visualization=line>

operations. Moreover, there should be more concerted efforts with respect to enforcing waste management compliance²⁷.

3.3.5 Section Synthesis

The above assessment sheds light on various challenges and opportunities within the region. Between 2011 and 2021, the GAL Xlokk territory witnessed a population increase of 17.8%, resulting in a population density of 1,815 inhabitants per km². This high population density poses significant challenges, notably the strain on infrastructure, leading to traffic congestion and environmental degradation.

The increase in population resulting from the inward migration patterns also brought about a gender imbalance in favour of males and an increase in multiculturalism. While the percentage of foreign nationals is lower than the national average, some localities like Birżebbuġia and Marsascula have higher proportions of foreign nationals, contributing to cultural and economic diversity. Managing this diversity effectively demands efforts to bridge cultural differences, promote language accessibility, and ensure equitable opportunities for all residents.

The male-to-female ratio within the territory also saw an increase, reflecting a wider trend in Malta. This shift has implications for social dynamics and necessitates efforts to promote gender equality, encourage inclusive social environments, and create opportunities for all residents to foster healthy relationships and cooperation.

The GAL Xlokk territory is also experiencing an ageing population as witnessed by the age structure of the localities as well as the high old-age dependency ratios in certain localities. The presence of a significant elderly population poses challenges for healthcare and social systems, requiring careful planning and the development of age-friendly communities. Strategies to ensure the well-being and engagement of senior citizens are vital to maintain a balanced and sustainable community.

Balancing these factors requires collaborative efforts among local authorities, community organisations, and residents. The region's potential lies in its ability to address challenges while leveraging its diverse strengths to create an inclusive, sustainable, and thriving community. The socio-economic assessment provides a roadmap for achieving this balance, fostering a prosperous and harmonious GAL Xlokk territory.

3.4 SWOT Analysis

The aim of this section is to conduct a deeper analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) pertaining to the territory. This approach seeks to mitigate the weaknesses of the territory while aiming to minimise and safeguard against potential threats originating from both external and internal sources. Additionally, it strives to amplify and concentrate on the territory's strengths, capitalising on any available opportunities.

²⁷ <https://era.org.mt/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Recognising-Maltas-Env-Challenges.pdf>

The following is derived by analysing the data discussed within the previous sections of this report, and from informed observations grounded in evidence, obtained through public consultation meetings which will be discussed further in a subsequent section. The following table establishes a link between the CAP Strategic Plan and the Local Development Strategy (LDS).

Figure 2: Strengths

Figure 2: Strengths	
	<i>GAL Xlokk LDS Pillars / CAP SP Rural Development Interventions</i>
Strong cultural identity and a sense of community	LDS Pillar 4: Education and Research
Business births	CAP SP: Setting up of Young Farmers, On-Farm Productive Investments
Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) upholding cultural traditions	LDS Pillar 3: Marketing of the Territory
Agriculture produce is dominated by fodder, kitchen garden, and permanent crops adding value to the landscape	LDS Pillar 3: Marketing of the Territory CAP SP: Areas under natural or other area-specific constraints CAP SP: Direct Payments (Eco-Scheme IPM)
Regional sites for recreation and tourism	LDS Pillar 2: Enhancement to Social and Rural Infrastructure. LDS Pillar 1: Improving the environment of the territory
Presence of numerous points of interest and sites showcasing the region's heritage	LDS Pillar 2: Enhancement to Social and Rural Infrastructure

The GAL Xlokk region is distinguished by an abundance of rural landscapes and beaches, drawing a substantial annual influx of tourists. Noteworthy attractions include Wied iż-Żurrieq, St. Peter's Pool, and Haġar Qim, among others. These locales augment the region's significance, owing to their profound cultural and natural worth. As discussed, business births within coastal and inland localities within this region have increased significantly throughout the years and have also surpassed business deaths indicating positive growth within these localities.

Regarding the social aspect, there is substantial engagement of entities such as band clubs, voluntary organisations (VOs) and NGOs which often rely on voluntary contributions. Moreover, the GAL Xlokk region is distinctly proactive in advancing its local communities and facilitating both structured and informal educational prospects, particularly concerning the region's culture and heritage. Despite resource constraints, there is considerable drive to work towards creating new opportunities to showcase the values and talent of their communities.

Figure 3: Weaknesses

Figure 3: Weaknesses	
	<i>GAL Xlokk LDS Pillars / CAP SP Rural Development Interventions</i>
A large increase in the population density	LDS Pillar 4: Education and Research
A minor portion of skilled agricultural, fishery, and forestry workers who are engaged full-time	LDS Pillar 4: Education and Research CAP SP: Knowledge exchange, advice, training and dissemination of information
Lost cultural practices/ Lack of crafts hub	LDS Pillar 4: Education and Research CAP SP: Knowledge exchange, advice, training and dissemination of information
The growing challenge of fostering social inclusion for foreign communities within society	LDS Pillar 4: Education and Research
Air pollution	CAP SP: Land Based management commitments
Lack of access to roads, valleys, and tourist destinations	LDS Pillar 2: Enhancement to Social and Rural Infrastructure.
Insufficient availability of supportive devices for individuals with disabilities to access and utilise specific premises	LDS Pillar 2: Enhancement to Social and Rural Infrastructure.
Lack of promotion and initiatives that market tourist attractions and local cultural products	LDS Pillar 3: Marketing of the territory

Over the years, Malta has witnessed a swift rise in both its population size and density, a trend that is also evident within the GAL Xlokk region. In fact, the population density for this region is higher than the average for Malta. As the number of foreign residents surged, the demographic make-up of this area began evolving into a more culturally diverse community. However, this transformation also led to challenges concerning social inclusion, stemming from barriers related to language and culture.

The ageing population stands out as a significant weakness in the GAL Xlokk region as discussed within the socio-economic analysis presented in this report. Data shows that 19.0% of inhabitants within this region are aged 65 or over, which is greater than the percentage for Malta which is registered at 18.8%.

Moreover, not only is the formal educational attainment rate relatively low, but there's also a notable lack of education and expertise in agricultural practices. The workforce engaged in agriculture, fishery, and forestry is sparse. Consequently, the gradual decline in people pursuing and participating in these industries leads to the erosion of traditional trades over time.

Climate change has emerged as a significant national challenge for Malta, with one of the primary contributors being air pollution. This issue has already caused damage, particularly impacting agricultural land by causing biodiversity loss and water scarcity. This also represents a substantial vulnerability, and if not addressed, it could lead to more severe adverse consequences for the land and the diverse ecosystems that make up a significant part of the territory's identity. Additionally, Malta's struggles with ineffective waste management, notably high landfill waste, adds to this pressing issue.

The matter of accessibility was also addressed, with representatives from various organisations noting that despite attempts to enhance the accessibility of certain premises for both the general public and individuals with disabilities, there remains room for improvement. Particularly, there exists a deficit in convenient entry points and inadequate provision of supportive facilities like ramps and elevators for those with specific needs.

The problem regarding lack of data at regional level, remains.

Figure 4: Opportunities

	<i>GAL Xlokk LDS Pillars / CAP SP Rural Development Interventions</i>
Introduce new infrastructural projects – Green infrastructure	LDS Pillar 2: Enhancement to Social and Rural Infrastructure. LDS Pillar 1: Improving the environment of the territory
Economic potential	LDS Pillar 3: Marketing of the territory CAP SP: On-farm Production Interventions, Off-farm Production Investments.
Improve marketing and promotion of local sites and products	LDS Pillar 3: Marketing of the territory CAP SP: On-farm Production Investments CAP SP: Off-farm Productive Investments
Restoration projects of cultural heritage	LDS Pillar 2: Enhancement to Social and Rural Infrastructure.
Improving accessibility for different premises	LDS Pillar 2: Enhancement to Social and Rural Infrastructure.
Investing in formal and non-formal education	LDS Pillar 4: Education and Research CAP SP: Knowledge exchange, advice, training and dissemination of information
Enhancing community inclusivity	LDS Pillar 4: Education and Research
Allocating resources to specific crafts or skills and networking	LDS Pillar 4: Education and Research CAP SP: Knowledge exchange, advice, training and dissemination of information

By making strategic investments, the region can tap into several opportunities to satisfy the needs of the community. In terms of infrastructure, directing investments towards maintaining the existing systems, alongside any new projects, would be advantageous. Enhancing accessibility and the quality of various facilities would consequently lead to increased community participation and engagement.

Moreover, allocating resources to develop green infrastructure, such as secure and accessible green spaces, would provide the community with new recreational spots while simultaneously tackling the prevailing carbon footprint within the nation, a concern mirrored in this specific region as well. Initiating measures to combat the persistent issue of climate change and the escalating carbon footprint should commence with endeavours of this nature - introducing green spaces that could also align with the region's potential for educational initiatives. These green hubs could serve as venues for interactive workshops, field trips, and similar activities, fostering hands-on learning experiences.

Furthermore, an opportunity exists to renovate specific structures and artefacts, thereby preserving the region's cultural essence. Equally important is the exploration of opportunities linked to social inclusivity. This can be achieved through a range of events that consider the diverse and evolving demographic composition of the localities within this region. Similarly, effective marketing initiatives could be introduced to attract more tourists to less frequented destinations. This would in turn contribute to both the education and tourism objectives which were highlighted within the public consultation meetings.

Figure 5: Threats

Figure 5: Threats	
	<i>GAL Xlokk LDS Pillars / CAP SP Rural Development Interventions</i>
Potential risk of losing tourist attractions, including statues, sites, and other culturally and historically significant areas	LDS Pillar 3: Marketing of the territory
Abandonment of agricultural work and potential risk of losing traditional landscapes such as rubble walls	CAP SP: Setting up of Young Farmers, On-Farm Non-Productive Investments
Steady increase in the population and population density	LDS Pillar 4: Education and Research
Increasing urban sprawl	LDS Pillar 1: Improving the environment of the territory LDS Pillar 1: Improving the environment of the territory
The ageing population	LDS Pillar 4: Education and Research
Further disruption in the current green infrastructure and ecosystems	LDS Pillar 1: Improving the environment of the territory

Further loss of traditional practices	LDS Pillar 4: Education and Research. CAP SP – Knowledge exchange, advice, training and dissemination of information LDS Pillar 3: Marketing of the territory
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The GAL Xlokk region is confronted primarily with the looming threat of losing its cultural heritage and traditions that have been passed down for generations. Precious cultural elements like statues, buildings, and artefacts face the potential risk of insufficient preservation, endangering their availability for future generations to enjoy. It is imperative to invest in restoring and conserving these cultural and historical treasures that hold immense significance for the community.

Should the local population continue to grow, leading to increased population density, the territory, as well as Malta in general, could witness further changes in its characteristics with issues of overpopulation. If the population surge is largely attributed to an influx of foreigners, it becomes even more crucial to implement initiatives that safeguard the native language and protect traditional arts and crafts, which are already at risk of being lost.

The risk of losing traditional arts and crafts could stem from both the influx of foreigners and the waning interest among the younger generation to engage in these fields. Similarly, the abandonment of agricultural practices is a pressing concern fuelled by the declining interest of young individuals in pursuing farming activities. This trend, coupled with the urban sprawl, could potentially result in the erosion of the region's distinctive landscape and ecosystems.

4. Description and Objectives of the Strategy

This section shall describe the objectives of the LDS for the GAL Xlokk Foundation and the integrated and innovative features of the strategy, rank the objectives, and set clear, measurable and realistic targets and results.

This section also includes details of the consultation and drafting process, indicating how the bottom up and partnership approach were respected; describes the organisation and functioning of the management of the strategy and the specific tasks and responsibilities; describes the specific selection criteria for the assessment and prioritising of project applications; describes the procedures, responsibilities, and decision making powers; and describe the selection process for projects (including project selection criteria).

This section shall therefore include detailed information regarding each action, which is being proposed by the GXF.

4.1. The Previous Local Development Strategy

This strategy seeks to build upon the previous LEADER programmes of 2007-2013 and 2014-2022. Hence it is important to consider the vision and strategic objectives that were established in the first and second LDS for the Xlokk region for that period.

LEADER programme 2007-2013: The overall objective of ‘achieving a rural and sustainable development in the southern part of Malta’ translated as a scenario in which the region was actively promoted and the quality of life of the people in the territory was improved. This vision was considered to be a balance between aligning to national objectives and providing a focus on the attention that the region and its people need and deserve.

In terms of approach, the core strategic objectives were defined on the basis of the analysis of the territory while giving priority to the issues that emerged as a result of the consultation. The main core strategic objectives established in the LDS for the Xlokk region for the period 2007-2013 were:

- Strengthening the identity of the region
- Enhancing community cohesiveness
- Making the region more attractive
- Assisting agriculture and niche products
- Animation of the territory

LEADER programme 2014-2022: The second LDS sought to build upon the first programme with the overall priority objectives being the development of the cultural, environmental, business, knowledge base and tourism aspects in the territory. The five strategic pillars of the LDS were:

- Development of the cultural landscape, social heritage, and tourism product of the rural territory.
- Development of the environmental landscape of the rural territory.
- Restoration of assets of artistic and cultural value.
- To invest in the transfer of skills and development of the knowledge base of the rural communities. (this measure was dropped from the actual implementation of the Local

Development Strategy following Covid-19 health related measures where in place by the Superintendence of Health and other relevant authorities)

- To invest in the development of the tourism product of the rural areas.

4.2 Description and Objectives of the Strategy

The Local Development Strategy (LDS) primarily serves as a funding tool for operations within a specific region, adhering to the principles of the LEADER approach while meeting the criteria for an effective and suitable strategy that enhances the region. The SWOT analysis forms the foundation for each measure's intervention logic.

This LDS results from an analysis of the region's geographic and socio-economic profile, taking into account recent changes and its cultural and historical context. It is further informed by extensive consultations with the various stakeholders.

The community's confidence in the LEADER program is evident through high participation in public consultations and proposal submissions. Past positive experiences have generated expectations of increased support for higher-quality projects. However, given budget limitations, the LDS must focus on high-priority objectives while ensuring equitable distribution and inclusion. This shapes the structure of LDS measures, including action weighting, budget caps, and expenditure thresholds.

Safeguarding LEADER's reputation is essential to continue delivering value to rural communities. Therefore, the LDS emphasises the implementation and management capacity of the GXF, including group organisation, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms.

Past experience highlights the need for a more focused strategy, streamlined operations aligned with management capacity, and a greater emphasis on collaborative and integrated actions. Proposals and prioritization predominantly revolve around measures addressing four main strategic pillars.

4.3 Defining the Strategic Objectives

This strategy aims to address the needs identified through territorial analysis, consultations, and the experience of the GXF. This is to ensure that all initiatives supported by the LEADER fund have a significant positive impact on the community. In this regard, the socio-economic characteristics of the area, its geographical and landscape features, and the results of the consultation are especially relevant when shaping the overall strategic vision of the LDS and determining priority objectives. These needs and goals will then guide the development of concrete actions and projects.

The consideration of proposals and the prioritisation of these ideas in combination with the analysis of the area and the population of the Xlokk region showed a predominance for measures serving three main strategic goals, in order of priority:

- i. Enhance the environment across the territory.
- ii. Improve marketing efforts across the territory.
- iii. Expand education and research.

These strategic goals are focused on enhancing both the well-being of the local population and the overall environmental quality of the areas. This will be achieved by improving the existing

environment and by strengthening marketing and educational initiatives in a bid to better preserve the regions' assets and traditions for the next generations.

This vision for the Xlokk territory, along with the establishment of priority goals based on identified needs and opportunities, allows for a continuation on previous LEADER programmes particularly with respect to improving the environment reinforcing the region's identity and increasing its attractiveness.

When combined with the overarching objectives detailed in the subsequent sections, these strategic goals delineate the structure of this Local Development Strategy (LDS) and provide the rationale for each of the planned measures.

4.4 Complementarity and Synergy

The LEADER approach within the CAP is a cooperative intervention that provides a bottom-up territorial approach. The wide range of possible actions that can be undertaken ensures complementarity with other funds, including those that can be funded by the CAP SP which has the standard top-down approach. The value of small-scale projects eligible under the LDS targets the specific needs of the territory which non-LEADER measures may not address.

The CAP SP offers a range of non-LEADER interventions that target the Strategic Objectives of the CAP. This LDS allows improvements in rural areas that go beyond productivity through its pillars. This complementarity enables the further development of other sectors and the advancement of a dynamic community.

In addition, the non-LEADER measures of the CAP SP are targeting agriculture as the main sector, in terms of productivity and quality through interventions that fall under one or more Strategic Objectives. The LDS excludes agricultural primary production activities but provides for complementarity with the non-LEADER interventions which stimulate rural development actions that are not equally served by other funds.

The needs of the GAL Xlokk territory have been well outlined during the consultation process and backed with statistics issued in the latest Census. Furthermore, the National Agricultural Policy for Malta 2018-2028 has identified an exhaustive list of improvements that are necessary to strengthen rural areas at a national level. The LDS is in line with the National Agricultural Policy as well as the CAP which brings to the territory a holistic and European dimension towards economic, social and environmental sustainability. As clearly defined in the CAP SP, other strategies and policies have been taken into account, such as the Farm to Fork Strategy, the European Green Deal, and the Biodiversity Strategy.

4.5 Horizontal Objectives

4.5.1 Social Inclusion

Social inclusion is one of the main objectives of the LEADER programme, hence projects that support equal opportunities for youths, women, elderly people, disabled persons, and minorities will be given priority.

Over the past decade, the localities within the GAL Xlokk territory experienced significant changes in their social fabric brought about by increases in their population and demographic characteristic. This horizontal measure aims to highlight the importance of ensuring that all individuals and sub-groups within a locality feel part of the local community. This measure seeks to promote mutual understanding, cooperation and integration.

This LDS makes use of the same principles with regards to the setting of selection criteria that are adopted in the CAP SP, by including social criteria to enable preference to be given to proposed interventions that contribute towards the promotion of equal opportunities, equality, non-discrimination and improved accessibility.

4.5.2 Digitalisation

Digitalisation allows communities to preserve knowledge for future generations while reaching a wider audience through on-line resources. Having a digital presence is essential to enhance education, increase the visibility of one's product, and put an area on the map when it comes to tourism. Hence, digital access allows rural communities to gain entry to a vast reservoir of knowledge and resources, allowing local businesses, farmers, and residents to make well-informed decisions, boost productivity, and enhance overall quality of life.

Digitalisation can also contribute to environmental sustainability in rural areas. Smart farming technologies, for instance, empower farmers to optimise resource use, reduce waste, and minimize their environmental footprint. Furthermore, by embracing digital platforms, rural communities can showcase their unique experiences, products, and cultural heritage to a global audience. This increased visibility can boost tourism, trade, and cultural exchange, thus contributing to local economic growth.

The integration of digital technology across all four strategic pillars ensures that the GAL Xlokk territory remains competitive in the digital era, thus improving the well-being of its community.

4.5.3 Preserving the Uniqueness of Individual Localities

This horizontal measure aims to encourage initiatives which highlight the uniqueness of the individual localities within the GAL Xlokk territory thus strengthening the local identity and local profile. Through this measure the LDS recognises that each rural area has its unique set of characteristics which distinguish it from other areas and seeks to ensure that projects are tailored to the specific characteristics of the local community.

Preserving the distinct cultural, environmental, and socio-economic characteristics of individual localities stands as a central objective within the LEADER initiative. The emphasis on locality-specific uniqueness preserves local distinctiveness and enhances the appeal of rural areas to tourists seeking authentic experiences, thereby bolstering local economies.

This horizontal measure will ensure that priority is given to projects which highlight and build upon the unique characteristics of a particular locality, as opposed to promoting projects with no evident link to a particular locality.

4.5.4 Innovation and Originality

Innovation can include the emergence of new products and services which incorporate the distinctiveness of the area and new methods of doing things which involve a combination of the area's resources and links between different economic sectors. This measure ties in with the above project and seeks to promote original projects which distinguish a particular locality or venture. In rural areas where challenges can be unique, fostering fresh, inventive approaches is essential. Original projects encourage communities to think creatively, leading to solutions that can have a more significant and lasting impact.

Originality also ensures that development efforts are tailored to the specific needs and opportunities of the local community. Every rural area has its distinct characteristics, and a one-size-fits-all approach often falls short. An original project takes into account these individualities, resulting in initiatives that are more effective and relevant.

Moreover, original projects tend to attract more attention and support. They stand out, drawing interest from funders, stakeholders, and the broader community. This increased visibility can lead to additional resources, partnerships, and collaborations, strengthening the project's chances of success.

4.5.5 Collaboration

This LDS aims to build upon prior strategies and acknowledges the importance of cooperation in countering the limited effectiveness of independent actions. Collaboration serves as a vital means to encourage shared responsibility and the exchange of knowledge. Collaboration can vary from partners contributing financially to the project as well as partners contributing through time and effort such as in the organisation of activities and events.

This goal is achieved through the implementation of a dedicated measure designed to support and encourage collaboration. This fundamental principle is applied to all strategic pillars, where priority is given to collaborative efforts through the establishment of pertinent selection criteria.

4.5.6 Neutral Environmental Impact

A neutral or positive environmental impact refers to the effects that a project or activity has on the environment, which can either maintain the current state of the environment (neutral) or improve it in various aspects (positive). These aspects can include minimising harm to natural ecosystems, causing no type of pollution, conserving resources, and enhancing environmental conditions.

Proposed projects should align with principles of sustainability and responsible environmental stewardship. Additionally, projects should contribute to the well-being of communities and ecosystems. Projects with a positive environment impact can involve practices that reduce pollution, conserve water, protect biodiversity, and promote cleaner energy sources. These actions can lead to improved air and water quality, enhanced public health, and increased resilience to environmental threats. Such projects can also result in cost savings through reduced resource consumption or waste management, thus also creating a positive economic impact.

Priority will be given to projects having an estimated net positive environmental impact, while projects with a net neutral impact will also be considered.

4.5.7 Preparedness

The level of preparedness of a proposed project will also be taken into consideration. Preparedness refers to the extent to which a project promoter is ready and capable of successfully executing the proposed project. It encompasses various elements that demonstrate the project's feasibility, viability, and the ability to meet its objectives including:

- Whether any preliminary discussions with relevant authorities such as ERA, the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) or the Super Superintendence of Cultural Heritage would have already been held. The list can be extended and/or amended according to the particular pillar.
- Whether any planning permits have already been obtained by the relevant authorities, such the Planning Authority (PA) and/or other relevant authorities.
- Whether the project is appropriately planned to include achievable goals, with a clear time-line and realistic budget.

4.5.8 Dissemination and Animation of Activities

Preference will be given to projects that include a clear dissemination plan and/or an associated list of activities to be carried out within a specific period.

5. Definition and Development of the Action Plan

This section includes detailed information regarding each action which is being proposed by GXF. It explains the Strategy's Action Plan by providing a detailed description of each measure falling under the objectives described in the previous section.

5.1 Measures by Pillars

After conducting public consultation meetings and participating in numerous meetings with various ministries, five distinct measures are being proposed to be incorporated into the upcoming Local Development Strategy (LDS). These pillars aim to highlight the strengths, requirements, and future opportunities of the local community in the GAL Xlokk region.

The measures designed for the Action Plan for the Xlokk territory are classified as per the previously discussed territory-specific strategic objectives. As shown in the diagram below, a total of five measures have been designed targeting the three identified objectives. Detailed descriptions for each measure are presented in the subsequent subsections.

Figure 6: Strategic Objectives and Measures



5.2 Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria, in alignment with the National Eligibility Rules - Section 3: Common Rules of Eligibility, are applicable to all five measures outlined in this LDS, including the transnational pillar. The primary eligibility criterion is the project's relevance to the specific measure under which the project is submitted. Consequently, any project falling under any of the five measures must demonstrate a clear connection to the respective measure to qualify for reimbursement.

The below is a list of eligibility criteria common for each measure²⁸:

- a. The proposed project will be implemented within the GXF territory
- b. The applicant is able to demonstrate evidence of sufficient financial capacity required to fund the private financial component
- c. The proposed project contributes to the general and specific objectives of the measure
- d. The proposed project contributes to at least one indicator target

- e. The GXF will ensure that all measures which give rise to State Aid implications, would need to comply with the applicable State Aid Rules.

²⁸ Other eligibility criteria may apply to each individual measure and will be listed once a call for applications is published

5.3 Defining the Strategic Measures

Title:	Improving the Environment of the Territory
Code for Action	GXF LDS 01
Aim:	<p>The general aim of this measure is to carry out environmental improvements in the territory to further improve the landscape of the area and the well-being of its citizens, by the end of the programming period, through (at least) 9 projects.</p> <p>These projects should have a reasonable degree of accessibility to the general public. The general public refers to the collective body of individuals within a society who are not part of exclusive or elite groups, but include a diverse spectrum of individuals, including but not limited to, vulnerable and marginalised groups. Due consideration should be given to sites belonging to institutions, such as schools or rehabilitation centres, which would directly benefit the institutions' respective populations.</p> <p>This pillar could include efforts to minimise the region's carbon footprint, the greening of existing garden, the safeguarding of water resources, the establishment of effective waste management practices, and to encourage the use of alternative transport within the local communities.</p>
Rationale:	<p>The high population density in the GAL Xlokk territory can result in environmental degradation and in turn decrease the well-being of its citizens. This measure aims to partially mitigate the consequences of this environment degradation by the long term improvement of the existent green spaces and/or by promoting projects which improve the quality of the environment by reducing pollution and safeguarding resources. The improvement of open spaces within the territory would bring about significant positive effects on societal well-being and biodiversity.</p>
Scope of Action:	<p>This measure supports projects that promote the greening of existing infrastructure and supports activities with environmental and climate benefits.</p> <p>The scope of action includes the efforts to minimise the region's carbon footprint, the greening of existing gardens, the safeguarding of water resources, the establishment of effective waste management practices, and to encourage the alternative use of transport within the local communities.</p>
General Description of the Action	<p>a) Description of the type of operation</p> <p>Based on the analysis of the territory and the findings of the consultation exercise, the following indicative list presents a few examples of the type of operations which could be supported through this measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The use of native vegetation and trees in the landscaping of already existing

	<p>gardens and soft areas for the rehabilitation of recreational spaces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The upgrading and embellishment, through the use of natural and eco-friendly materials, of open green spaces such as gardens, together with programmes for the promotion of benefits of biodiversity, safeguarding of water resources, and the ecosystem services which it supports, e.g. pollination. - The creation of elements of infrastructure such as bicycle racks to encourage the use of alternative means of transport and decrease the territory's carbon footprint. - The creation programmes which establish effective waste management practices that go beyond the nation's statutory minimum, in order to encourage better waste management in the territory. <p>b) Type of Support</p> <p>The form of support provided by this measure is a non-repayable grant support in line with any of the forms of financing outlined in Article 83 of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115, and as may be announced in the Call for Project Proposals issued, and/or at the latest in the document setting out the conditions for support.</p> <p>Operations shall not be eligible for support where they have been physically completed or fully implemented before the application for support is submitted to the Local Action Group, irrespective of whether all related payments have been made.</p> <p>c) Action intervention logic, its link to the need/s of the Region as identified in section 2, its contribution to CAP SP needs and the Partnership Agreement objectives</p> <p>d) Contribution to cross cutting objective of the CAP SP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Climate change action - Environmental care - To preserve landscapes and biodiversity - Vibrant rural areas
Eligible Beneficiaries	<p>The following are considered eligible beneficiaries for the purpose of this measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local councils - Regional councils - VOs (compliant with the Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations, in line with the Voluntary Organisations Act 2007, and regularly operating within the Xlokk territory). - Schools found in the Xlokk territory (these may include private schools, church

	schools, independent schools, state schools and other schools).
Eligible and Non-Eligible Costs	<p>Eligibility for this pillar is in-line and compliant with the National Eligibility Rules (Section 3: Common Rules of Eligibility).</p> <p>Only costs incurred as per article (ii) Eligibility period under Section 1 - General Principal of Eligibility of the National Eligibility Rules shall be eligible. The Foundation shall issue more detailed guidelines at the time of the launch of the calls for applications for this measure. The eligible costs to be reimbursed through this grant support relate to two types of investments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Type 1: Investments that are directly related to the long term improvement and sustainable management of existing gardens and soft areas. - Type 2: Investments that are associated with the development of programmes aimed at improving the territory's environment, such as decreasing pollution and the carbon footprint, promoting the use of alternative transport or safeguarding water resources. <p>Indicative Examples of eligible costs - this list may change once measure's guidance notes are published:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overheads which include the expenses incurred that are not directly attributable to a specific project or activity but without which a project cannot be implemented (refer to National Eligibility Rules). - General costs such as landscape architects, irrigation/water engineers, consultation fees, feasibility studies, the acquisition of patent rights and licences up to an indicative amount of 10% of the total eligible project cost. - Fencing and other works needed to facilitate conservation management, including protection of water and soil. - The costs of propagation material (seeds, seedlings, saplings, etc) used for structural changes, planting, under-planting, edges and borders, belts, etc., and the related plant prevention, (e.g. poles, irrigation equipment, and any individual plant protection requirements as appropriate). - The cost of infrastructure intended to promote the use of alternative transport such as bicycle racks. - Native trees and plants. <p>All costs shall be eligible if incurred within the project duration.</p> <p>Examples of non-eligible costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Replacement operations and general maintenance

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The purchase of machinery and real estate. - The planting and purchasing of non-native species of trees/plants/shrubs - Interest on debt - Value added tax except, in specific circumstances as outlined in Article 64 (1) (c) of the Common Provision Regulation (as per National Eligibility Rules - Section 3). - Value added tax in the case of State Aid Schemes - “Simple replacements”, as determined by the Foundation Decision Committee following guidance received by the Managing Authority - Building and/ or restoration of rubble walls. - Works in kind <p>In addition, calls for applications and respective guidelines may contain additional provisions relating to methods of procurement of the works, rates of items and services, types of vegetation and/or trees, and other requirements, as may be applicable. The subsidiary Legislation 549.64 of the Environment and Resources Authority on “Trees and Woodlands Protection Regulations – Legal Notice 200 of 2011” is one such example.</p>
Indicative Selection Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social inclusion - Dissemination and Animation of Activities (Digitisation) - Innovation, Originality, and Preserving the Uniqueness of Individual Localities - Collaboration - Neutral/Positive Environmental Impact - Preparedness
Level of Support	The beneficiary will be granted financial assistance amounting to up to 80% of the total eligible expenditure. The co-financing element must be borne by the applicant.
Budget Allocation Towards Action	<p>The total budget allocation towards actions under this measure is €441,000.</p> <p>The grant support for individual projects shall be capped at a minimum of €20,000 and a maximum of €49,000.</p>
Targets and Clear, Adequate indicators to Measure the Success of the Action	At least nine (9) projects leading to the improvement of the environment in the GAL Xlokk territory and the quality of life of the communities of the LAG territory.
Risks in Implementation and Mitigation	A main risk associated with this measure is the transformation of existing open spaces with significant rural and semi-natural heritage value into more formalised environments. This risk is being mitigated through the inclusion of the eligibility

Factors	<p>requirement that the project is compatible with the existing land uses and habitats and the inclusion of relevant selection criteria.</p> <p>Another risk is the introduction of alien species during landscaping. This is mitigated through the inclusion of relevant criteria favouring indigenous species of conservation value and through a requirement for documented evidence of consultation with the relevant authorities.</p> <p>Another main risk is associated with the design of environmental spaces that are not conducive to improved use of these spaces by the territory's communities. This is being mitigated through a requirement for the development to lead to improved recreational uses relating to the environment of the territory.</p>
Overall Assessment and Relevance of the Action	<p>This measure is relevant to national policies relating to the protection of biodiversity and its sustainable use. The Action ensures positive environment impacts through the protection of biodiversity in the territory's rural areas whilst promoting projects for the landscaping and greening of open spaces.</p>

Title:	Enhancement of Social and Rural Infrastructure
Code for Action	GXF LDS 02
Aim:	The aim of this measure is to enhance the social character of the communities and the rural infrastructure of the localities.
Rationale:	<p>Given the existence of a prior measure addressing restoration in the preceding LDS, discussions concluded that if a provision for co-funding restoration projects were to be reintroduced in the upcoming LDS, it would be pertinent for such restoration initiatives to concentrate on landscapes and infrastructure that hold value for the broader community's enjoyment and are rural in their nature. These projects should have a reasonable degree of public accessibility, which can range from the site, building and/or artefact being visible from the street to complete public access. Restoration in historic buildings opening on a daily basis still fall under the remit of the measure.</p> <p>At the same time, the consultation process has still found great interest within the community for cultural, therapeutical, sports, arts, crafts, social and animal welfare infrastructural projects in the urban central areas and periphery of the localities. Here, projects proposed should have a reasonable access by members and daily service users. Due consideration should be given to sites belonging to institutions, such as schools or rehabilitation centres, which would directly benefit the institutions' respective populations.</p>
Scope of Action:	<p>The scope of action of this measure is twofold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To carry out restoration projects which focus on landscapes and infrastructure

	<p>that hold value for the broader community's enjoyment and are rural in their nature.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To carry out infrastructural projects within the community in the sectors of culture, sports, arts, crafts, social and animal welfare.
<p>General Description of the Action</p>	<p>d) Description of the type of operation</p> <p>Based on the analysis of the territory and the findings of the consultation exercise, the following indicative list presents a few examples of the type of operations which could be supported through this measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The restoration of historical buildings or parts thereof situated in rural areas. - The restoration of rural artefacts and infrastructure situated in rural areas. - Projects which involve culture, sports and/or animal welfare infrastructure for the use of the local community. - The conservation of paintings of significant artistic and historical value. - The restoration of objects d'art, located within the territory and which have a religious or cultural significance to the community. - The restoration of local statues or street niches. - The restoration of historical archives found on the territory. - The creation of therapeutic gardens. <p>b) Type of Support</p> <p>The form of support provided by this measure is a grant support in the form of reimbursement of eligible costs that have been actually incurred and paid, together with, where applicable, other contributions as may be specified in the call for applications. Additionally, all eligible costs related to the project will be treated as such from the signing of the contract with GXF if the project is selected for funding.</p> <p>The form of support provided by this measure is a non-repayable grant support in line with any of the forms of financing outlined in Article 83 of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115, and as may be announced in the Call for Project Proposals issued, and/or at the latest in the document setting out the conditions for support.</p> <p>Operations shall not be eligible for support where they have been physically completed or fully implemented before the application for support is submitted to the Local Action Group, irrespective of whether all related payments have been made.</p> <p>c) Action intervention logic, its link to the need/s of the Region as identified in section 2, its contribution to CAP SP needs and the Partnership Agreement objectives</p> <p>d) Contribution to cross cutting objective of the CAP SP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generational renewal

<p>Eligible Beneficiaries</p>	<p>Eligibility for this pillar is in-line and compliant with the National Eligibility Rules (Section 3: Common Rules of Eligibility).</p> <p>The following are considered eligible beneficiaries for the purpose of this measure:</p> <p>Local councils</p> <p>Regional councils</p> <p>VOs (regularly registered with the Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations, in line with the Voluntary Organisations Act 2007, and regularly operating within the Xlokk territory).</p> <p>Small-medium enterprises</p> <p>Natural persons being the main administrator of the site.</p>
<p>Eligible and Non-Eligible Costs*</p>	<p>Only costs incurred as per article (ii) Eligibility period under Section 1 – General Principal of Eligibility of the National Eligibility Rules shall be eligible. The Foundation shall issue more detailed guidelines at the time of the launch of the calls for applications for this measure. The eligible costs to be reimbursed through this grant support relate to two types of investments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Type 1: Investments that are directly related to restoration projects. - Type 2: Infrastructural projects within the community in the sectors of culture, sports and arts. <p>Only one project can be submitted within the same site and/or premises. For instance a VO cannot submit a project under the administration of a particular parish church and another VO under the administration of the same parish church submit another project.</p> <p><i>*- Any percentages referred to below shall be regarded as indicative figures.</i></p> <p>Indicative Examples of eligible costs - this list may change once measure’s guidance notes are published:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overheads which include the expenses incurred that are not directly attributable to a specific project or activity but without which a project cannot be implemented (refer to National Eligibility Rules). - Costs under type 1 or type 2 investments. - Costs that are directly related to the restoration of the items or object or artefact or feature. - Costs that are directly related to the infrastructure under type 2 investment. - General professional fees (such as architect) up to a maximum of 10% of the total eligible costs of the project. - Equipment – capped up to a maximum of 20% of the total eligible costs of the project (only eligible under Type 2 investment).

	<p>All costs shall be eligible if incurred within the project duration.</p> <p>Examples of non-eligible costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The purchase of real estate. - Productive investments - Interest on debt - Value added tax except in specific circumstances as outlined in Article 64 (1) (c) of the Common Provision Regulation (as per National Eligibility Rules - Section 3). - Value added tax in the case of State Aid Schemes - “Simple replacements”, as determined by the Foundation Decision Committee following guidance received by the Managing Authority - Building and/ or restoration of rubble walls. - Works in kind <p>In addition, calls for applications and respective guidelines may contain additional provisions relating to methods of procurement of the works, rates of items and services, types of vegetation and/or trees, and other requirements, as may be applicable. The subsidiary Legislation 549.64 of the Environment and Resources Authority on “Trees and Woodlands Protection Regulations – Legal Notice 200 of 2011” is one such example.</p>
Indicative Selection Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social Inclusion - Dissemination and Animation of Activities - Innovation, Originality, and Preserving the Uniqueness of Individual Localities - Collaboration - Neutral/Positive Environmental Impact - Preparedness
Level of Support	The beneficiary will be granted financial assistance amounting to up to 80% of the total eligible expenditure. The co-financing element must be borne by the applicant.
Budget Allocation Towards Action	<p>The total budget allocation towards actions under this measure is €427,256.</p> <p>The grant support for individual projects shall be capped at a maximum of €30,518.</p>
Targets and Clear, Adequate indicators to Measure the	At least fourteen (14) projects leading to the improvement of the social and/r rural environment in the GAL Xlokk territory and the quality of life of the communities of the LAG territory.

Success of the Action	
Risks in Implementation and Mitigation Factors	Another risk associated with this measure is that of providing support to activities that could be easily transferable to other territories, that is, the proposed activities have a weak dependence on the territory and its people. This risk is being mitigated through the requirements for strong territorial attachment in the selection criteria.
Overall Assessment and Relevance of the Action	This measure is relevant to national policies relating to the protection of biodiversity and its sustainable use. The Action ensures positive environment impacts through the protection of biodiversity in the territory's rural areas whilst promoting projects for the landscaping and greening of open spaces.

Title:	Marketing of the Territory
Code for Action	GXF LDS 03
Aim:	<p>The general aim of this measure is to strengthen the economic viability of the local community by helping participants reach a wider audience and promote what assets or products they already have through better marketing</p> <p>This pillar could include efforts to increase a potential participant's reach through activities such as on-line marketing, exploring new markets, and attracting new customers or visitors. However, it is essential to underscore that this pillar includes also extends to non-digital marketing.</p>
Rationale:	<p>While substantial effort is carried out by producers in producing a product, marketing skills and time effort is restricted. Additionally, the region's cultural and natural assets are in certain instances not adequately promoted and hence fail to reach the desired target audience. Through this measure the LAG seeks to promote the assets or products already existent in the region, in a bid to enhance economical sustainability.</p>
Scope of Action:	<p>This measure supports projects that promote the market of existing assets and products. It also promotes the digitalisation of business processes with the ultimate target of expanding the promoter's reach.</p> <p>This measure is expected to have a relatively open scope, potential beneficiaries are encouraged to explore diverse and innovative approaches to leverage this marketing pillar/measure.</p> <p>The projects should allow communities to preserve knowledge for future generations through online resources and also allow communities to reach a wider audience through online resources. Projects that include smart farming technologies, allowing for instance, the optimisation of resource use, the reduction of waste, and the minimisation of the environmental footprint fall under this pillar.</p>
General Description of the Action	<p>a) Description of the type of operation</p> <p>Based on the analysis of the territory and the findings of the consultation exercise, the following indicative list presents the type of operations that are likely to be supported through this measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The exploration of new sales markets particularly through on-line sources. - On-line marketing sales campaigns aimed at attracting new customers or visitors. - The branding of a product and/or service within the territory aimed at attracting non-residents and tourists

	<p>b) Type of Support</p> <p>The form of support provided by this measure is a non-repayable grant support in line with any of the forms of financing outlined in Article 83 of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115, and as may be announced in the Call for Project Proposals issued, and/or at the latest in the document setting out the conditions for support.</p> <p>Operations shall not be eligible for support where they have been physically completed or fully implemented before the application for support is submitted to the Local Action Group, irrespective of whether all related payments have been made.</p> <p>c) Action intervention logic, its link to the need/s of the Region as identified in section 2, its contribution to CAP SP needs and the Partnership Agreement objectives</p> <p>d) Contribution to cross cutting objective of the CAP SP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digitisation - Simplification - Modernisation
<p>Eligible Beneficiaries</p>	<p>Eligibility for this pillar is in-line and compliant with the National Eligibility Rules (Section 3: Common Rules of Eligibility).</p> <p>The following are considered eligible beneficiaries for the purpose of this measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local councils - Regional councils - VOs (regularly registered with the Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations, in line with the Voluntary Organisations Act 2007, and regularly operating within the Xlokk territory). - Small Medium Enterprises - Natural persons being the main administrator
<p>Eligible and Non-Eligible Costs*</p>	<p>Only costs incurred as per article (ii) Eligibility period under Section 1 - General Principal of Eligibility of the National Eligibility Rules shall be eligible. The Foundation shall issue more detailed guidelines at the time of the launch of the calls for applications for this measure. The eligible costs to be reimbursed through this grant support relate to investments associated with the development of marketing, advertising, branding, promotion and information dissemination activities, including experts' and professional fees (market research, designers, etc.) and the procurement of related services (website development, promotional material, etc.) as well as installation of physical infrastructure for promotion and information (sign-posts, boards, information</p>

	<p>panels, etc).</p> <p><i>* Any percentages referred to below shall be regarded as indicative figures.</i></p> <p>Indicative Examples of eligible costs - this list may change once measure's guidance notes are published:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overheads which include the expenses incurred that are not directly attributable to a specific project or activity but without which a project cannot be implemented (refer to National Eligibility Rules). - Direct project costs that are necessary for the implementation of operations shall be eligible for support. There is no capping on the expenditure in favour of professional and ancillary services as long as these are directly related to the implementation of the marketing and promotion project. - Cost of tangible material such as printing. <p>The Foundation reserves the right to issue more restrictive guidelines on the eligibility of expenditure, including standard rates for operating costs.</p> <p>Examples of non-eligible costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The purchase of machinery and real estate - Interest on debt - Value added tax except in specific circumstances as outlined in Article 64 (1) (c) of the Common Provision Regulation (as per National Eligibility Rules - Section 3). - Value added tax in the case of State Aid Schemes
<p>Indicative Selection Criteria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social inclusion - Innovation, Originality, and Preserving the Uniqueness of Individual Localities - Collaboration - Neutral/Positive Environmental Impact - Preparedness - Use of digitisation
<p>Level of Support</p>	<p>The beneficiary will be granted financial assistance amounting to up to 80% of the total eligible expenditure. The co-financing element must be borne by the applicant.</p>
<p>Budget Allocation Towards Action</p>	<p>The total budget allocation towards actions under this measure is €270,000.</p> <p>The grant support for individual projects shall be capped at a minimum of €10,000 and a maximum of €15,000. Collaborative projects will be capped at a minimum of €15,000 and a maximum of €45,000.</p>

Targets and Clear, Adequate indicators to Measure the Success of the Action	At least six (6) projects leading to an increase in marketing and the quality of life of the communities of the GAL Xlokk territory.
Risks in Implementation and Mitigation Factors	Several small operators are expected to contribute to this initiative. A risk associated with this is the limited ability of relatively small-scale operators to collaborate which would significantly enhance the outcome of such an initiative, attract enough tourists to make their operations sustainable. This risk is being mitigated through the incentive of providing a higher budget for projects involving partnerships.
Overall Assessment and Relevance of the Action	This measure is in line with the CAP SP objectives of ensuring a fair income for farmers, increase competitiveness, and fostering knowledge and innovation.

Title:	Education and Research
Code for Action	GXF LDS 04
Aim:	<p>The general aim of this measure is to expand opportunities for the younger generation, as well as other demographic segments, to engage in and learn about sustainable agricultural and cultural pursuits.</p> <p>It is proposed that the pillar is set to education, as opposed to a narrower description, in order to allow potential applicants to come up with different ideas to meet the needs of the community, as well as make the best use of the potential participants' skills, interests and provide networking opportunities.</p>
Rationale:	Fundamental knowledge about various topics connected to agricultural practices, local food, food products and traditional arts, crafts and games is at risk of being lost due to evolving societal norms. The territory is rich in practices which have been inherited through generations in a practical manner. This knowledge-based rural society uses non-academic pathways to share the knowledge and engage with others who can potentially learn such skills. To address this concern the LAG is proposing to introduce measures that encourage experimental learning through hands-on workshops. Knowledge exchange through such measure go beyond the topics delivered through formal education.
Scope of	This measure supports projects that promote research pursuits related to

Action:	agriculture and education in the community, particularly through hands on workshops related to agricultural skills and traditional arts, crafts and games. The development of flexible learning pathways are necessary to safeguard the inheritance of traditional skills.
General Description of the Action	<p>d) Description of the type of operation</p> <p>Based on the analysis of the territory and the findings of the consultation exercise, the following indicative list presents the type of operations that are likely to be supported through this measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agricultural lessons in the Maltese and/or English language in the community. - Crafts workshops such as traditional lace making. - Traditional local games such as il-Boċċi and il-Passju - Workshops for agricultural skills. - Training related to the acquisition of agricultural and language skills that are related to the agricultural sector for integration purposes. - Research projects in relation to agriculture, such as the history of olive oil and/or other agricultural practices in Malta. <p>b) Type of Support</p> <p>The form of support provided by this measure is a non-repayable grant support in line with any of the forms of financing outlined in Article 83 of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115, and as may be announced in the Call for Project Proposals issued, and/or at the latest in the document setting out the conditions for support.</p> <p>Operations shall not be eligible for support where they have been physically completed or fully implemented before the application for support is submitted to the Local Action Group, irrespective of whether all related payments have been made.</p> <p>c) Action intervention logic, its link to the need/s of the Region as identified in section 2, its contribution to CAP SP needs and the Partnership Agreement objectives</p> <p>d) Contribution to cross cutting objective of the CAP SP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simplification - Modernisation
Eligible	Eligibility for this pillar is in-line and compliant with the National Eligibility Rules

Beneficiaries	<p>(Section 3: Common Rules of Eligibility).</p> <p>The following are considered eligible beneficiaries for the purpose of this measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local councils - Regional councils - NGOs (regularly registered with the Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations, in line with the Voluntary Organisations Act 2007, and regularly operating within the Xlokk territory). - Small Medium Enterprises - Natural persons being the main administrator
Eligible and Non-Eligible Costs*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Only costs incurred as per article (ii) Eligibility period under Section 1 – General Principal of Eligibility of the National Eligibility Rules shall be eligible. The Foundation shall issue more detailed guidelines at the time of the launch of the calls for applications for this measure. The eligible costs to be reimbursed through this grant support relate to investments associated with the development of marketing, advertising, branding, promotion and information dissemination activities, including experts’ and professional fees (market research, designers, etc.) and the procurement of related services (website development, promotional material, etc.) as well as installation of physical infrastructure for promotion and information (sign-posts, boards, information panels, etc). - <i>*Any percentages referred to below shall be regarded as indicative figures.</i> <p>Indicative Examples of eligible costs - this list may change once measure’s guidance notes are published:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overheads which include the expenses incurred that are not directly attributable to a specific project or activity but without which a project cannot be implemented (refer to National Eligibility Rules). - Direct project costs that are necessary for the implementation of operations shall be eligible for support. There is no capping on the expenditure in favour of professional and ancillary services as long as these are directly related to the implementation of the marketing and promotion project. - The Foundation reserves the right to issue more restrictive guidelines on the eligibility of expenditure, including standard rates for operating costs. - Examples of non-eligible costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Language training courses that are already being provided by other local entities such as JobsPlus and the Directorate of Lifelong Learning - Academic agricultural courses of an academic/vocational courses that are

	<p>already being provided by local institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The purchase of machinery and real estate - Interest on debt - Value added tax in specific circumstances as outlined in Article 64 (1) (c) of the Common Provision Regulation (as per National Eligibility Rules - Section 3). - Value added tax in the case of State Aid Schemes.
Indicative Selection Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social inclusion - Dissemination and Animation of Activities (Digitisation) - Innovation, Originality, and Preserving the Uniqueness of Individual Localities - Collaboration - Neutral/Positive Environmental Impact - Preparedness
Level of Support	The beneficiary will be granted financial assistance amounting to up to 80% of the total eligible expenditure. The co-financing element must be borne by the applicant.
Budget Allocation Towards Action	<p>The total budget allocation towards actions under this measure is €208,000.</p> <p>The grant support for individual projects shall be capped at a minimum of €10,000 and a maximum of €15,000 for educational projects. Projects involving both education and research will have a maximum capping of €26,000.</p>
Targets and Clear, Adequate indicators to Measure the Success of the Action	At least eight (8) projects leading to enhanced educational awareness and the quality of life of the communities of the LAG territory.
Risks in Implementation and Mitigation Factors	A risk associated with this measure is the potential need for beneficiaries to purchase equipment but having limited funds to do so. This risk is being mitigated through the incentive of providing a 60% (indicative) cap for beneficiaries to spend on equipment required to conduct their proposed workshop. The purchase of equipment should also serve as an incentive to carry on providing such education beyond the term of the funding.
Overall Assessment and Relevance of the Action	This measure is in line with the CAP SP objectives fostering knowledge and innovation.

Title:	Inter-Territorial and Transnational Cooperation
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Code for Action	GXF LDS 05
Aim:	To support the design and implementation of joint project/s with other LEADER LAGs.
Rationale:	<p>The action allows the LAG, together with farmers, producers and other regional actors, to interact with other groups. The implementation of joint projects with other LAGs will add a wider national and international perspective to the actions supported by the LAG.</p> <p>The local action groups are proposing a project related to the techniques used by farmers in their agricultural holdings. Throughout the years, farmers have opted to use traditional ploughing methods, which may cause harm to the fields. The project is taking into consideration, the climate change, with such methods not being the most efficient ones. The project will involve testing on alternative farming techniques without the use of traditional ploughing methods. These should provide more efficient produce.</p>
Scope of Action:	This action will support initiatives to promote better agricultural practices, networking and knowledge sharing opportunities.
General Description of the Action	<p>a. Description of the type of operation</p> <p>GAL Xlokk Foundation (Malta) is proposing a cooperation project with a Hungarian LAG. Locally, the GXF aims to partner with an Environmental Voluntary Organisation. The principal aim of the voluntary organisation is to support national initiatives which are in favour of the use of natural products to grow crops instead of chemical residues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The proposal involves a project related to the techniques used by farmers in their agricultural holdings. Throughout the years, farmers have opted to use traditional ploughing methods, which may cause harm to the fields. The project is taking into consideration, the climate change, with such methods not being the most efficient ones. The project will involve scientific testing on alternative farming techniques without the use of traditional ploughing methods. These should provide more efficient produce. - The project is proposing to build a carbon sequestration system. Carbon sequestration can be done through a natural or artificial process by which carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere and held in solid or liquid form. Carbon sequestration will reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere with the goal of reducing global climate change. Carbon sequestration aims to improve the health of the soil, increase climate resilience and reduces the use of fertilizers. - The project aims to encourage other farmers to start making use of this

	<p>practice. The project envisages to take up an experiment in relation to carbon sequestration. The experiment will make use of a field which will be divided into two parts. Part of the field will be ploughed through traditional farming technique, whereas the other part of the field will make use of the carbon sequestration method. This innovative technique will make use of a bedding of seaweed or shredded mulch to eliminate tilling between rows for Carbon dioxide to be absorbed and reduced. Soil test will be a factor to determine the difference in soil texture carbon and organic matter.</p> <p>Main objectives of the project:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. To encourage other farmers to start making use of this innovative practice; ii. To bring new interest groups involved in the sector together; iii. To have an exchange of best practice, which is ensured also with concrete research. iv. The Xlokk producers will be having an opportunity to get good ideas from another region <p>b) Type of Support</p> <p>The form of support provided by this measure is a non-repayable grant support in line with any of the forms of financing outlined in Article 83 of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115, and as may be announced in the Call for Project Proposals issued, and/or at the latest in the document setting out the conditions for support.</p> <p>Operations shall not be eligible for support where they have been physically completed or fully implemented before the application for support is submitted to the Local Action Group, irrespective of whether all related payments have been made.</p> <p>c) Action intervention logic, its link to the need/s of the Region as identified in section 2, its contribution to CAP SP needs and the Partnership Agreement objectives</p> <p>The idea behind this project falls within specific objective 8 of the CAP SP – Promote employment, growth, gender equality, including the participation of women in farming, social inclusion, and local development in rural areas, including the circular bio-economy and sustainable forestry. Whilst the project will not create new jobs directly, supporting and providing agricultural holdings with innovative techniques would help in retaining jobs and supporting the rural environment.</p> <p>d) Contribution to cross cutting objective of the CAP SP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Climate change action
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simplification - Modernisation
Eligible Beneficiaries	The eligibility and selection criteria for this measure fall under the Managing Authority's remit.
Eligible and Non-Eligible Costs	<p>Examples of eligible costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overheads which include the expenses incurred that are not directly attributable to a specific project or activity but without which a project cannot be implemented (refer to National Eligibility Rules). - Training - Capacity building exercises - Organisation of events and events planning - Support for innovation in products/ services in rural areas - Adoption of common methodological and working methods - Communication and networking - Marketing activities - Activities to support job creation and sustain existing jobs - Other expenses (flights, accommodation, per diem, insurances and shipping expenses amongst others)
Level of Support	The beneficiary will be granted financial assistance amounting to up to 80% of the total eligible expenditure. The co-financing element must be borne by the applicant.
Budget Allocation Towards Action	The total budget allocation towards actions under this measure is €52,541.55 (80% of the project costs).
Targets and Clear, Adequate indicators to Measure the Success of the Action	At least one (1) project leading to the improvement of the environment in the GAL Xlokk territory and the quality of life of the communities of the LAG territory.

Risks in Implementation and Mitigation Factors	The main risk associated with this measure is that it would not lead to the desired knowledge sharing. This is being mitigated primarily through hands-on workshops and through the involvement of a number of farmers and at least one environmental voluntary organisation.
Overall Assessment and Relevance of the Action	The idea behind this project falls within specific objective 8 of the CAP SP – Promote employment, growth, gender equality, including the participation of women in farming, social inclusion, and local development in rural areas, including the circular bio-economy and sustainable forestry. Whilst, the project will not create new jobs directly, supporting and providing agricultural holdings with innovative techniques would help in retaining jobs and supporting the rural environment.

Title:	Running Costs and Animation
Code for Action	GXF LDS 06
Aim:	To support running and animation costs linked to the management of the LDS.
Rationale:	The efficient administration of the LAG is crucial for the success of the LEADER programme within the territory. This measure supports the running costs of the LAG to implement the LDS. In addition, this action will also support the training of the LAG staff and members of the Decision Body involved in the implementation of the strategy. Costs related to the animation of the LDS are also supported through this measure. These may include information dissemination events on the LAG's initiatives and projects, promotional events, and networking sessions. Given the importance of efficient management systems in the implementation of the LDS, activities associated with monitoring and evaluation, and bookkeeping and legal-related specific issues, of the LAG activities and projects will also be supported.
Scope of Action:	The efficient implementation of the LDS and the administration of the LAG is crucial for the success of the LEADER programme. This measure supports the running of the LAG to effectively implement the LDS and efficiently manage LAG activities and projects. Animation activities promoting activities and the provision of training and information sessions are important for developing links between local actors and projects and for stimulating the local development budget permitting process.

<p>General Description of the Action</p>	<p>Description of the type of operation</p> <p>The following indicative operation types are supported by this action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Running Costs - Animation - Training <p>This measure supports the following running costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - running cost of the LAG linked to the management of the implementation of the strategy consisting of operating costs; - personnel costs, - training costs, - costs linked with communication, - financial costs, - and costs linked to the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy <p>The main task, for the LAG is implementation of the strategy, but it must also undertake the following administrative functions:</p> <p>Animation of the territory in order to facilitate exchange between stakeholders, to provide information and to promote the strategy and to support potential beneficiaries with a view of developing operations and preparing applications;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation and publication of public calls in line with the LDS; - Receipt, analysis, assessment, selection and contracting of projects; - Management, Monitoring and implementation of the strategy, and - Bookkeeping and legal-related specific issues <p>Type of Support</p> <p>The form of support provided by this measure is a non-repayable grant support in line with any of the forms of financing outlined in Article 83 of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115, and as may be announced in the Call for Project Proposals issued, and/or at the latest in the document setting out the conditions for support.</p> <p>Operations shall not be eligible for support where they have been physically completed or fully implemented before the application for support is submitted to the Local Action Group, irrespective of whether all related payments have been made.</p> <p>c) Action intervention logic, its link to the need/s of the Region as identified in section 2, its contribution to CAP SP needs and the Partnership Agreement objectives</p> <p>Under the LEADER programme, the LAGs are tasked with the development and implementation of the approved LDS. Measures within the LDS are based on the priorities of the territory's communities and aim to enhance the quality of life of rural communities by involving local actors. LEADER will support initiatives that</p>
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	<p>conserve the local cultural and natural heritage, implement cultural and tourism-oriented interventions, foster economic growth and job creation, promote cooperation, education and knowledge exchange. This measure supports the running of the LAG and the implementation of the strategy and aims to create the conditions for an efficient administration of the LAG, which is considered as being critical for the implementation of the LDS and the promotion of local partnerships.</p> <p>The LEADER approach is about a proactive ‘animation’ of the territory that develops links and partnerships between local actors to promote local development. Animation activities are important for the promotion of opportunities for knowledge exchange and awareness creation, but also to support potential beneficiaries in developing their operations and preparing applications. Raising awareness of the approach adopted by the LEADER programme is important for stimulating the local development process and for creating opportunities for collaboration and project development. Activities carried out by the LAG will include training and information sessions on LEADER, local development, project applications and the LDS. These are important to facilitate the development of bottom-up approaches that better identify the local needs and solutions, engage the local stakeholders and improve the potential for collaboration and innovation.</p> <p>d) Contribution to cross cutting objective of the CAP SP</p> <p>The implementation of the LDS is expected to contribute to the overall cross-cutting objectives of the CAP SP. In addition, it will contribute to the improvement of the wider rural economy and quality of life by involving local actors, promoting local development and encouraging economic growth and job creation within the territory.</p>
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Eligible Beneficiaries	Running costs: LAGs or the (legal) structures clearly entitled to carry out the LAG management tasks. Animation: LAGs or the structures clearly charged with animation tasks																				
Eligible and Non-Eligible Costs	This measure will enter into force once the LDS has been approved and preparatory support no longer applicable.																				
Level of Support	Aid intensity 100% of the costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EAFRD will provide support for 75% of the respective measure budget with the remaining 25% covered from National contribution c An advance payment may be provided, subject to the consideration of the competent authorities 																				
Budget Allocation Towards Action	The total budget indicative allocation towards actions under this measure is €349,777.																				
Targets and Clear, Adequate indicators to Measure the Success of the Action	The implementation of the following initiatives leading to an improved quality of life for the communities of the LAG territory: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Indicator</th> <th>Target</th> <th>Indicator Type</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Indicative Number of training sessions for LAG staff and/or members of the Decision Body (By the concerned Authorities)</td> <td>3</td> <td>LDS-specific PI</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Indicative Number of information and networking sessions carried out by the LAG</td> <td>4</td> <td>LDS-specific PI</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Indicative Number of potential beneficiaries receiving support whilst developing operations and preparing applications</td> <td>43</td> <td>LDS-specific PI</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Indicative Number of projects implemented by the LAG within the framework of the LDS</td> <td>37</td> <td>LDS-specific PI</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Indicator	Target	Indicator Type	1	Indicative Number of training sessions for LAG staff and/or members of the Decision Body (By the concerned Authorities)	3	LDS-specific PI	2	Indicative Number of information and networking sessions carried out by the LAG	4	LDS-specific PI	3	Indicative Number of potential beneficiaries receiving support whilst developing operations and preparing applications	43	LDS-specific PI	4	Indicative Number of projects implemented by the LAG within the framework of the LDS	37	LDS-specific PI
	Indicator	Target	Indicator Type																		
1	Indicative Number of training sessions for LAG staff and/or members of the Decision Body (By the concerned Authorities)	3	LDS-specific PI																		
2	Indicative Number of information and networking sessions carried out by the LAG	4	LDS-specific PI																		
3	Indicative Number of potential beneficiaries receiving support whilst developing operations and preparing applications	43	LDS-specific PI																		
4	Indicative Number of projects implemented by the LAG within the framework of the LDS	37	LDS-specific PI																		
Risks in Implementation and Mitigation Factors	The main risk associated with the implementation of this measure is the possible low uptake by the local communities of initiatives carried out by the LAG. To mitigate against this risk, the following mitigating actions will be undertaken: This risk is mitigated through the strong local connections developed by the LAG, with local councils, operators and the territory's community during the implementation of the previous local development strategies and by the robust public consultation carried out during the development of this LDS. The LAG will make use of digital (e.g. website, social media profiles) and printed (e.g. newspapers, local publications) media to inform the community of initiatives, calls and services provided. These depend on the requirements stipulated in the																				

	<p>Operating Guidelines issued by the MA.</p> <p>Another risk associated with the implementation of this measure is the continuous increase in the prices of certain services such as accountancy, audit, rent of premises, website costs, adverts and other professional services. As a mitigating factor, the GXF has asked the local councils forming part of the territory to pay a membership fee covering the whole programming period.</p>
<p>Overall Assessment and Relevance of the Action</p>	<p>This measure supports activities carried out by the LAG to efficiently implement the LDS and to animate the territory by developing links and partnerships between local actors. The measure is particularly relevant to the objective of the LDS of protecting and make sustainable use of the cultural and natural capital of the territory and to leave a positive socio-economic impact on the territory's community. This will be done by providing support to local operators and stakeholders to develop and manage projects implemented under the LDS. Through this projects and other local-scale initiatives, the LAG will promote the local cultural and natural assets, and create synergies and opportunities for developing rural tourism and fostering education and employment within the territory.</p>

6. Transposing Needs and Objectives into Projects

This section describes the method used by GXF to transpose the objectives into projects. This section ties to Section 4 'Description and Objectives of the Strategy'. This section describes the method used to transform the objectives of the strategy and needs of the region into Actions which will support beneficiary projects.

The analysis of the socio-economic and geographical profile of the Xlokk territory and the evidence provided by the bottom-up participatory approach of the rural communities living in the region have provided the basis for the programming of a total of four measures. Firstly, the measures are structured around the needs that have been identified from this process, and therefore build on the need to address the three priority objectives of enhancing the environment across the territory, improving marketing efforts across the territory, and expanding education and research. The prioritisation of objectives and corresponding actions is reflected in the relative budgetary allocation directed to these measures.

Secondly, all the measures programmed in this strategy have been framed within the limits of the set of LEADER-specific and horizontal objectives that have been described in the preceding section – social inclusion, digitalisation, preserving the uniqueness of individual localities, innovation and originality, collaboration, neutral environmental impact, the stage of preparedness, and the dissemination and animation of activities.

The following measures have been programmed for this LDS.

Priority Objective 1: Enhance the Environment Across the Territory

Measure 1: Improving the environment of the territory

Measure 2: Enhancement to social and rural infrastructure

Priority Objective 2: Improve Marketing Efforts Across the Territory

Measure 3: Marketing the territory

Priority Objective 3: Expand Education and Research

Measure 4: Education and research

6.1 Priority Objective 1: Enhance the Environment Across the Territory

The two measures that are programmed in fulfilment of social and cultural development are intended to complement each other – improving the environment of the territory focuses on minimising the region's carbon footprint, safeguarding water resources, establishing effective waste management practices and rehabilitating existing gardens and soft areas. The enhancement of social and rural infrastructure focuses on infrastructural projects within the community in the sectors of culture, sports and arts and restoration projects of landscapes and infrastructure in the rural environment.

The total budget for these two measures is €868,256.45 amounting to 64.5% of the total budget for implementation of operations under this LDS.

This measure seeks to accomplish several vital objectives that align with various strategies and programmes, such as the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan to 2030²⁹ and the CAP SP. It complements the CAP SP measures of improving rural conditions and infrastructure and supports investments in infrastructure beneficial to the agricultural sector, such as the upgrade of rural areas and improved waste management.

6.2 Priority Objective 2: Improve Marketing Efforts Across the Territory

The measure programmed in fulfilment of improving marketing efforts across the territory is intended to help potential participants reach a wider audience and promote what assets or products they already have. This pillar aims to increase a potential participant's reach through activities such as on-line marketing, exploring new markets, and attracting new customers or visitors.

The total budget for this measure is €270,000.00 amounting to 20.1% of the total budget for implementation of operations under this LDS.

This measure ties in with the CAP SP objective of attaining more economic sustainability for farmers' income to increase their resilience and ensure continued management of agricultural landscapes and the survival of key farming sectors. This measure is intended to improve the agricultural producer's economic sustainability by helping them reach a wider market for their produce and potentially attain other peripheral streams of income.

The measure can also support more young farmers to set-up or takeover a business in the agricultural sector successful, in line with the CAP SP objective of having a socially sustainable CAP.

6.3 Priority Objective 3: Expand Education and Research

The measure programmed in fulfilment of expanding education and research highlights the necessity to expand opportunities for the younger generation, as well as other demographic segments, to engage in and learn about agricultural and cultural pursuits was highlighted as more crucial than ever before. Fundamental knowledge about various topics connected to agricultural practices and traditional arts is at risk of being lost forever due to evolving societal norms. This measure is intended to encourage experimental learning primarily through hands-on workshops.

The total budget for this measure is €208,000.00 amounting to 15.5% of the total budget for implementation of operations under this LDS.

This measure aligns with CAP SP objective of knowledge sharing which aims to create a thriving network through which knowledge can be disseminated between the different actors. Similarly, it also aims to enhance the links between researchers and practitioners through research projects.

7. Financial Plan

²⁹ National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan to 2030 draft version - ERA

This section provides a detailed breakdown of the indicative budget by activity and per Measure. This section includes the overall financial plan of the Strategy. The budget is clearly divided by Action and details of the overall contribution to the overall LDS objectives is included.

7.1 Overall Financial Plan

The GAL Xlokk financial plan for the 2023-2027 CAP SP Programming Period – LEADER programme – has been based on the budget available as communicated by the MA, the stakeholder consultation process, discussions with the Decision Committee and LAG Manager, as well as lessons learnt from the previous programming period. Actual funds disbursement (excluding running costs – discussed separately below) are planned to start in the second half of 2024 and are expected to continue until 2029 since some actions and their relative payments will continue to flow for a period following the end of the programming period.

The GAL Xlokk territory has been allocated a total of €1.3 million to support the LEADER initiative.

Indicative budget for every Strategic Objective

Objective	Actions	Estimated number of projects	Total estimated cost in €	Indicative Capping		% of Budget
				Minimum	Maximum	
Enhance the Environment Across the Territory	Improving the Environment of the Territory	9	441,000.00	20,000	49,000	33%
	Enhancement to Social and Rural infrastructure	14	427,256.45		30,518	32%
	Transnational Project	1	52,451.55			
Improve Marketing Efforts Across the Territory	Marketing of the Territory	6	270,000.00			20%
	<i>No Partnership</i>			12,000	15,000	
	<i>Partnership</i>			15,000	45,000	
Expand Education and Research	Education and Research	8	208,000.00			15%
	<i>Education</i>			10,000	15,000	
	<i>Education and Research</i>			15,000	26,000	
	Running costs and Animation		349,777.00			
Total (excluding Transnational Project and Running Costs)			1,346,256.45			100%

Allocation by Action and Year

Certainly, not all actions can be executed within a single year, primarily due to strategic and administrative considerations. In certain instances, certain measures may necessitate more than a year to be initiated and fully implemented. The below table indicates the annual distribution of allocations categorised by the type of strategic objective and the respective action. The table indicates the disbursement for each action per year.

Indicative annual allocation breakdown

Actions	Total Budget	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
		2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	
Improving the Environment of the Territory	441,000.00		30%	45%	15%	10%		100%
Enhancement to Social and Rural infrastructure	427,256.45		30%	45%	15%	10%		100%
Transnational Project	52,451.55	20%	40%	40%				100%
Marketing of the Territory	270,000.00	10%	50%	35%	5%			100%
Education and Research	208,000.00	10%	50%	35%	5%			100%
Running costs and Animation	349,777.00		6%	25%	25%	25%	19%	100%
Total (excluding Transnational Project and Ru	1,346,256.45							

8. Communication Plan

The communication plan describes the activities required for rural stakeholder animation and general public awareness to be developed as part of the LDS. The framework addresses the proposed measures, the target groups and also describes the activities, actions and tools to be used, including an indicative budget.

8.1 Objectives

This section is dedicated to promoting the LEADER Programme, the LDS, along with the application and selection process for the stipulated measures. Consequently, the principal objectives include the following:

- To enhance awareness of the Programme to reach a broader audience of potential beneficiaries.
- In line with the above objective, for the upcoming LDS, there is a strong emphasis on achieving a substantial number of beneficiaries. This underscores the GXF's preference for imposing a project capping to maximise the number of beneficiaries.
- Emphasise the key and relevant points of this report within the specific target area - the GAL Xlokk territory.
- Maintain a record of the beneficiaries who benefit from this programme.

8.2 Contents

GXF will disseminate the Strategy to the general public, with a particular focus on the GAL Xlokk territory, in order to achieve the above objectives. The communication efforts will mainly concentrate on providing fundamental information about the LEADER programme, explain the primary objectives and actions of the Strategy and outline the way forward for proposing projects and applying for funds, including associated timeframes.

8.3 Target Groups

The LDS caters to various target groups which is also reflected within the Strategy pillars, and the communication efforts throughout. Accordingly, the pillars outlined in the Strategy will be presented in a way that each target group would be able to follow, thus tailored to the specific needs of each target audience.

In particular, the Strategy and the process for submitting projects will be presented to:

- The Funds and Programme Division (FPD), the Managing Authority for the CAP SP funds – prior to the EC submission for approval
- The GXF committee
- Government entities involved in this Strategy's stakeholder consultation process

- Individuals and entity representatives attending the public consultation meetings
- Individuals and entity representatives that provided their feedback/ project proposals via email/ social media
- Other individuals/ entity representatives included in the database compiled for the purposes of this Strategy's public consultation exercise
- Other stakeholders of the territories such as local councils, clubs, NGOs that are not already included in the database above
- Other members of the general public

Modes of communication

To effectively engage with various segments of the community within the territory, a range of communication channels are employed:

- **Technical meetings** primarily involve interactions with the GXF Board. These meetings serve the purpose of keeping the board updated on developments and providing in-depth explanations of the strategy's core elements, building upon the insights gained from public consultation meetings and discussions with the contacted Ministries. Additionally, discussions are conducted with the Managing Authority (MA) to comprehensively review the LDS and its expected time-lines.
- **Information sessions** can be held in order to provide a more comprehensive explanation of the measures outlined in the LDS to their intended recipients.
- Explore the possibility of **publishing articles** in local newspapers to engage with a different demographic of readers.
- Social media platforms can be utilised in order reach the wider audience. An overview of the key highlights and potential outcomes derived from the Strategy may be showcased on the GAL Xlokk Foundation's website and other Social media platforms.

As mentioned, various marketing channels, such as social media marketing and search engine optimisation (SEO) marketing, can be employed for this purpose. These platforms can be leveraged to:

- Raise awareness about the LEADER Programme by showcasing successful projects from the previous LDS.
- Create advertisements to promote the Strategy (LDS).

It is also essential that all forms of communication and information dissemination regarding the LDS prominently include the latest publicity requirements as per Visual Identity Guidelines published by the Funds and Programmes Division, within the Ministry for the Economy, European Funds and Lands. This helps ensure that the audience is continuously reminded that all publicity is associated with LEADER-funded initiatives.

Information for potential beneficiaries

The GAL Xlokk LAG shall ensure that all applicants and any other potential beneficiaries will have access to all the relevant information related to the LEADER Programme and the application process which includes:

- The funding opportunities and project-specific timeframes
- The application and administrative process to be followed in order to qualify for the co-financing
- The process of evaluating application forms, and the eligibility criteria of selected projects
- The staff responsible for explaining the operations of this structure
- The duty of the beneficiaries to inform the public about the support received through the programme
- The appeal process, and related timeframes

Information for the general public

The GXF will also be responsible for passing on the following information to the general public through a medium which will be chosen by the LAG:

- (a) The content of the approved Strategy, and any updates made to it
- (b) The successful projects following the Strategy

9. Implementation Plan

This section includes a description of the strategy management, monitoring, evaluation and control. The section details how the different measures will be implemented and when, what actions will be required for the launch of each measure, information sessions, press releases, adverts, evaluation of applications, board meetings, contracting of beneficiaries, monitoring of project progress, site visits etc. A plan of how the LDS can be monitored and evaluated is also included in the LDS.

In the implementation of the Local Development Strategy, the LAG is obliged to abide by the latest Operating Guidelines for the LEADER Programme drawn up by the Managing Authority, EAFRD. The LAG understands that the MA may update this document from time to time.

9.1 Overview

This section highlights the process for implementing the LDS which initiates with the issuance of the LDS tender to the final phase where reimbursements of the funds is granted to the selected beneficiaries. An explanation of each individual phase and its stipulated time-line is briefed within this section of the report where each activity that is required to be done during the entire process, is highlighted.

The three phases:



Implicitly, each of the aforementioned phases encompasses various activities and responsibilities that must be undertaken by different stakeholders. Notably, the Managing Authority (MA), the Paying Agency (Agricultural and Rural Payments), and the GXF each bear critical duties essential for the seamless progression of these distinct phases. Regarding the initial phase, which entails formulating and documenting the strategy, a dedicated team of expert consultants was subcontracted and delegated to prepare this Strategy.

Below are the implementation duty guidelines provided to the LAGs for the creation and enhancement of the LDS, as prepared by the MA for the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

Managing Authority	GAL Xlokk Foundation	Paying Agency
Providing guidelines for the structure and content of the LDS	Undertaking preliminary actions for LDS preparation, including issuing and evaluating requests for external consultancy services	Receiving payment claims
Approval of the proposal to initiate preliminary actions for LDS development	Implementing the LDS	Processing, authenticating, and reimbursing
Receiving and evaluating the LDS	Managing projects, including fulfilling necessary preparatory obligations	Conducting beneficiary controls
Approving the LDS	Conducting monitoring and evaluation activities	
Setting the budget	Fulfilling other responsibilities outlined in the operating rules established by the MA	
Contracting the GXF		
Approving Cooperation projects		
Approving operational budgets		
Monitoring and evaluating GXF/LEADER		

Initially, consultation meetings were convened involving various stakeholders. Specifically, as elaborated in **Section 12 - Community Involvement**, multiple consultation sessions were conducted. These meetings facilitated the collection of feedback from the general public, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), voluntary organisations (VOs), and also select ministries. The objective was to gather pertinent information that could be employed in formulating the measures outlined in this Strategy.

The following two phases, namely phase 2 and phase 3, are focused on project selection, monitoring, and project requirements which will persist until the end of this strategy's cycle.

9.2 Implementation Flow

The below are the activities that are integral to all three phases of this strategy.

1. Documentation of the Strategy	2. Choosing the Projects	3. Monitoring and Financing
LDS Tender	Call Issuance	Monitoring
Public consultation meetings + Ministry meetings	Receipt of applications and examination of administrative documentations	Financing
Formulating the strategy	Evaluation of projects	
Finalising the strategy	Project Selection	
	Notification of awards and beneficiary contracting	
	Appeals Process	

Phase 1: Documentation of the Strategy

1.1 LDS Tender

Prior to the development of the upcoming LDS, in June 2023, GXF released a request for quotations (RfQ) seeking consultancy service to formulate the LDS for the Xlokk territory. The reporting company successfully secured this RfQ and officially entered into a contract with the GXF in August 2023.

1.2 Public Consultation meetings + Ministry meetings

The LEADER Programme, and consequently, the LDS, advocates for a bottom-up approach that ensures extensive community participation throughout the strategy formulation process. This approach customises the strategy's measures to the specific needs of the territory.

The initial step involved organising several public consultation meetings, which are elaborated upon in subsequent chapters of this report. In fact, a total of three public consultation meetings were conducted at different locations and on different days to engage a broader audience. These meetings were held in Hal Safi, Luqa and Birzebbugia. Also, ministry meetings took place with relevant ministries to align the strategy's objectives.

1.3 Formulating the strategy

After the completion of the public consultation meetings, ministry meetings, and discussions with GXF representatives, the consultation team collaboratively drafted an initial report of the strategy, guided by the insights provided by GXF members. This first draft was submitted to the GXF on the 25th of September 2023.

1.4 Finalising the strategy

After drafting the strategy, discussions were held with the GXF Decision Committee to review the measures and important results. After that, a final public consultation meeting was held to present the results and the draft of all proposed measures to the public.

The strategy was finalised by the end of September 2023, following further discussions with the GXF Decision Committee. It was then submitted to the MA for its ultimate approval.

Upon receiving feedback from the MA, any necessary amendments to the Strategy are to be made in order for the final approval to be obtained. Following this, both the GXF and the MA will proceed to make the strategy available and disseminate its key points. This step is of importance as it ensures community awareness of the LDS which will be implemented.

Phase 2: Choosing the Projects

2.1 Call issuance

The process initiates with GXF issuing calls for funding applications under the measures outlined in this LDS. These calls provide details on submission deadlines, the application process, and offer guidance.

The number of calls to be issued hinges on the budgets allocated by the MA to GXF and the specific budget allocated to each measure. To manage the workload effectively and prevent administrative overload due to vetting, GXF should consider a staggered issuance of calls over an extended period. The sequence of calls can be determined by the LAG, taking into account factors such as the anticipated project duration and the number of applications. Throughout this phase, GXF is responsible for disseminating information about these calls as widely as possible to interested parties within the territory.

2.2 Receipt of applications and examination of administrative documentations

The duration of a call for applications under the GXF will vary based on the type of measure, its allocated budget, and the number of applications received for each measure.

An Evaluation Committee, consisting of the LAG Manager, LAG secretary, and any necessary technical experts, is responsible for conducting administrative checks for all applications submitted for each measure. These checks involve verifying whether the proposed project meets the eligibility criteria outlined in the call documents and confirming the validity of supporting documentation.

If applicants fail to submit the application form as expected by the Foundation or fail to attach the required supplementary documents as specified, the GXF will promptly notify these applicants. They will then be given a designated period to provide the missing information. Failure to comply within the specified timeframe will lead to disqualification, with applicants being formally informed of their rejection.

2.3 Evaluation of projects

The Evaluation Committee, responsible for assessing the administrative and technical aspects of each application, conducts this review after the specified deadline for the respective measure has passed. Subsequently, a report is generated for each application, which contains recommendations for the Decision Committee based on established criteria. It's important to note that if certain projects are found to be ineligible for funding, an administrative report is the only type of report generated for those cases.

These reports are then subject to review and evaluation by the members of the Decision Committee. During this evaluation, the information provided in each application is assessed in alignment with the selection criteria outlined in the call for applications.

Furthermore, it's worth noting that the Decision Committee holds the authority to request additional information and seek clarifications regarding the projects as part of their review process.

2.4 Project Selection

Following the evaluation phase, the Decision Committee will make its selections and grant funding to projects as part of the LEADER programme. The chosen projects will be made publicly accessible on the official GXF website. This list will include a preliminary roster of selected applicants and projects set to receive funding, projects placed on a reserve list, and those that have been rejected. Applicants whose projects have been rejected will also receive notification letters outlining the reasons for their ineligibility for funding, along with information about their right to file an appeal within a specified time frame.

To facilitate this appeal process, an independent appeals board or committee will be established by the GXF. This body will autonomously review any appeals lodged. The appointed chairperson of this board will initially assess the validity of the appeal's grounds and the supporting documentation provided by the appellant. Subsequently, the appeal will be presented to the entire committee for comprehensive evaluation. The decisions reached by this board will be conclusive and not subject to further dispute.

Throughout this entire process, it is imperative that the LAG keeps thorough records. Maintaining transparency is essential, achieved by diligently recording meeting minutes and documenting the entirety of the selection process.

2.5 Notification of awards and beneficiary contracting

Following the selection of projects, including any appeals, the GXF will release the official final results and proceed to inform the chosen project applicants of their eligibility for financial aid through award notices. These award notices will also outline the following steps necessary for the establishment of funding conditions, which will be formalised through a signed contract.

In instances where an application has been rejected, the communication sent to each affected applicant will include a concise summary of the specific reasons that led to the rejection of their application.

2.6 Appeals Process

In the event of a suspected violation or if individuals believe that the decision made by the board is incorrect, they have the option to submit an appeal through an objection to the Decision Committee. This objection must specify the reasons for initiating the appeal.

The appeal should be submitted within ten days from the date on which the Evaluation Committee has presented the project awards. It is important to note that the objection will only be considered valid if it is accompanied by a deposit, the exact amount of which will be specified in the application process.

The Appeals Review Board, following a comprehensive assessment of all the evidence and a thorough review of submissions from all concerned parties, will make the final determination regarding whether to accept or reject the appeal.

Phase 3: Monitoring and Financing

3.1 Monitoring

As the projects and beneficiaries are confirmed by the board, the GXF will take on the responsibility of monitoring the projects. This entails ensuring that the contractual terms are being followed and that the project's progress aligns with the predetermined goals and objectives.

The subsequent section of this Strategy outlines the LAG's comprehensive monitoring plan. It includes detailed explanations of the methodologies and time-lines for implementing the project monitoring regulations.

3.2 Financing

The Paying Agency plays a pivotal role in this phase, being responsible for co-financing the selected projects. It's worth noting that while interim payments may be available in certain cases, reimbursement payments are typically made upon the successful completion of the project. To initiate the reimbursement process, the beneficiary is required to submit a reimbursement request to the Paying Agency, accompanied by the necessary supporting documentation.

Throughout this process, the GXF will provide guidance and support to the beneficiaries. The specific responsibilities of the GXF and ARPA (Paying Agency) will be clarified during meetings held between the two entities at the commencement of Phase 2. The final payment will be issued following an on-site inspection, coupled with administrative checks to verify compliance with the contract terms.

9.3 Time-line

A Gantt chart is provided to outline the time-line established for the three discussed phases of the LDS implementation.

As of the drafting of this strategy, Phase 1 of the implementation is nearly complete.

Phase 2 will begin with the issuance of calls, but the exact start date for this phase for each measure is currently undetermined. Calls will be scheduled over time, as deemed necessary for administrative efficiency. Consequently, the timing for Phase 2 and the subsequent phase is depicted on yearly increments.

It is important to acknowledge that the duration of various activities can significantly differ across measures. This variance is influenced by factors such as the measure type, the number of received applications, project duration, and unexpected circumstances. Therefore, this time-line should be regarded as provisional, subject to adjustment as needed.

Phase 1: Documentation of the strategy	2023						
	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
LDS tender	█						
Public consultation meetings			█				
Formulating the strategy				█			
Finalising the strategy					█		

Phase 2: Choosing the projects	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Call issuance						
Measure 1 - Education and Research		█				
Measure 2 - Marketing of the territory			█			
Measure 3 - Improving the environment of the territory				█		
Measure 4 - Enhancement to rural and social infrastructure					█	
Measure 5 - Transnational project						█
Running Costs						█
Receipt of applications and examination of administrative documentations	█	█	█			
Evaluation of projects	█	█	█			
Project Selection	█	█	█			
Notification of awards and beneficiary contracting	█	█	█			
Appeal Process	█	█	█			
Phase 3: Monitoring and Financing						
Monitoring	█					
Financing	█					

***N.B. Measures 3 and 4 are to be issued by no later than Q1 2025**

10. Monitoring and Self-Evaluation Procedure

A plan of how the LDS can be monitored and evaluated is included in this section. For every measure, realistic indicators, milestones and targets (qualitative and quantitative) are set.

Once the strategy is launched, and the calls for projects are published and the projects start being implemented, there will be need for a thorough assessment of the results and impacts of the Strategy/ actions. Hence, the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy and its actions is another important step of the LDS. Such monitoring and evaluation will make sure that the Strategy and the LEADER programme are truly being fruitful and also allow for the administration to assess where improvements can be made.

10.1 Monitoring

In order to examine how the projects are being carried out and whether their objectives are being reached, the LAG will make use of a number of different indicators. These will also allow the LAG to gauge the success of the Strategy and measure its value added. They are usually quantifiable measures which look at objectives reached, resources mobilised, outputs accomplished, or particular effects being obtained.

Overall, the LAG will use three levels of indicators:

- i) Common indicators for LEADER
- ii) Indicators in line with the local CAP SP
- iii) Specific indicators for the territory

The first two levels are made mandatory through a) the common rules for the LEADER programme and through b) the National CAP SP. Other third level indicators which the LAG will use have been devised by the action group itself in order to reflect the specific needs and structures of the Xlokk territory and the LDS.

10.1.1 Common Indicators for the LEADER

	Indicator	Source of data	Frequency
R22/T21	% of rural population covered by the Local Development Strategy	NSO data sets	Available data
R23/T22	% of rural population benefiting from improved services/ infrastructure	NSO data sets & Beneficiaries' applications	Available data
R24/T23	Jobs created in supported projects	Beneficiaries	Upon application (estimate); thereafter annually

Indicator	Source of data	Frequency
Total Expenditure Number of projects supported by LDS Number of applications received Number of applications awarded Number of beneficiaries receiving advice and similar support from the LAG Number of training days to LEADER staff by the relevant authorities Number of trained beneficiaries/ attendees to training	LAG Administration	Annually
Number of cooperation projects supported	Beneficiaries applications	Upon Application
Population covered by the LAG	NSO	Annually

10.1.2 Indicators in Line with the Local CAP SP

10.1.3 Specific Indicators for the Territory

Measure	Indicators (*)	Targets	Source	Frequency
General - For all measures	Number of funds needed for the project		Beneficiary	Upon Application (Estimate) and Follow up (Actual)
	% of funds obtained through LDS			Upon Application (Estimate) and Follow up (Actual)
	Time elapsed between application - notification of approval and draw-down of funds	n/a	LAG Administration & Beneficiaries	Annually (Follow up)
	Number of jobs created		Beneficiary	Upon Application (Estimate) and Follow up (Actual)
	Number of projects involving a partnership		LAG Administration & Beneficiaries	Upon Application (Estimate) and Follow up (Actual)
Measure 1: Improving the Environment across the Territory	Number of projects which directly minimise the region's carbon footprint Number of projects which indirectly minimise the region's carbon footprint	9 projects	LAG Administration & Beneficiaries	Upon Application (Estimate) and Follow up (Actual)
Measure 2: Enhancement to Social and Rural Infrastructure	Number of restoration projects	7 projects		
	Number of infrastructural projects within the community in the sectors of culture, sports and arts	7 projects	LAG Administration & Beneficiaries	Upon Application (Estimate) and Follow up (Actual)
Measure 3: Improve Marketing Efforts Across the Territory	Number of marketing and promotion projects by end of programming period	6 projects	LAG Administration & Beneficiaries	Upon Application (Estimate) and Follow up (Actual)
	Increase in digital reach per project	500+ per digital project 50+ per non-digital project		
Measure 4: Education and Research	Number of research projects	At least one peer reviewed paper	LAG Administration & Beneficiaries	Upon Application (Estimate) and Follow up (Actual)
	Number of educational projects	8 projects		
	Number of participants for each project			
Measure 5: Transnational Project	Number of cooperative projects	1 project	LAG Administration + Beneficiaries	Upon Application (Estimate) and Follow up (Actual)
	Number of participating local operators and stakeholders	20		

10.2 Evaluation

The LAG will adopt a Self-evaluation process through its expertise to carry out such analysis. This might be complemented by an external evaluation, where the LAG takes an active role in supporting this evaluation.

Considering that the Foundation already has administered funds under two programming periods, the LAG has the necessary expertise to conduct its continuous self-assessment of projects being undertaken and/or completed. The LAG's staff already has the experience to form part of the Evaluation Committee to build their own analytical skill set and be able to reflect on specific and important elements of the LDS. During this self-assessment exercise, the LAG takes stock of the implementation of the projects being undertaken through various methods which may include one or more of the following: (i) one-to-one meetings (ii) project progress reports and (iii) site visits.

The appointment of an external evaluator fits in with the LAG's work and other internal monitoring and reporting, especially when considering the LAG's know-how of the systems, projects, and territory, as well as the 2014-2020 LEADER experience. The LAG assumes that the external evaluation is conducted by experts engaged by the Managing Authority as per the programming period 2014-2020.

Reporting will also be carried out to inform the public, NGOs, businesses, territory residents and any other stakeholder of the findings and allow for the correct promotion of the LEADER programme locally, both at a territorial and a national level.

11. Description of the Process for Engagement in the LDS Preparation and Implementation

This section of the LDS includes a description of the process that was undertaken to involve the local communities in the development of the strategy. This section describes the process which was adopted by the contractor during the design of the LDS.

11.1 Bottom-Up Approach

The LEADER programme functions by employing a bottom-up approach, involving communities from different localities within the region. This approach is favoured over others as it incorporates the viewpoints and direct needs of local residents. To ensure holistic community involvement, a range of approaches were employed to notify the public about the public consultation meetings held as a component of the Strategy's formulation such as through different media domains.

11.2 Public Consultation Meetings

To kick-start the process of compiling the public's opinions for the Strategy, public consultation sessions were set to assess the local community's strengths, needs, and prospects for the region. Following a discussion with the GXF Board members, three distinct venues were selected across the region to enhance accessibility for interested individuals attending these gatherings. The chosen locations included Hal Safi, Luqa, and Birżebbuġia. The initial two meetings took place at the offices of their respective local councils, while the last session in Birżebbuġia was held at the premises of a local band club.

After finalising the locations and venues, the subsequent phase involved notifying the wider community to attend. Collaborating with marketing personnel from the team of key experts, advertisements for the public consultation sessions were disseminated through three major local newspapers. These adverts emphasised the primary purpose of the meetings, the dates, different venues, and registration details. A total of six advertisements were published across two consecutive Sundays in these three local newspapers. The advert was also shared on social media platforms, including the official 'GAL Xlokk Foundation' Facebook page, with the aim of reaching a broader audience. To encourage discussions, photographs from each meeting were also uploaded on this page.

The advert was circulated to various entities including Local Councils, NGOs, band clubs, and other local organisations and related foundations in anticipation of increasing the awareness of these meetings. Such entities were kindly urged to share the information, as they often attract a range of stakeholders within the area.

11.2.1 During the Meetings

An attendance roster was formulated, detailing the names of individuals who had registered their attendance and the organisations they were representing. Participants were requested to sign beside

their registration information before each meeting. At the beginning of every public consultation session, the manager of the LEADER programme and members from the team of key experts working on the Strategy delivered a brief overview of the LEADER programme highlighting the anticipated outcome and encouraged for active participation in the discussions held. Minutes were taken for all of the meetings.

Participants were informed about the limited budget allocated to the LEADER programme within the current programming period. It was highlighted that substantial endeavours including infrastructure projects, often suggested by Local Councils, would most likely need to find alternative funding programmes. This was stated in order to voice the programme's intention to support a substantial quantity of small projects, promoting wider beneficiary participation, as opposed to benefiting only a few. Also, the concept of collaboration between different localities and organisations was presented as a potential approach to address the constraints of limited funding. Notably, the notion of partnerships between various organisations and localities was raised from both sides of the room.

Attendees were also encouraged to present project ideas aligned with the core principles of enhancing economic prosperity within the region through employment and growth improvements, promoting social inclusion and gender equality, and safeguarding the natural environment.

The primary discussions that emerged during the Public Consultation Meetings (PCMs) revolved around the implementation of diverse projects aimed at continuously improving the quality of life in each locality. While certain projects were tailored to specific areas, others were concerned with the broader region. Notable points of discussion included the necessity for Local Councils and private entities to establish activities that enhance social inclusion, foster partnerships, invest in workshops and educational courses, encompassing traditional arts and crafts, healthcare, water conservation, as well as agritourism-related endeavours aimed at bolstering the cultural heritage of the locality.

Furthermore, throughout these meetings, the majority of attendees voiced their perspectives on issues encountered during the previous LEADER programme/LDS. Several prominent themes were emphasised, including the challenges posed by excessive bureaucracy in the application process and the constrictive project funding limits.

11.2.2 Main Themes

Over the course of the initial three public consultation meetings, various central themes were highlighted by the attendees. As previously stated, a prevailing topic was the issue of excessive bureaucracy. Most attendees, spanning local council representatives, voluntary organisations, individual citizens, and other stakeholders alike, consistently brought up the challenge of the stringent and time-consuming application process. This was emphasised as a demotivating factor, with a particular emphasis on the demand for specific documentation, which, in some cases, seemed excessive and unnecessary in the participants' opinion.

Education emerged as a primary focal point during the PCMs. The necessity to expand opportunities for the younger generation, as well as other demographic segments, to engage in and learn about agricultural and cultural pursuits was highlighted as more crucial than ever before. Attendees contended that fundamental knowledge about various topics connected to agricultural practices and traditional arts is at risk of being lost due to evolving societal norms. To address this concern, there was a consensus on the importance of introducing measures that encourage experiential learning

through hands-on workshops. Such workshops would cater to different age groups and facilitate learning and practical engagement with rural activities, including those mentioned. Workshops could also have the unintended benefit of fostering social inclusion among the participants and improve social cohesion in the region.

Furthermore, recognising the fast-paced lifestyles of many individuals today, the idea of providing certain workshops in an online format was also discussed. This approach would integrate digital platforms into the learning experience, acknowledging the trend towards digitisation and the need for flexible learning opportunities.

Additional relevant topics were deliberated during the public consultation meetings, including the realms of tourism, green infrastructure, animal welfare and social inclusion. Notably, the theme of social inclusion garnered considerable attention, potentially driven by the evolving demographic landscape of the localities under consideration. The influx of foreigners, constituting a substantial portion of the community, following the previous LDS, emphasised the necessity for proactive measures to facilitate the integration of diverse nationalities.

Furthermore, a prominent focus centred on the restoration of artistic elements, spanning landscapes, paintings, sculptures, and more. Given the existence of a prior measure addressing restoration in the preceding LDS, discussions concluded that if a provision for co-funding restoration projects were to be reintroduced in the upcoming LDS, it would be pertinent for such restoration initiatives to concentrate on landscapes and artifacts that hold value for the broader community's enjoyment.

Following the formulation of the LDS report, a final public consultation meeting was organised to present the proposed measures to the public, who had previously offered suggestions on what should be emphasised in this report. Attendees were encouraged to provide any remaining feedback to be able to finalise the LDS.

11.2.3 After the Meetings

Following these meetings, individuals who had provided their email addresses received a follow-up email containing additional details on where to send any other suggestions. This communication extended an open invitation for them to reach out via email or phone for any additional project ideas that may not have been covered during the meetings. A designated email address was established by the team of key experts to centralise all correspondence in one platform – gfxlds.com.mt. This approach was particularly helpful for attendees who might have preferred not to express their thoughts during the meeting itself.

11.3 Meetings with Ministries and Other Governmental Authorities

Simultaneously, meetings took place with different governmental entities and other related entities. These discussions aimed to present the documented stakeholder feedback and gather input regarding existing and potential strategies that could influence the region with the main focus being to identify potential measures that would be integrated into this LDS.

The Ministries and Governmental Authorities:

- Ministry for National Heritage, Arts and Local Government
- Ministry for Inclusion, Voluntary Organisations and Consumer Rights
- EU Funds Division - Ministry for the Economy, European Funds and Lands
- Managing Authority - Funds and Programme Division
- Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector
- Ministry for Agriculture Fisheries and Animal Rights
- Malta Tourism Authority
- Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Enterprise

The aim of these meetings was to update the relevant authorities of the advancements made regarding the upcoming LDS in the GAL Xlokk region. These meetings aimed to facilitate discussions of any national initiatives or projects similar to those suggested during the public consultation meetings in order to prevent any redundancy or replication of strategies, ensuring effective resolution of numerous unmet needs.

11.4 Before Submitting the Draft

Another public consultation meeting was convened to discuss the draft measures (following approval from the DC members) and the general selection criteria. Again, any feedback received during this meeting was taken into consideration in this report.

12. Set-Up of the Local Action Group

The objective of this section is to assess and detail the set-up of the LAG, including the composition of the Decision Committee (DC). In accordance with the Guidelines to Local Action Groups on How to Design and Develop the Local Development Strategy and the Leader Operating guidelines, 51% of the GAL Xlokk Foundation is composed of private entities. The statute of the LAG is to be updated by a warranted notary and registered as required by National Law. A true copy of the original statute of the LAG, updated by a warranted notary and registered as required by National Law, is annexed to the LDS.

12.1 The Legal Structure of the LAG

As stipulated in the Common Provision Regulation, Local Action Groups shall design and implement the community-led local development strategies. In this regard and following up on the work carried under the 2014-2020 RDP LEADER programme, the GAL Xlokk Foundation was set up as a corporate body having a distinct legal personality, full autonomy and a non-profit organisation. Given its distinct legal personality, its Statute also allows the Foundation to enter into contracts - be it employing personnel, holding and disposing of finances for the purposes of both its functions and operations, of suing and of doing all such things and entering into such transactions as are incidental or conducive to the exercise or performance of its functions.

The legal and juridical representation of the Foundation is vested in the Chairperson, together with the Secretary of the Decision Committee of the Foundation (the DC is equivalent to the Board of Directors in a commercial entity). On the other hand, the Committee may appoint any one or more Committee members or staff to appear as necessary from time to time in the name and on behalf of the Foundation in any judicial proceedings and in any deed, contract, instrument, or other document whatsoever.

The Foundation is a non-profit organisation, although it is still able to carry out activities and undertakings of a commercial nature for the purposes of funding the implementation and furtherance of its aims and objectives, and thus ensuring its sustainability.

12.2 LAG objectives

The main objectives of the GXF include:

- i. Upgrade the quality of life of the rural community.
- ii. Consolidating a public-private partnership with the intention of becoming a LAG.
- iii. Define and implement an area-based LDS for the South-East of Malta (which is this Strategy in question).
- iv. Practising a bottom-up approach in decision-making for both the elaboration and implementation of the LDS.
- v. Participating in inter-territorial and trans-national actions, together with other partners or Leader-type organisations.
- vi. Participating actively in the National Rural Network (when operational), European Network for Rural Development as well as any other LEADER-related network.

The GXF also has the power to trade or carry on commercial activities – but only if the proceeds of such activities are destined to the social purposes for which the Foundation has been established for in the first place and in accordance with Title III of the Second Schedule of Chapter 16 (Civil Code) of the Laws of Malta.

Other powers that the GXF has been vested with include:

- Engage in any business, project or undertaking that may be deemed desirable or necessary and that is consistent with the objectives of the partnership.
- Carry out financial administration of the Foundation in accordance with the budgets available.
- Apply, receive, administer, and disburse EU and national funds related to its projects.
- Set up operational groups to achieve all or any of the purposes for which it has been established.
- Act as the administrative actor for the implementation of the approved LDS, including but not limited to issuing calls for proposals, receipt of applications, evaluation of applications and monitoring the satisfactory performance of the whole process.
- Be responsible for the animation of the LAG territory.
- Report progress on the delivery of the LDS to the MA as requested.
- Ensure a continuous capacity build-up by providing the necessary training and skills acquisition to the DC and LAG staff. This includes attending training organised by the MA during the duration of the implementation program, and other training as permitted through the running cost funding provided to the LAG.
- Keep constant communication with the MA, including through the provision of requested information.

12.3 The LAG Structure

The Foundation is made up of both public and private partners from locally based socio-economic sectors. Specifically, 49% of representation within the DC emanates from the public sector (i.e. Local Councils and the University of Malta) and the remaining 51% from the private sector.

The term of office of each DC member is three years, after which an election is held during the Annual General Meeting (AGM) which appoints the DC members. A simple majority of 50% plus one vote approval of the registered members is required for the appointment of a new member. The members of the Committee are subject to contestation as per LAG's statute. Selected members from this Committee also have to take up the role of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer and DC Secretary.

- The Chairperson of the DC, together with the DC Secretary, is the legal representative of the Foundation. The Chairperson of the DC can also entrust to one or more committee member specific tasks.

- In case of the Chairperson is not able to perform his or her duties, or resigns/ is removed, the Vice Chairperson assumes the functions of the Chairperson until the next election. The Vice Chairperson also replaces the Chairperson in case of temporary absence or in case of any other impediment from the Chairperson's part.
- The role of the Treasurer is restricted to monitoring purposes only and not to an administrative and policy role. S/he is responsible of overseeing the proper financial management of the Foundation.
- The DC Secretary is ultimately responsible for recording the minutes of the DC's meetings and distribute them in a timely manner.

The roles of both the accountant and the auditor of the LAG is usually outsourced as per Guidelines to LAGs. The accountant plays a key role in successful LAG management and completes the LAG's structure. The committee must keep the accountant informed on all financial matters such as the approval of invoices as well as the LAG's administration funding decision. This allows for better reporting throughout the year. The auditors also help the LAG throughout the year by giving good administrative and financial advice

As mentioned previously, the term of the Chairperson and the other members is for a period of three years, subject to contestation at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). At the end of the three-year period the Chairperson and other members are eligible for re-appointments for subsequent terms of three years. When the term expires, the members sitting on the decision committee and the chairperson continue to function until a new general election is held.

12.4 Membership

The GXF also issues memberships, which are open upon application. The application requires the potential applicant to specify which sector s/he belongs to. New membership requires the approval of at least 75% of the registered members during the AGM or at least two thirds majority of the DC. It is important to note that under the 2007-2013 and 2014-2022 LEADER programme, Local Councils' membership in the LAG was against the payment of a membership fee. Local Councils who failed to pay the stipulated fee were not allowed to apply for projects. However, in such a case, the local entities and private individuals within that locality were still eligible to participate in such programme. The GXF envisages and intends on adopting this same procedure for the 2023-2027 programme.

In order to ensure sustainability, the Statute has provisions that safeguard the Foundation from the risk of having to cease to operate upon the cessation of any of the founder members and/ or any of the members from being a member of the Foundation itself. Indeed, any of the founder members and any of the members of the Foundation can be replaced, yet such replacement requires the approval of at least 75% of the registered members during the AGM or with at least two thirds majority of the DC.

12.5 Training and Development

The LAG staff are key to the success of the LEADER programme implementation. It is hence deemed crucial for such staff/ personnel to acquire the required skills and expertise with regards to various areas required in the implementation of such strategy.

The LAG Manager is responsible in ensuring the sound operational and financial management of the LAG and hence must have the necessary training in areas such as financial and project management, as well as an overview of audit matters. Public speaking is also beneficial due to the various meetings that s/he will be involved in throughout the whole process. The LAG Manager should also have the necessary management skills to ensure the sound management of the Foundation.

It is important for all LAG members to familiarise themselves with the list of criteria stipulated in the LEADER Operating Guidelines. The LAG staff should also be provided with training to help them acquire evaluation skills. Considering the limited resources, this is normally done in conjunction with the MA which offers several training sessions on various relevant topics. Similar to other public tenders, the LEADER projects have to be evaluated in an objective manner and a score is given based on a pre-determined list of criteria. All LAG staff and members should be provided with the necessary training to undertake such evaluation by the local responsible authority. Other areas, such as the identification and recording of conflicts of interest, are also vital for all LAG members to be acquainted with.

13. The Implementation Capacity

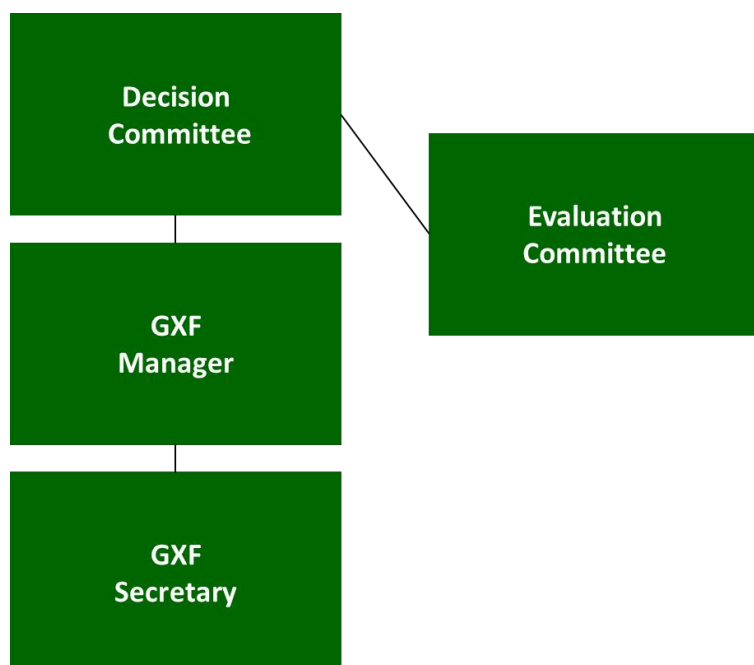
The following section details the set out of the GXF's organisational structure, the roles of the administrative staff, the Evaluation Committee, Decision Committee, contracted project managers etc. The procedures to be adopted will be aligned with the Leader Operating Guidelines issued by the Managing Authority;

13.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The DC is responsible for selecting a LAG Manager and a Secretary to provide administrative and secretarial support, including minuting of meetings and the decision-making process, upon the approval of the LDS by the MA, and the receipt of the required funds. The LAG Manager will be entrusted with a pivotal role in the implementation of the Strategy, including assistance to potential beneficiaries in the application process. The LAG Manager is in fact the person responsible for the administration of the Foundation and to provide leadership and co-ordination of the LEADER programme. In case the LAG Manager is not able to perform his/her duties, or resigns or is removed, an open call for vacancy will be issued according to the Operating Rules. In the (temporary) absence of the LAG Manager, the DC Secretary shall assume the functions and duties of the Manager.

The figure below presents the structure of the LAG. Each constituent's role is described in more detail below.

Figure 7 – Structure of GXF



The following sub-section provides details on the roles and responsibilities of the constituents of the LAG structure. However, before focusing on the demarcation of internal roles, it is pertinent to start with the link between the Managing Authority and the LAG.

13.2 Managing Authority

The Managing Authority is responsible for programme planning, implementation, delivery and evaluation of the CAP SP funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and hence the LEADER since it makes part of the CAP SP.

The main role of the Managing Authority is to manage and implement this Programme in an efficient, effective, and correct way with respect to:

- Selection of applications for funding according to established criteria (in the case of the LEADER, applicants refer to the LAGs, not the end beneficiary within each territory).
- Monitoring and evaluation with regards to the implementation of the Programme.
- Communication and publicity activities to ensure that the programme reaches prospective beneficiaries.
- Reporting obligations to the EC on the progress of implementation.
- Provision of necessary information regarding obligations and requirements.
- Liaising with ARPA by providing all the necessary information regarding procedures to be followed and controls before payments are affected.

13.3 Foundation Decision Committee

The DC is the decision-making body in relation to all activities within the LAG and is also responsible for all the recruitment and appointments throughout the whole process, as previously indicated. All decisions taken during the DC's meetings are formally recorded in the minutes. This Committee is also in charge of evaluating the correct implementation of the LDS. Additionally, the DC will act as supervisor of all the initiatives undertaken under the LEADER. The DC generally meets regularly (typically once every month) but has the autonomy to meet as the needs arise (on the Chairperson's discretion or if requested by the LAG Manager or any other committee member), to direct the running of the Foundation and take strategic decisions. The current DC is made of nine members, with five coming from the private sector and four from Local Councils and the University of Malta. The DC might also appoint and refer to thematic working groups when taking decisions.

A quorum (with at least five Committee members) has to be reached for the proceedings of the DC to be initiated and continued. Decisions are taken by means of voting by the DC members present only. In case there are equal votes on a motion, the Chairperson has a casting vote. The Committee also regulates its own procedure and takes decisions on matters related to:

- The running and ongoing operations of the Foundation.
- Launching of projects/measures.
- Monitoring of projects during and after realisation.

Moreover, a DC member cannot vote for a decision if s/he has a direct conflict of interest in the matter (e.g. being a direct personal financial beneficiary in the project). DC members act with prudence, diligence and attention in both the execution of their duties and the exercise of their powers. Execution of business and procedures are conducted in a fair and transparent way and all

potential beneficiaries are offered equal opportunities in line with the Operating Rules. Additionally, it also the DC's remit to ensure that the projects/ measures endorsed by it are administered efficiently, effectively and with efficacy and also that the rules and criteria of the responsible authorities are adhered to.

In this regard, all decisions taken by the DC need to be in conformity with the Commission Guidelines, EU regulations, national legislation, the CAP SP, the LAG's eventual grant agreement with the MA and the Operating Rules issued by the MA. The role of the DC includes the assessment and review of all pre-recommendations made by the Evaluation Committee (EC – discussed in more detail later), giving points to each eligible project and eventually ranking and selecting the projects together with the subsequent allocation of funding. Where the DCs decision is not in accordance to the pre-recommendations made by the EC, reasons backing the decision must be documented. In cases where the DC members have a conflict of interest, these cannot sit on the selection board assessing that particular call (this aspect is discussed in more detail later. Once the selection process is concluded, the DC will proceed to publish the preliminary result.

The DC will also set up an autonomous and independent Appeals Board. Any appeals presented must be lodged with the Chairperson of the Appeals Board. No members from the DC or EC can be nominated to sit on this Board. The outcome of the appeals process is final and cannot be altered by the DC. The MA has the right to undertake checks on the process to verify the results and ensure a fair and transparent process. In case of irregularities identified by the MA, the LAG will be requested to revise the process accordingly.

13.4 Evaluation Committee

As previously indicated, it is the remit of the DC to appoint the EC. The EC consists of a Manager and Secretary. The Manager of the EC and the secretary of the EC are also the LAG Manager and LAG Secretary respectively. The EC members will have the role to administer and check the applications. A Technical Expert may also be selected to assist the EC, depending on what expertise is required. The Technical Expert's role on the EC could include assistance to perform technical checks for each application. The sole role of the EC is one that evaluates all project proposals as well as tenders.

The role of the EC is to make pre-recommendations to the DC on administrative and technical aspects of each application. This Committee shall prepare two reports for consideration by the DC:

- i. Administrative Report – this report should include an administrative checklist signed by the Secretary of the EC, who shall be responsible for the first set of administrative checks, and then signed and verified by the LAG Manager who shall be responsible to verify the first round of checks undertaken by the Secretary.
- ii. Technical Report - this report should include a reference to verifiability of costs, feasibility of projects, reasonableness of costs and timing. The Project Assessment Sheet is to be attached to this report.

The DC is to evaluate and perform any other technical checks deemed appropriate on projects before ranking and selecting projects. The role of the EC is to assess project applications, and ensure that:

- The projects meet the eligibility criteria set in the respective guidelines.
- The projects are complementary to the objectives set out in the LDS.
- The projects contribute to the economic, social and environmental background.
- The applications are administratively compliant and that quotations are valid, comparable and legitimate.

Checks will be undertaken by the LAG to ensure that no other funding has been sought for the project proposals presented. This will be undertaken by liaising with the competent bodies that oversee this aspect.

13.5 The LAG Manager

The LAG Manager, selected by the DC, is responsible for ensuring the sound operational and financial management of the LAG and the overall management and implementation of the LDS in line with the procedure set by the MA in the Operating Rules. The Manager together with the DC, have the role of appointing a LAG secretary. The Manager will be responsible for updating the DC on the implementation of the actions identified in the Strategy as well as on the management and administration of the Foundation on a regular basis. It is crucial to take into consideration that the budget allocated to LEADER is very limited and hence the operations of the LAG and the Manager's remit are curtailed by the running costs funding available. In this context, the Manager will be key in the successful implementation of the LDS, given these budget limitations.

In this regard, the Manager must be able to tackle situations that require prompt and flexibility and also deep knowledge of EU project management, the local government system, NGO legislation, and public procurement principles, amongst others. Additionally, the Manager must be able to realise when consultation is required in order to tackle ad hoc matters which may arise and which require expertise not possessed within the LAG. The LAG Manager is also the Manager of the EC. The LAG Manager is also responsible for liaising with the MA whenever necessary and shall also be available for meetings with the MA. The LAG Manager, the DC, members of the LAG and other stakeholder can be supported by external key experts through the training actions identified for LAGs within the LEADER programme.

13.6 The LAG Secretary

As previously mentioned, the LAG Secretary will be in charge of supporting the LAG Manager in the management and implementation of the LDS, in particular from an administrative and secretarial point of view. The LAG Secretary is also a member of the EC and is to keep tabs on the tasks being assigned to the LAG. The employment of the Manager and the Secretary allows the LAG to follow the four-eye principle especially during the evaluation of projects that are submitted to the LAG throughout the programming period.

The following table provides a summary of the roles and responsibilities of each body/entity/ person.

Roles and Responsibilities

Body	Role
Managing Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manage and implement this Programme in an efficient, effective and correct way. - Report progress of implementation to the Commission. - Liaise with the Paying Agency.
Decision Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decision-making body. - Responsible for selecting the LAG Manager and Secretary. - Evaluate the correct implementation of the LDS. - Act as supervisor of all initiatives undertaken under the LEADER - Appoint the EC. - Assess and review all pre-recommendations made by the EC. - Set up an autonomous and independent Appeals Board.
Evaluation Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Check all applications - Evaluate all project proposals - Make pre-recommendations to the DC - Prepare an administrative and technical report
LAG Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensures the sound operational and financial management together with the Accountant of the LAG. - Oversees and implements the LDS. - Update the DC on the implementation of actions identified in the Strategy. - Liaise with the MA whenever necessary.

13.7 Addressing Conflict of Interest

In cases where DC members have a potential conflict of interest the LAG is guided by the Commission Notice Guidance on the avoidance and management of conflicts of interest under the Financial Regulation (2021/C 121/01), and as the LAG may be guided by the Managing Authority.

Members declaring a conflict of interest cannot sit on the selection board assessing that particular call. Once the selection process is concluded, the DC must proceed with publishing the preliminary result. As previously mentioned, the DC will set up an autonomous and independent Appeals Board, who can also address any appeals on the grounds of conflicts of interest. In situations where an individual is involved or has a direct interest in a project and is connected to any of the DC members (including EC Members) this shall be considered as a conflict of interest. It is crucial to maintain impartiality, confidentiality, and ethical conduct when handling conflicts of interest.

All LAG staff should refrain from entering into situations that involve a conflict of interest. A conflict of interest may arise but is not limited to the following circumstances:

- The DC member's spouse, parent, brother, sister, child or step-child, other relative or person cohabitating.
- A body corporate controlled by the members.
- Any business partner or associate.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Emissions Data by Industry					
		Energy	Industrial Processes Solvent and Other Product Use	Agriculture	Waste
Main Pollutants	<i>NOx</i> (as <i>NO₂</i>)	4.2190352	0.00082784	0.176506201	0.01195035
	<i>NM VOC</i>	1.2721821	1.05506646	0.279644578	0.00116034
	<i>SOx</i> (as <i>SO₂</i>)	0.1326035	0.00037239	1.89909E-05	0.0008555
	<i>NH₃</i>	0.1231485	0.00183473	1.216342852	0.00417853
Particulate Matter	<i>PM_{2.5}</i>	0.2238143	0.1343143	0.00879346	0.0043835
	<i>PM₁₀</i>	0.2803411	0.97235032	0.117725522	0.00446948
	<i>TSP</i>	0.3267601	4.03499184	0.213425769	0.00451788
	<i>BC</i>	0.0635643	0.0101743	2.09011E-11	0.00047237
Other (from 1990)	<i>CO</i>	5.1921439	0.0252415	0.00268162	0.01530381
Priority Heavy Metals (from 1990)	<i>Pb</i>	0.3889336	0.09667352	4.14606E-06	0.00025024
	<i>Cd</i>	0.002466	0.00252574	3.35352E-05	5.0056E-05
	<i>Hg</i>	0.0027255	7.0286E-06	5.43555E-06	2.5066E-05
Additional Heavy Metals (from 1990, voluntary reporting)	<i>As</i>	0.0067989	0.000164	2.40861E-07	0.00017831
	<i>Cr</i>	0.1635901	0.00192361	3.25388E-06	0.00021968
	<i>Cu</i>	3.0049699	0.05709202	2.75358E-06	0.00064971
	<i>Ni</i>	0.4180099	0.00487086	1.9761E-06	0.00020677
	<i>Se</i>	0.0043183	0	8.20415E-07	0.00159863
	<i>Zn</i>	0.9040245	0.03323172	2.19263E-05	0.01749036
	POPs (from 1990)	PCDD/PCDF (dioxins/ furans)	0.0755313	0.04421026	0.019209563
benzo(a) pyrene		0.0141716	4.9073E-05	1.61292E-05	0.00136771
benzo(b) fluoranthene		0.0190844	1.9895E-05	4.54493E-05	0.00291387
PAHs benzo(k) fluoranthene		0.0133148	1.9895E-05	1.86566E-05	0.00155125
Indeno (1,2,3- cd) pyrene		0.0074923	1.9895E-05	1.31627E-05	0.00188466
Total 1-4		0.0540632	0.00010876	9.33978E-05	9.3376E-05
HCB		0.0020216	0	0	0.05971746
PCBs	0.0008766	0	0	0.00013712	
Activity Data (from 1990)	Liquid Fuels	0	0	0	0
	Solid Fuels	24213.305	0	0	0
	Gaseous Fuels	64.644192	0	0	0
	Biomass	14643.728	0	0	0
	Other Fuels	328.90786	0	0	0
	Other activity (specified)	32.078549	0	0	0
	Other Activity Units	37411.194	725520.725	2088690.731	20580032.1

