

*A Brief Synopsis  
of the  
Regeneration Project of Wied Ghajn Zejtun.*



*Contents:*

- 1. Background*
- 2. Opportunities & Benefits*
- 3. The EU & the Environment*
- 4. Project Main Aims*

**Ghaqda tar-Residenti ta' Santa Marija  
Estate, Mellieħa**

## **A Voluntary Organisation, Identification No. VO/0313**



### **Background – Regeneration Project**

First proposed in May 2009, the original proposal was submitted to the Prime Minister for his consideration.

In July the OPM confirmed that the proposal was in line with Government's Policy for sustainable development and stated that copies of the proposal had been referred to MR&RA, MEPA Chairman and the Mayor of Mellieha. The Ghaqda was referred to the Ministry of Resources & Rural Affairs with regard to seeking funding.

During August and September, a number of meetings were held with the MEPA Chairman and the EP Directorate and it was agreed that development, the environment and the Regeneration Project should be treated as a holistic issue. The project was given enthusiastic support by all concerned. The Water Framework Initiative Director and officials indicated a desire to enthusiastically adopt and submit the Wied Ghajn Zejtuna Regeneration Project as their pilot scheme for submission to the EU.

Following further meetings and discussions with MEPA/EPD early in 2010, the formation of a Regeneration Project Management Committee was approved consisting of the following key stakeholders: MEPA, MRRA, EPD, Cenmed, MLC and the Ghaqda.

An inaugural meeting took place in August 2010 and in addition to several on-site meetings, has continued to meet on 8 occasions since that time. Its purpose is to translate the Regeneration Project into an Action Plan with a clear set of aims and objectives and to determine a strategy for achieving those objectives. The Action Plan will form the basis for applications for funding from all appropriate sources.

**1.**

## **Opportunities.**

### Economical sustainable development.

The project has the potential to serve as a 'blueprint' for sustainable, economical development. Such a model may then be used for regenerating the remaining areas of the valley and could serve as an example of how to manage the effects of urbanisation and climate change, at local and national levels.

### Water Framework Initiatives.

The Water Framework Initiative Director and officials indicated that, the Water Framework team would enthusiastically wish to adopt and submit the Wied Ghajn Zejtuna Regeneration Project as their pilot scheme for submission to the EU.

### Continuation link.

Implementation of this proposal will have the effect of creating a continuation link between the existing Majjistral Nature and History Park, Malta's first National Park and the developing Selmun Heritage Trail. It will have the potential to serve as a 'blueprint' for sustainable, economical development. Such a model may then be used for regenerating the remaining areas of the valley and could serve as an example of how similar valleys may manage the effects of urbanisation and climate change, at local and national levels.

### Tourism.

The Cultural Heritage and Craft aspects of the Wied, dating back to the Roman period, are well known and the project has already been recognized as having potential for inclusion in the itineraries of Merill Eco Tours, a company already associated with the MLC.

## **Benefits**

- It would add greatly to the value of the present green credentials of Mellieha and enhance the Tourist sector.
- The project will create benefits to the Nation, more specifically to the present and future generations of the Mellieha community.
- It will provide an educational experience to local and visiting younger generations, instilling a sense of ownership.
- The project will provide rewarding work and job creation, at a time of recession & unemployment.
- The quality of community life will be improved and it will enhance ecological, social and fiscal values.



### **The EU & the Environment.**

The EU Commission places high on its agenda the EU Habitats Directive and the Water Framework Initiative, quote, “The sustainable management of water resources in times of global change is one of the most pressing challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century”( Conference on Water governance – meeting the challenges of global change).

The Maltese government is committed to both of these items of legislation and has already received adverse comments for failing to fully comply.

Valley Management Plans are being discussed, but are presently considering only Natura 2000 sites, a status which the Wied aspires to but has so far been denied despite the presence of species which we believe would warrant such a categorisation.

It is recommended that this project would add greatly to the present green credentials of Mellieha in addition to bringing added value and kudos to a most worthy asset.

Crucial to achieving the aims of the project is the construction of Water Catchment Reservoirs, which cannot be sited within the scheduled area. Although essential to the success of the overall project, such provision falls outside the jurisdiction of the Ghaqda.

The solution should be provided through consultation between MLC/TM/Planning Authority(Water Framework, MRRA.) in order to enable the planned construction of two substantial reservoirs to be undertaken in conjunction with the reconstruction of Triq il Pont (site1) and Triq il Qasab traffic control ‘island’ (site 2). These structures should be beneath the roadways, not within the protected areas.

Such reservoirs would provide conformity with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and facilitate the conservation and management of water thus becoming eligible for the acquisition of EU funding. The overall beneficiaries will be the state authorities and local farmers, able to avail themselves of the increased National stock of fresh water for local irrigation purposes.

## **The project's main aims are:**

---

<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- To conserve and increase the volume of re-usable water.</li><li>- To replenish the aquifer enabling the national water stock to be increased, thus preventing salinisation of the ground water table.</li><li>- To revive and protect the natural watercourse embankments, flora, fauna and their habitat.</li><li>- To demonstrate sustainable economical development.</li><li>- To create a greener, cleaner, safer environment.</li></ul>
<b>Cultural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- To restore the existing dry stone rubble walls, a feature of the Maltese heritage.</li><li>- To revive the tradition of the cultivation of produce, olives, carob and fruits.</li><li>- To encourage the growing of herbs for culinary and medicinal purposes.</li><li>- The re-introduction of traditional heritage crafts and products.</li><li>- To reintroduce the craft of beekeeping and the production of honey.</li></ul>
<b>Educational</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- To increase local awareness concerning the biodiversity.</li><li>- To create an educational experience for the promotion of environmental awareness.</li><li>- To increase voluntary participation as a means of widening the individual's educational experience and instilling a sense of ownership.</li></ul>
<b>Touristic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- To safeguard the area for the benefit of present and future generations of the Maltese population and tourists.</li><li>- To enhance and convert the visible ambience of the valley into a desirable natural asset to the benefit of local and foreign visitors.</li><li>- To inform and demonstrate to local and foreign tourists the function, biodiversity and natural beauty of a fresh water valley.</li><li>- To transform an eyesore into a touristic asset close to the heart of the Mellieña community, a designated European Destination of Excellence ( EDEN).</li><li>- To create a 'continuation link' between the Majjistral Nature and History Park, and the Selmun Heritage Trail.</li></ul>

---