INVESTING IN THE LIFESTYLE TOURISM BOOM

DESIGNING BEAUTIFUL HOTELS, CITIES, MARINAS AND EXPERIENCES THAT CREATE GREATER VALUE

Friday, 27 November 2026 | Hilton Malta | 15:30–18:30

Facilitator: Jill Hellman — Founder & CEO, The Strategy Lab Inc.; Global Growth Strategist | USA

THE OPPORTUNITY

Building on the morning plenary, "From Counting People to Making People Count", this Action Lab asks how tourism can create greater economic and social value without relying simply on more arrivals and more beds. Distinctive hotels, exceptional architecture, waterfronts, art, heritage and authentic experiences can attract higher-spending travellers and strengthen investment returns. Delegates will explore what it takes to design places worth travelling for, living in and investing in.

BETTER HOTELS. BEAUTIFUL CITIES. DISTINCTIVE EXPERIENCES. STRONGER INVESTMENTS. HIGHER RETURNS.

Connecting the plenary to the investment opportunity

15:30–15:43 | OPENING — THE CASE FOR BEAUTIFUL PLACES

Jill Hellman — Founder & CEO, The Strategy Lab Inc.; Global Growth Strategist | USA

International growth strategist and Cornell University visiting faculty member with advisory, speaking and training experience across more than 25 countries. Her documented career includes growing hospitality investments in Asia, strategic work at a $19 billion US retailer and external advisory work with McKinsey's global head of innovation. MBA, Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management.

Perspective: Introduces the shift from tourism volume to investment value.

Johann Buttigieg — Executive Chairman, Planning Authority | Malta

Executive Chairman of Malta's Planning Authority, the national institution responsible for development planning and planning decisions.

Perspective: Beautiful Malta: how planning can support architectural quality and investment.

15:43–16:13 | PANEL 1 — WHO WILL MAKE MALTA BEAUTIFUL?

Planning • Public Art • Tourism Product Development

THE OPPORTUNITY

How can Malta deliver more beautiful streets, public spaces, cultural settings and tourism infrastructure through cooperation with developers, businesses and local councils?

Perspective: How policy and development standards can deliver better-designed places.

Dr Luke Dalli — Executive Chairman, Arts Council Malta | Malta

Heads Arts Council Malta, the public body supporting Malta's artistic and cultural development.

Perspective: Public art, creativity and cultural identity as elements of destination value.

Perit Kevin Fsadni — Deputy CEO, Malta Tourism Authority | Malta

Architect and senior Malta Tourism Authority executive working in tourism product development and regulatory matters.

Perspective: Upgrading tourism infrastructure and the public realm to strengthen the visitor experience.

Dr Andrei Imbroll — Vice President, MHRA; Co-Founder & CEO, VBL Group | Malta

Hospitality entrepreneur involved in the regeneration and operation of historic properties in Valletta.
Perspective: The relationship between accommodation investment, short-term rentals and neighbourhood wellbeing.

Maria Galea — President, MEIA; Chief Creative Officer, Iniala | Malta – VIDEO CLIP INTERVENTION

President of MEIA and art adviser to Iniala, bringing an arts and creative-industries perspective.

Perspective: How art and cultural identity make cities and destinations distinctive attractions.

16:13–16:33 | PANEL 2 — THE ECONOMICS OF BEAUTIFUL PLACES

Urban Economics • Hospitality Asset Value • Investment Returns

THE OPPORTUNITY

How do better design and distinctive destinations increase visitor spending, property values and hospitality investment returns?

Jim Coleman — WSP | United Kingdom

Urban development and economics specialist at WSP, a global engineering and advisory group employing approximately 83,000 professionals across more than 50 countries.

Perspective: How infrastructure, placemaking and urban design influence investment and local economic performance.

Demetris Spanos — Managing Director, HVS Consulting & Valuation | Greece

Hospitality valuation and investment adviser at HVS, a global hospitality consultancy with 50+ offices and 300+ specialists.

Perspective: How design and destination quality affect hotel asset value and investment returns.

16:33–17:03 | PANEL 3 — DESIGNING HOTELS PEOPLE TRAVEL FOR

Iconic Architecture • Art-Led Hospitality • Heritage Regeneration

THE OPPORTUNITY

What makes a hotel an attraction in its own right, commanding differentiation and long-term value?

Gonca Paşolar — Co Founder and Managing Partner, Emre Arolat Architecture (EAA) | Türkiye

Co-founded EAA in 2004. With over 100 awards, the firm's landmark projects include the Antakya Museum Hotel, Yalıkavak Palmarina, Zorlu Center and Sancaklar Mosque. EAA is recognised for integrating contemporary architecture, cultural heritage and innovative placemaking to create distinctive destinations and experiences.

Perspective: What makes architecture a destination attraction in its own right.

Andrea Quiriconi — Owner, Hotel Trieste, Verona | Italy

Owner of Hotel Trieste in Verona and a design collector associated with the hotel's art-led approach.

Perspective: How distinctive design and art collections differentiate a hotel.

Barbara Avdis — Founder, Yades Greek Historic Hotels; Former Chair, Historic Hotels of Europe | Greece

Heritage hospitality entrepreneur and former chair of Historic Hotels of Europe, a network of historic properties across European countries.

Perspective: How heritage buildings become distinctive and commercially sustainable hotels.

17:03–17:35 | PANEL 4 — CONSTRUCTION & DESIGN: CAN BUILDINGS BECOME WORKS OF ART?

Creative Architecture · Planning Policy · Mediterranean Identity · Landmark Buildings

THE OPPORTUNITY

Should planning policies actively support innovative architecture, encouraging buildings that become works of art and attractions in their own right?

Michael Stivala — Chief Executive Officer, Stivala Group; President, Malta Development Association | Malta

Group CEO with more than 25 years in Stivala Group, overseeing its operations including hotels and accommodation properties. Also President of the Malta Development Association, representing 12 sections of the property and construction industry; re-elected for 2026–2028.

Perspective: The critical success factors in delivering beautiful, commercially viable buildings.

Amir Turki — President, Union of Mediterranean Architects (UMAR) | Tunisia

President of UMAR, which connects architectural professional bodies around the Mediterranean.

Perspective: Mediterranean identity and cross-border architectural cooperation.

17:35–17:57 | PANEL 5 — WHEN CITIES & ISLANDS BECOME ATTRACTIONS

Beautiful Cities • Destination Identity • Local Economies

THE OPPORTUNITY

How can cities and islands turn heritage, fashion, local enterprise and genuine lifestyle experiences into destination value?

Mariano Angelucci — President, XII Permanent Commission for Tourism, Fashion and International Relations, Roma Capitale | Italy

Rome city councillor and President of Roma Capitale's XII Permanent Commission for Tourism, Fashion and International Relations.

Perspective: How tourism, fashion, heritage and public spaces reinforce the appeal of Rome, which recorded 22.9 million tourist arrivals in 2025.

Gianluca Manenti — President, Confcommercio Sicilia | Italy

Leads Confcommercio Sicilia, representing commerce, tourism and service businesses across Sicily. His contribution highlights the island's genuine Mediterranean lifestyle: local gastronomy, traditional markets, historic towns, artisan enterprises and community hospitality as sources of distinctive tourism experiences and local economic value.

Perspective: Why authentic Sicilian lifestyle experiences strengthen destination identity, visitor spending and local businesses.

Dimitris Lianos Mayor, Municipality of Naxos and Small Cyclades |Greece

An experienced local government leader and former hotelier, serving as Mayor since 2019. With a background in business management and tourism, he champions sustainable island development, tourism infrastructure, digital innovation and the preservation of local heritage and communities.

17:57–18:40 | PANEL 6 — SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: PROTECTING THE VALUE WE CREATE

Responsible Investment • Nature • Communities • Sustainable Architecture

THE OPPORTUNITY

Can investment protect nature, strengthen communities and create commercially successful, beautiful places?

Tim Clancy — Co-Founder, Green Visions | Bosnia & Herzegovina

Co-founded Green Visions, a pioneering nature-tourism organisation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Terra Dinarica, associated with Via Dinarica trail development.

Perspective: How Green Visions and Via Dinarica-related nature tourism initiatives support conservation, trails, guiding skills and local livelihoods.

Asma Jerbi Abouda — Head, UIA Sustainable Tourism Work Programme 2026–2029 | Tunisia

Founder of Archi-Pro & Design in Sousse and journalist with Jawhara FM-TV. Recently appointed Head of the Sustainable Tourism Work Programme (2026–2029) of the International Union of Architects (UIA), a worldwide federation representing approximately 1.3 million architects across 124 countries and territories.

Perspective: How architecture and sustainable tourism can preserve Mediterranean identity while creating lasting destination value.

Kevin Mercieca — Chief Executive Officer, Environment & Resources Authority (ERA) | Malta

Leads Malta's environmental regulatory authority, overseeing environmental protection, and resource management.

Perspective How: can Malta balance tourism growth and development pressures with environmental sustainability, resource capacity and residents' quality of life?

18:40 — END OF ACTION LAB