ACTION LAB 2

TOO HOT. TOO FULL. TOO FRAGILE?

CAN OUR TOURISM INDUSTRY, HOTELS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES COPE WITH THE PRESSURES AHEAD?

Protecting Hotels, Local Communities and Tourism Investment from Extreme Weather, Overcrowding and Security Risks

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

Facilitator: Dr Aradhana Khowala — Founder & CEO, Aptamind Partners; MTF Senator | United Kingdom

THE CHALLENGE

Building on the morning plenary, "From Counting People to Making People Count", this Action Lab asks whether hotels, infrastructure and local communities can withstand rising visitor pressures, extreme weather and public safety risks. More arrivals and accommodation place demands on electricity, water, transport, emergency services and public spaces. For hotels, the consequences include operating costs, business continuity and guest safety; for local councils, they include short-term rentals, public order and residents' quality of life.

The Action Lab brings together destination leaders, crisis-management specialists, emergency services, security innovators and institutional partners to identify practical responses. Discussions will inform MED READY, the proposed Malta living lab for public safety, destination resilience and intelligent tourism management.

15:30–15:45 | OPENING — THE RESPONSIBILITY TO BE READY

Connecting the plenary to hotel preparedness and community resilience

THE OPPORTUNITY

How can Malta strengthen preparedness, protect tourism investment and keep hotels and local communities safe and welcoming?

Dr Aradhana Khowala — Founder & CEO, Aptamind Partners; MTF Senator | United Kingdom
International tourism investment adviser and founder of Aptamind Partners. Her work connects tourism strategy, hospitality investment and destination development.

Perspective: Why preparedness and resilience must be central to the long-term value of tourism destinations.

Hon. Glenn Bedingfield — Minister for Home Affairs, Security and Employment | Malta
Government minister responsible for home affairs and security, with responsibilities directly relevant to public safety and inter-agency coordination.

Perspective: Cooperation between public authorities, tourism operators and communities to strengthen destination safety.

Carlos Tabone — Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Tourism | Malta
Senior public administrator involved in tourism policy and institutional coordination.

Perspective: Enjoy & Respect, responsible visitor behaviour and practical cooperation with local councils.

15:45–16:30 | PANEL 1 — TOO HOT. TOO FULL. CAN WE COPE WITH MORE — AND ARE WE READY WHEN THINGS GO WRONG?

Extreme Weather • Tourism Growth • Infrastructure • Short-Term Rentals • Community Impact • Preparedness

THE OPPORTUNITY

Can hotels and local communities manage rising visitor flows, extreme temperatures and accommodation growth while preparing for disruptions and protecting residents' quality of life?

Betim Budzaku — Director General, Andorra Turisme | Andorra
Leads Andorra's national tourism organisation, whose work includes year-round tourism, market diversification and the Andorra Selected initiative.

Perspective: Managing visitor flows, seasonality and premium destination positioning.

George Micallef — MHRA; Sunroute Managing Director | Malta
Has worked as a tourism development consultant since 1987, advising governments, public institutions and private businesses in Malta and internationally.

He has also served as Deputy Chairman of the Malta Tourism Observatory and contributed to national tourism policy, strategic planning and tourism development studies.

Perspective: The relationship between accommodation investment and quality tourism objectives.

Mario Fava — President, Local Councils' Association | Malta
Represents Malta's local councils and their role in local governance, public spaces and community services.

Perspective: How local councils can respond to tourism pressures while protecting residents and the visitor experience.

16:30–17:00 | PANEL 2 — INTERNATIONAL PRACTICES FOR PREPAREDNESS & RESILIENCE

International Case Studies • Crisis Preparedness • Business Continuity • Emergency Leadership • Destination Recovery

THE OPPORTUNITY
What can Malta learn from international crisis-management and tourism-resilience practices to prepare hotels, local councils and destinations before emergencies occur?

Prof. Lee Miles — Professor of Crisis and Disaster Management, Bournemouth University | United Kingdom
Academic specialist in crisis and disaster management whose research examines preparedness, resilience and disaster recovery.

Perspective: How organisations can plan, coordinate and recover from disruptions.

Richard Gordon MBE — Director, Bournemouth University Disaster Management Centre | United Kingdom
Emergency-management specialist and MBE recipient with experience in crisis leadership and training for government and response organisations.

Perspective: Practical major-incident preparedness for hospitality businesses and communities.

Prof. Lloyd Waller — Executive Director, Global Tourism Resilience and Crisis Management Centre; University of the West Indies | Jamaica
Academic and tourism resilience leader working on crisis management, destination recovery and digital governance.

Perspective: How destinations can build resilience before, during and after a crisis.

17:00–17:30 | PANEL 3 — PROTECTING GUESTS, STAFF & COMMUNITIES

Public Order • Fire & Rescue • Emergency Healthcare • Operational Coordination

THE OPPORTUNITY
How can hotels and local councils cooperate with police, civil protection and emergency healthcare to protect visitors, employees and residents?

Angelo Gafà — Commissioner of Police, Malta Police Force | Malta
Heads Malta's Police Force and its policing and public-order operations.

Perspective: Visitor-intensive areas, crime prevention and coordinated community safety.

Peter Paul Coleiro — Director General, Civil Protection Department | Malta Leads
Malta's civil protection services, including fire and rescue response.

Perspective: Fire safety, evacuation preparedness and cooperation with hotels and local councils.

Dr Patrick A. Farrugia — Health System Resilience, Mater Dei Hospital | Malta
Healthcare contributor bringing the perspective of emergency medical capacity and system preparedness.

Perspective: Medical readiness and inter-agency response when tourism and major incidents increase demand.

17:30–18:00 | PANEL 4 — INTELLIGENT SECURITY: PROTECTING BEACHES, HOTELS & COMMUNITIES

Artificial Intelligence • Drones • Beach & Coastal Safety • Hotel Security • Community Protection • Early Warning

THE OPPORTUNITY

How can AI, drones and early-warning systems help protect beaches, hotels, visitors and local communities through earlier risk detection, coordinated response and appropriate privacy safeguards?

Hamdi Chaker — Chief Executive Officer, Fire Eagle | France

Technology entrepreneur working on drone-enabled monitoring and security applications.

Perspective: Potential applications for beach and coastal safety, hotel security, crowd monitoring and wildfire detection.

Louis Loke — Assistant Commissioner of Police and Director, Community Partnership Department, Singapore Police Force— Singapore

Perspective: Intelligent surveillance, threat detection and protection of beaches, hotels and communities.

Saif Al Jabri — Colonel – Director of the Community Police Department — Abu Dhabi Emirate UAE

Perspective: How police, tourism stakeholders and local communities can collaborate to prevent incidents, strengthening public confidence and create safer, more welcoming destinations for residents and visitors alike.

18:00–18:30 | PANEL 5 — INVESTING IN SAFER HOTELS & STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Green Financing • Resilience Investment • Funding • Enjoy & Respect

THE OPPORTUNITY

How can hotels and local councils mobilise investment, funding and partnerships to strengthen resilience and community safety?

Wout Steurs — EU policy & Regulation and Funding - KPMG | Brussels

An EU Policy, Regulation and Funding specialist with KPMG's European Office in Brussels. He works across the KPMG network on EU funding, credits, grants and incentives, helping businesses and public-sector organisations connect strategic investment priorities with relevant European funding opportunities. He has also worked as an independent expert evaluator and business coach for European Commission programmes and as Access to Finance Lead for the European Commission's Intelligent Cities Challenge. His experience spans tourism, cities, resilience and sustainable investment, with a particular focus on turning policy and funding opportunities into practical, investment-ready projects.

Mark Scicluna Bartoli – Head of Product Development, Bank of Valletta (BOV) | Malta

Experienced banking executive specialising in EU funding, innovative financing and sustainable investment. Previously served with Malta Enterprise and the European Commission, supporting business growth and access to finance.

18:30 | CLOSE OF ACTION LAB

MED READY — The Forum discussions will help identify priority actions, institutional responsibilities and possible Malta pilot initiatives for hotel readiness, public safety and destination resilience.