

VISION 2050

GRC GOZO PERSPECTIVES

DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION



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- The demographic transition in all its dimensions and increasing presence of migrant workers, which is deemed vital for continued economic growth, needs to be considered in what GRC is proposing in its vision for Gozo.
- There is also a new development resulting from the provision of social housing in Gozo that could have an impact on Gozo social and population fabric.

CONNECTIVITY

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CONNECTIVITY

- In a medium to long-term horizon, GRC advocates increased efficiency and adequate infrastructures at Mgarr harbour. Specifically, GRC recommends a technical and holistic assessment as to how the port facilities at Mgarr could be extended in view of the increasing number of passengers and commerce between Malta and Gozo.
- In the short to medium term, authorities should also look at an additional port facility in Gozo with adequate infrastructure and services to facilitate the movement of cargo and passengers, and in the case of an accident at Mgarr harbour.
- Improved marina facilities at Mgarr harbour are also strongly recommended.

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PRESERVING GOZO'S HERITAGE

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PRESERVING GOZO'S HERITAGE

- GRC proposes stakeholders' agreement on what constitutes Gozo's cultural heritage as a first step towards preserving Gozo's assets.
- This is also intended to build on Gozo's unique characteristics and ensure that Gozo remains a destination of choice.

WELFARE
IN GOZO

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WELFARE IN GOZO

- Equally important is the safeguarding and strengthening of Gozo's welfare and sense of community of its villages. It is vitally important that values and norms that distinguish Gozo remain in the long-run.
- As has been stated, the Vision 2050 is not just about economic development. The economy is closely integrated with social development and the 'social' plays a key role in any economic activity.

PLANNING POLICY

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PLANNING POLICY

- GRC proposes a re-think over a medium-term horizon of planning policies with the aim of developing a Gozo-specific policy on development while allowing for new construction.
- What Gozo needs is balanced spatial planning, land use and building decision-making that respects the island's core values, fulfils the island's sustainable tourism potential, addresses current infrastructural gaps and future needs.

BUILDING CERTIFICATION

- We also need to be bold and recommend some form of certification such as the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) which is a widely recognised environmental assessment and certification scheme.
- Such a method of certification, which could be introduced as a pilot project for Gozo, serves the purpose of safeguarding Gozo's environment and achieving sustainability and carbon neutrality at the same time.

DIVERSIFYING GOZO'S ECONOMY

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DIVERSIFYING GOZO'S ECONOMY

- GRC insists that the Gozo Innovation hub which provides resources, support and opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship by way of physical space that brings together researchers, creators, and innovators to nurture ideas into industry-changing products and services, needs to respond with a greater degree of flexibility over a short-term horizon in providing physical space to businesses in Gozo.

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INNOVATION AT THE WORKPLACE & PRODUCTIVITY

- Thus far, no formal initiatives in this area have been undertaken by Government, and GRC is of the view that a pilot project be conducted in Gozo in a medium-term time horizon. Innovation in the workplace refers to introducing new ideas, methods, products, or services to improve organisational performance and achieve competitive advantage.

ACHIEVING CARBON NEUTRALITY

- GRC proposes the introduction of carbon credits or carbon offsets for Gozo businesses over a medium-term horizon. This proposal would complement what GRDA is proposing in its Climate Neutrality Plan.
- Carbon credits would allow businesses to achieve carbon neutrality by compensating for emissions that cannot be reduced through internal reduction actions.
- As part of the process to achieve carbon neutrality, we propose the development of a sustainability index specific for Gozo in a medium-term horizon.

NEW AGRICULTURE METHODS & BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

- As we face increasing challenges related to food security and climate change, innovative solutions are needed. Vertical farming is one such solution. This technique does not depend on land to grow crops and takes up less space due to stacking crops in vertical rows. This is ideally suited for Gozo but requires a strategic approach over a medium and long-term horizon.
- Another proposed technique, also over a medium to long-term horizon, is underground agriculture which is also a solution to extreme temperatures.
- Yet another promising solution is sustainable sea-based agriculture. This revolutionary idea combines modern agricultural practices with the natural resources of the ocean, enabling agri-businesses to grow food in an efficient and environmentally friendly manner.

COHESION POLICY

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RELEVANCE OF 'OTHER' ECONOMIC SECTORS

- Sectors, other than construction and tourism, can play a key role in achieving the Vision's economic sustainability goals. Hence, the 'other' sectors mentioned in this report need to be incentivised through existing and possibly more Gozo-targeted support services provided by Malta Enterprise and Indis over the medium to long-term.
- These services must include schemes for Gozo-based businesses that support skills development of workers with the aim of enhancing productivity of enterprises.

EDUCATION

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EDUCATION

- GRC advocates additional programmes in Gozo including ones run jointly with the University of Malta that are currently not offered in Malta and mainly for foreign students. Additionally, GRC insists for greater synergy across educational institutions based in Gozo, particularly ITS and MCAST.
- GRC also believes there is scope for holding international conferences at UoM Campus in Gozo at its unfinished new wing.



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