



GOZO REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Vision Document for the Gozo Regional Development Authority

JANUARY 2021

Contents

4	Opening Note by the Minister for Gozo
5	Introduction by GRDA Chairman
6	Foreword by the Chief Executive Officer
7	Introduction and Background
11	Functions of the Authority
18	Organisational Structure
20	Operations and Conduct of Affairs
22	Value Added
24	Examples of Potential GRDA Guided Measures
26	Appendix

Opening Note by the Minister for Gozo

It is a great pleasure to introduce the Gozo Regional Development Authority (GRDA) Vision Document, which outlines its mission and core values. This document also presents its remit and priorities, which I am sure the Authority is determined to achieve to position itself as a leading player in the development of Gozo.

The creation of the GRDA is intended to strengthen Gozo's institutional framework in order to evolve Gozo's regional economic and social development into a distinct and sustainable one. The GRDA will have its own distinct personality and will have power not only on consultative matters but also to implement, regulate and enforce action.

With extensive Legislative powers and fully focused on policy coordination, oversight and where need be execution, the GRDA has the potential to anticipate and mitigate effects emanating from national policies that could lead to unintended outcomes on the region, and also to elevate the specific needs and issues faced by the Gozo region to a new dimension on the national agenda. A core responsibility of the GRDA is to ensure that priority is given to Gozo when designing national strategies and policies, particularly those which have a direct effect on the island.

The GRDA is therefore expected to play a central role in introducing a regional perspective to every national discussion, coming forward with robust and solid proposals and make sure decisions are implemented in an effective and efficient manner. I am sure this will greatly benefit the operation of the Ministry for Gozo with the Authority proving itself to be a fundamental institution in the sustainable development of Gozo.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Authority's Chairman Mr. Michael Grech, Members of the Board, and its CEO for their dedication, commitment and hard work. I strongly believe that, together, we can achieve our vision for the long-term benefit of Gozo.



CLINT CAMILLERI

Minister For Gozo

Introduction by GRDA Chairman

In September 2020, the Gozo Regional Development Authority (GRDA) was officially launched, after the approval of the Act, enacting this institution, in Parliament in 2019. This was an important milestone in the history of the island of Gozo.

The new Authority will have a wide remit, since it will have to cover various aspects which have a direct bearing on the Island of Gozo. Apart from economic development, the Authority will also be covering other areas of interest and importance for the island, including, the social, cultural, environmental, and ecological aspects. The scope of the GRDA will be both of a consultative and of a regulatory nature. It will also be playing an important role in the policy formulation scenario concerning our Island, setting the pace and the targets of what Gozo wants to achieve in the years to come. For this reason, the Authority will be formulating a Regional Development Strategy for Gozo, following extensive consultations with all interested parties.

We Gozitans know very well the challenges that our island is facing and the difficulties it has in balancing its economic progress with the protection of the environment. It is my belief that the right equilibrium can be reached.

For many years, various Gozitan organisations have been highlighting that Gozo does not need to replicate everything that was being done on the main Island of Malta, and that Gozo needs specific policies targeting the issues and problems it faces. We need to be different. Gozo must build on its strengths. The Island needs to become a destination of excellence, where it is the quality and not the quantity that matters. We must work towards making living and working in Gozo attractive enough to keep our youths here, and to attract back those that in the past decided to seek better opportunities elsewhere.

To reach this scope, the GRDA will in the coming months organise meetings with Gozitan entities and NGO's to listen to their views and proposals. It is not an easy task to reach a consensus on the way forward because of the different viewpoints on how to reach our common goals. However, I sincerely believe that since all these Gozitan entities truly have the well being of the island and its inhabitants at heart, we can reach this goal.

The Authority will also be in close contact with those Government Ministries, Public Sector entities, and National Regulatory Authorities whose decisions will have a direct impact on the development of Gozo. The GRDA will act as a guardian to the residents of Gozo so that the common good of the island of Gozo and of Malta in general, is safeguarded. It is for this reason that the GRDA, backed by the provisions of the law, will be working to have a material impact on the quality of living of those residing in Gozo. This is consistent with what the Prime Minister, Dr. Robert Abela, stated during a cabinet meeting held in Gozo late 2020, "whoever thinks that this authority is going to be an institution without any teeth, is grossly mistaken".

Together with the commitment of my Board of Directors, the help of the Minister for Gozo and the autonomy granted to us by the law, I am sure that over a defined period of time, we will be reaching our goals. Nonetheless, we cannot procrastinate any further. We need to act now! My hope is that this vision document will clarify what the Authority will be setting to achieve in the years to come.



MICHAEL GRECH

GRDA Chairman

Foreword by the Chief Executive Officer

Gozo holds a very distinct nature in terms of the environment, economy, culture and lifestyle. Over the years Gozo has managed to retain much of its distinctive features and characteristics. This uniqueness could be the key for Gozo's long-term economic development. Those striving to keep living standards on the island of Gozo as high as possible should be very critical of any irreversible development that would make Gozo less distinct.

Of course, it is not an easy task to attain strong economic growth without creating unintended externalities. Mass tourism concentrated in the summer months and urban excessive development are just two examples of potentially undesirable impact of economic development on Gozo. It is therefore critical that all efforts are made so that new policy initiatives are only pursued if they bring long-term benefits that can be sustained and social and environmental costs largely mitigated. The Gozo Regional Development Authority will up the game in the use of evidence-based policy decisions not least through and increased use of qualitative considerations to back the quantitative measures.

It is a matter of fact that challenges, some of which are very complex, will remain due to geographical insularity and the sheer size of the island. However, the Authority has the potential to play a critical role in ensuring that the Government, social partners and economic groups make the right choices in the endless web of possibilities that exist for 'development' to manifest itself.

The Gozo Regional Development Authority is of course a new entity, starting its operations only in September of 2020. It must prove itself with hard work and tangible results. With determination it must win over the doubters. With strong values it must remain forward looking.

The GRDA Vision Document is a first step. It aims to explain to interested parties the Authority's priorities and objectives, and provide a glance at how it intends to achieve them. It aims to explain that the role of the GRDA could be two-pronged. Firstly, it could be practical in facilitating the execution of projects and initiatives stemming from national policy. Secondly, and probably more importantly so, the entity that would work towards ensuring that the 'development' of the region remains true to the long-term sustainable needs of Gozo, its inhabitants and all those that have Gozo's interest at heart.



MARIO BORG

GRDA CEO

Introduction and Background

What is the GRDA?

The Gozo Regional Development Authority (hereafter referred to as the Authority or GRDA) is an autonomous authority being set up through the Gozo Regional Development Act XVIII of 2019 (hereafter referred to as the ACT) CAP 600¹. An Authority is one of the highest local institutional set-ups, given it is established, recognised and given its powers separately through an Act in the Laws of Malta.

The Act gives the Authority its own distinct personality and gives power to the Authority not only on consultative matters but also to implement, regulate and enforce action.

The Authority will have both a consultative and regulatory function, with its initial aim being that of drawing up a Regional Development Strategy for Gozo (RDS) and seeing its implementation. The GRDA was officially launched in September 2020.

The Regional Development Strategy will be central to the activities of the GRDA and will act as the roadmap for any further initiatives that will be undertaken with respect to Gozo. The strategy will be launched in 2021 following consultations within government, with the private sector, constituted bodies, non-governmental organisations and the general public. It will look at the needs and ambitions of Gozo and propose a medium-to-long term socio-economic vision and plan which is realistic and implementable.

Through its two main roles, the GRDA will be a further step towards optimising Gozo's point of views during any national policy discussion, making sure that Gozitan interests are taken into account and that any policies, projects or action plans that potentially can impact the affairs of Gozo take into account its specific characteristics and realities.

The GRDA goes far beyond being a forum for discussions; the Act provides it with the necessary powers, within the parameters of the law, to drive policy and implement related actions. Moreover, the Authority will focus on all sectors and niches in society, by bringing together all Gozitan stakeholders, making sure that everyone is heard and that the implementation is streamlined across all sectors.

The Authority will have the power to delegate and where necessary implement directly, whilst still working hand in hand with the Ministry. The GRDA will also inform the MGOZ with the overall sentiment in the Gozitan community in terms of policies, challenges and issues as they arise, and will make sure that all the actions adopted will be in line with the overarching direction and long-term goals outlined in the Regional Development Strategy (RDS).

The Authority will have both a consultative and regulatory function, with its initial aim being that of drawing up a Regional Development Strategy for Gozo (RDS) and seeing its implementation.

¹ List of Act Articles and what they cover can be found in the Appendix. The Act was passed through a Bill in Parliament in June 2019. A public consultation process was undertaken between September-October 2018.

Why is the GRDA needed?

For the last few years, the Island of Gozo experienced rapid economic growth spurred mainly by tourist arrivals, infrastructural projects and real estate. This marked inflow of investment and increased activity resulted in more opportunities and financial rewards but also brought with it social change. An ageing population, increased participation of women in the labour market, and higher expectations at both ends of the skills spectrum changed the composition of the local society. The rather rapid pace of change also led to increased pressure on the social fabric and as well as contrasting priorities for the use of space.

Gozo holds a rather distinct nature marked mainly by its regionality. Over the years Gozo has managed to retain its rural areas and urban features, its craftsmanship, a strong voluntary sector, a strong voluntary sector, as well as other authentic characteristics.

What must be avoided is the application of the 'one-size-fits-all' policies to Gozo as these can lead to inadequate, unreasonable or ineffective outcomes.

Such an approach leads to specific issues faced by Gozo not being factored within national policies.

The GRDA must play a central role in introducing a regional perspective to every national discussion, coming forward with robust and solid proposals and make sure decisions are implemented in an effective and efficient manner. This will result in an outcome that will tackle the necessities and issues that the Island is facing while safeguarding Gozo's heritage.

The GRDA will also help in enhancing further the Gozitan human capital pool, by strengthening the education and skills sectors whilst also creating the necessary business ecosystem to develop work opportunities to match such skills and knowledge. Within this scenario, the GRDA will have an important role to promote initiatives that create job opportunities in Gozo.

Indeed, the Authority will serve as a catalyst to unleash further the untapped potential of the island, so as to bring greater economic value and investment in Gozo and enable greater contribution of the island to the overall Maltese economy. The Authority will also have the role of ensuring that the strengthening of the Gozitan economy does not come at the cost of undermining any social or environmental aspects. All actions and policies taken on board will be firmly founded on the need of developing the island sustainably. This will ensure that both the current Gozitan population as well as future generations can enjoy a strong economy without the need to sacrifice unnecessarily their land, traditions and/or heritage.



The Authority's mission, vision and values

MISSION

Formulate and Streamline Regional Policies and help in the implementation of such policies to ensure Sustainable Development

The mission of the GRDA is to strengthen Gozo's voice amongst policy makers and other governmental bodies, so as to ensure that policies and actions drawn up and projects proposed are adequate for the specific nature of the Gozitan ecosystem.

By making sure that Gozo's perspective is featured in policy making, the GRDA will ensure that Gozo specific issues are tackled and that strengths are capitalised, therefore developing the island in a sustainable manner.

VISION

Drawing up, implementing and enforcing the Regional Development Strategy for Gozo, so as to have a long-term, effective, and efficient way forward to develop Gozo in a holistic and sustainable manner.

The GRDA will make sure that its mission is attained by carrying out its consultative as well as legislative functions, backed by the strength of the Law. Through these two roles, the Authority will draw up and implement the Regional Development Strategy for the island, which will act as a long-term holistic plan, directing authorities as to where Gozo needs to sustainably grow to reach its full potential for the benefit of both this generation and the ones still to come.

The GRDA will make sure that the Regional Development Strategy features the opinions and viewpoints of all relevant shareholders, both in terms of strengths as well as concerns for the island. Through such consultation, an overall long-term effective strategy will be drawn up, identifying the

way forward for Gozo in one integrated plan that covers all sectors. This will make sure that there is no fragmentation between sectors and that all the players are moving towards one unique goal, within the same set parameters. This Strategy will act as a guidance for all other regional and national policies in terms of what outcomes are to be achieved.

This long-term holistic roadmap for Gozo will ensure that all other sectorial and regional policies drawn up will be in line and consistent, rather than fragmented. Hence, through timely and effective implementation of the Strategy, the GRDA will make sure that all policies set out will lead to sustainable growth for Gozo.

GOVERNING VALUES



GOZO CENTRIC



SUSTAINABILITY



REPRESENTATIVENESS



LONG-TERM FOCUS

The Authority will operate on a set of guiding principles which will act as the foundations of all decisions and actions carried out by the GRDA.

GOZO CENTRIC

The GRDA will be working specifically towards attaining the best results for Gozo and its people. Gozo's needs and development, from short- to medium- and long-term, will be the guiding force behind the Authority, whereby all policies and actions proposed will be analysed through this lens. It is for this reason that the GRDA will be taking ownership and will champion the Regional Impact Assessment Studies (RIAS), whenever a policy, strategy or project will have an impact on Gozo. By highlighting the specific features of the island, the GRDA will be able to safeguard its uniqueness and see to its most pressing needs.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Closely tied to the long-termism value, the development policies to be proposed and the actions supported by the GRDA will all be firmly focused on sustainability. As specified, Gozo has managed to retain much of its urban and rural landscapes; hence, any development to be carried out will need to ensure that it is done sustainably so as not to lose the unique character of the island. Indeed, much of these unique characteristics are the island's "value added", such as quieter areas, more countryside, tight knit communities, and the core village characteristics. Over-development will hamper such features, which could mean that in the future they will not be there to be enjoyed by future generations – citizens and society, tourists and businesses. It is therefore of utmost importance that all policies should be developed with a long-term view in mind, making sure that social, environmental and economic pillars are all kept in balance.

REPRESENTATIVENESS

Another founding value is that of representativeness and the common good. The GRDA will aim at making sure that all stakeholders, groups and individuals will be closer to where policy making takes place.

Their contribution will be encouraged and channelled through formal and permanent structures to optimise social dialogue. Only in this way will the Authority be truly representative of the entire Gozitan community. This is already being fostered through the composition of a diverse Board, with members representing different sectors of society. This will ensure that policies put forward are not in any way biased to any one particular group of society, but rather all policies will be set up to seek the common good. All policy proposals will be evidence-based, as a result of studies and consultation processes; hence, they will represent the horizontal and cross-sectional interest of Gozo and not any individualistic interests.

LONG-TERM FOCUS

While some actions will inevitably focus on the short-term and projects which have a high implementation priority in the immediate, the autonomous nature of the Authority will also enable it to design and implement longer-term policies. This means that plans will not be targeted towards quick wins and short-term planning, but rather, feature more effective and longer-term solutions. We feel that this is what Gozo urgently needs to safeguard its unique characteristics.

While falling under the delegation powers of the Minister for Gozo, the Authority's operational set-up will ensure continuity to plans and projects, allowing the GRDA to propose projects with longer timeframes. In this spirit, the Authority will be able to develop a Regional Development Strategy which targets the current as well as long-term issues of Gozo, ensuring that the island is looked at holistically.

Functions of the Authority

What will the Authority be doing?

The functions of the authority can be classified under two major categories - the **consultative arm, and the implementing and/or legislative arm.**

Its consultative arm will have a number of roles. Firstly, the GRDA will be reaching out, when required (e.g. project/strategy consultations) to all relevant stakeholders in Gozo, so as to gather their aspirations and concerns and ensure that policies or other decisions being discussed and being taken at both a national and regional level, will take into account these local viewpoints and priorities. This will encourage policy formulation based on regionality, rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach. Secondly, the GRDA will also conduct research on specific topics and themes which impact Gozo, and will subsequently publish such research. This will not only increase awareness with regards to Gozo's specific and unique features, but it will also better inform policy makers on actions to be taken and policies to be implemented. This might include research carried out

periodically, as well as ad hoc studies on specific issues. Moreover, the GRDA will be able to research and observe best practices of other European counterparts. By consulting with other regional agencies at an EU level, the GRDA will be able to draw upon other foreign success stories and adapt them to Gozo. Finally, the consultation processes will provide the Authority with the necessary data with regards to various socio-economic dimensions of the island, which will help to draw up specific socio-economic models to be used in modelling the impacts of regional policies in a more accurate and realistic manner. Additionally, backed up by the power of the Act, the Authority will have a legislative arm, allowing it to enact and implement decisions, through close collaboration with other governmental departments.

A high-level overview of the roles and tasks of the GRDA are illustrated in the following **Figure 1**, which shows a flow chart of the GRDA's functions. Such tasks are further explained in **Box 1**, being a direct extract of the functions of the GRDA as set out in the Act.

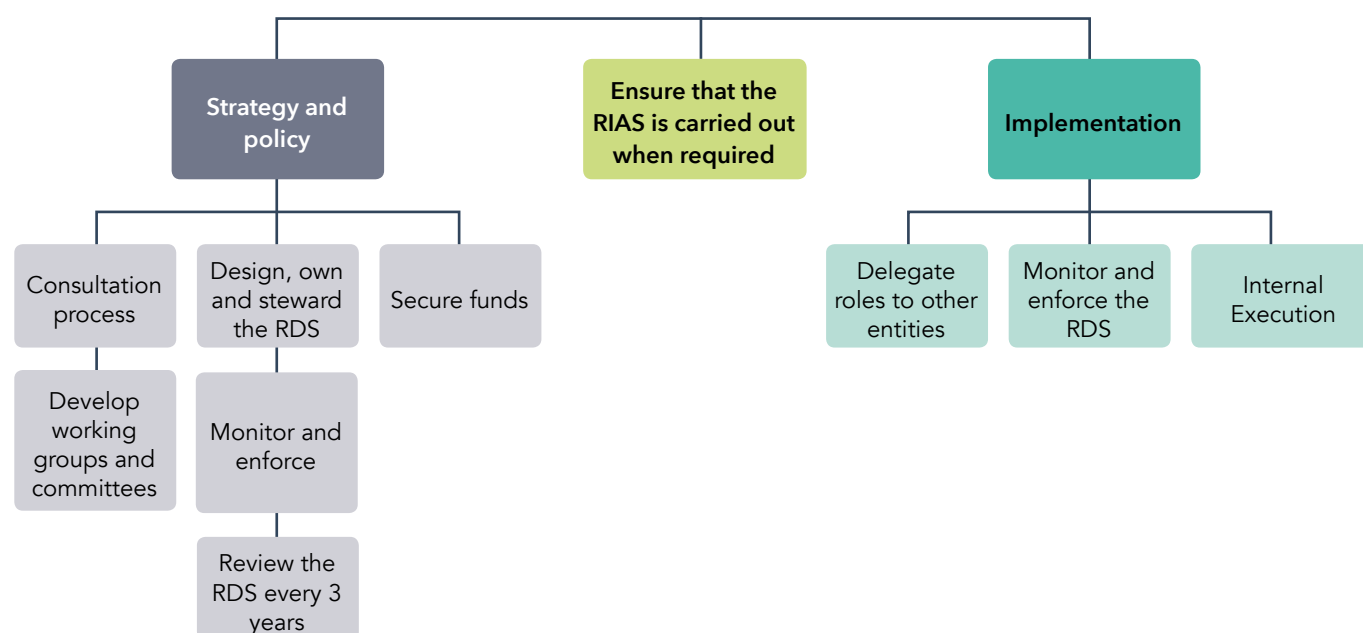


Figure 1: Roles and tasks of the GRDA

The functions of the Authority shall be:

(a) to consult with the Government, the private sector, constituted bodies and non-governmental organisations, and private citizens in connection with any work which it intends to carry out with regard to the design of a Regional Development Strategy for Gozo, subsequent to which a report relating to such consultation process is to be presented to the Minister [for Gozo] for approval, with or without amendments, or otherwise;

(b) to give its recommendations regarding the setting up of the Standing Committee on Gozo Affairs and regarding discussions which are to be suggested to the Committee once this is set up;

(c) to own and steward the implementation of the Regional Development Strategy for Gozo once this is approved by the Minister for Gozo;

(d) to draw up performance agreements [Schedule I of the Act] with government departments or entities under the responsibility of the Ministry for Gozo which are assigned responsibility for the implementation of measures and actions identified in the regional development strategy for Gozo;

(e) establish a Working Committee, as well as sub-committees, as it may deem appropriate, with government entities in order to achieve an ongoing functional relationship with such government entities and to ensure that any decisions required for the implementation of the regional development strategy for Gozo are taken without undue delay.

(f) to ensure that a Regional Impact Assessment, as established in Schedule II of the Act, is carried out when government ministries intend presenting to Cabinet -

- (i) a national strategy;
- (ii) a national policy;
- (iii) a national action plan;
- (iv) major new projects or services; and
- (v) regulatory and legislative provisions,

which affects or affect, as the case may be, Gozo in order to achieve an improved joined-up national strategy and policy design, planning and implementation with the regional development strategy for Gozo;

(g) to monitor the implementation process of the actions and measures under the regional development strategy for Gozo and take actions within parameters of responsibility assigned or recommend action to the Minister for Gozo to ensure smooth implementation of such measures and actions;

(h) to carry out surveillance as to how measures and actions under the regional development strategy for Gozo are being implemented and how they are performing once implemented;

(i) to carry out enforcement actions, where such authority is provided by the Minister for Gozo under regulations made in accordance with article 43 to secure and ensure the effective performance of measures and actions under the Regional Development Strategy for Gozo;

(j) to propose to the Minister for Gozo policy matters with regard to the design and implementation of the Regional Development Strategy for Gozo, and in particular to request the Government, through the Minister for Gozo, to ring-fence certain central funds to be directed towards Gozo;

(k) to submit to the Minister for Gozo a monthly formal report on the implementation of actions and measures under the Regional Development Strategy for Gozo;

(l) to formally review the Regional Development Strategy for Gozo every three years, which review is to be placed by the Ministry for Gozo on the Table of the House of Representatives once this is approved by the Minister for Gozo; and

(m) to perform such other functions as may from time to time be assigned to it by the Minister for Gozo within the parameters of the provisions of this Act.

Box 1: Functions of the GRDA as set out by Article 8 of the Act

The GRDA will carry out the functions outlined above through a two-pronged approach. Firstly, internally using its own resources where the Authority will carry out some of the tasks and roles itself. Additionally, where an existing entity is better positioned to fulfil such roles and carrying out such tasks, the GRDA will be able to delegate some of these

roles to such entities (e.g. MGOZ departments or units). The GRDA will also propose policies that need to be endorsed and executed by other national competent entities. In such instances, coordination and cooperation with such entities will be fundamental. This is illustrated in **Figure 2** below.

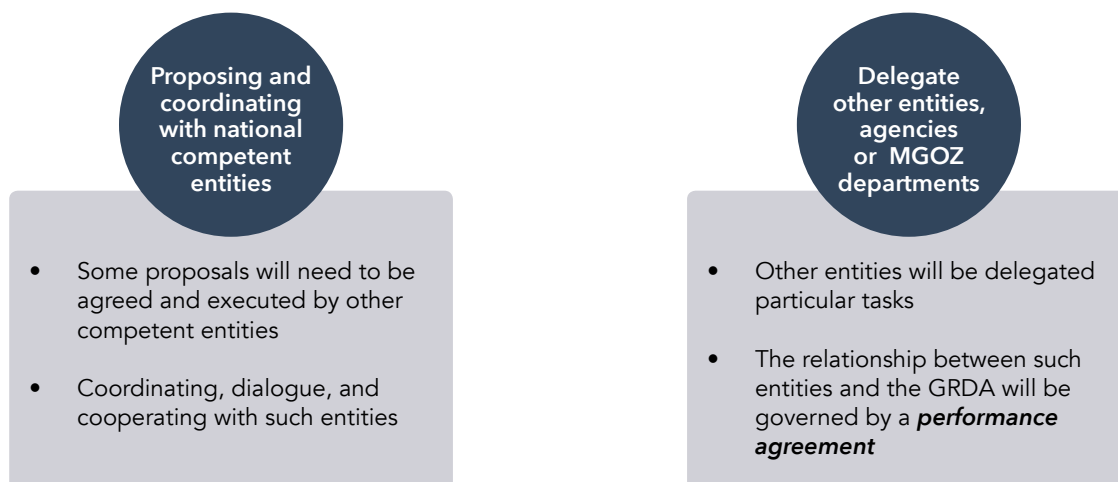


Figure 2: Delegating and coordinating functions



To manage the collaboration with other external entities, the GRDA will be drawing a number of Performance Agreements (Schedule 1 of the Act) which will govern such relationships and make sure that roles and responsibilities are well defined.

The Performance Agreements should include 5 elements, namely:

1. An outline of the actions and measures under the Regional Development Strategy for Gozo delegated to bodies entrusted with their implementation, be it a governmental department and/or another entity within MGOZ.
2. The responsibilities, relationships and accountability parameters between the GRDA, being the 'purchaser' of the implementation service and the Government department and, or entity within the MGOZ as the 'supplier' of the implementation service.
3. The planning, reporting and control framework established between the GRDA and the implementing entity, to ensure accountability.
4. The budget management framework for the specified action and, or measure established between the GRDA and the implementing entity.
5. Key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets.

These agreements are needed for a variety of reasons:

- a. Firstly, they clearly outline which entity will be responsible of which task. In this way, the GRDA can make sure that all tasks and roles are delegated or carried out by its own staff, hence, ensuring that all necessary actions are being taken. This will help avoid instances of duplication of efforts or instances whereby a task remains unassigned.
- b. Secondly, they ensure accountability in terms of delegation of tasks, whereby the body entrusted with the task will have specific time frames and budgets within which it must operate, thereby avoiding inefficiencies and unnecessary delays.
- c. The performance agreements also help in achieving greater transparency in terms of actions taken, as the delegated entity will need to report on their doings and the results achieved.
- d. The KPIs will also help in the monitoring of the activities carried out by the 'sellers' of the services and hence, make sure that adequate work is being performed.
- e. Through such agreements, the GRDA will ensure good quality of work, in a timely and resource efficient manner.

What is a Regional Impact Assessment Study?

Another important function is that of ensuring that a Regional Impact Assessment Studies (RIAS) (indicative outline presented in Schedule II of the Act) is carried out whenever a policy, strategy, action plan or regulation of major development is drawn up and will influence Gozo.

The purpose of such a Regional Impact Assessment studies is to make sure that Gozo's most important economic, social and environmental characteristics are taken into account in any national strategy, policy design and planning.

It will also ensure that the impacts of the proposed policies or actions are analysed in line with the Regional Development Strategy for Gozo, and hence falls in line with the long-term vision of the island. The RIAS will also help in incorporating Gozo in the national strategies and plans.

Figure 3 is a high-level summary of the various steps which lead to the carrying out of an RIAS and its components. This is followed by a narrative explaining further each step in more detail.

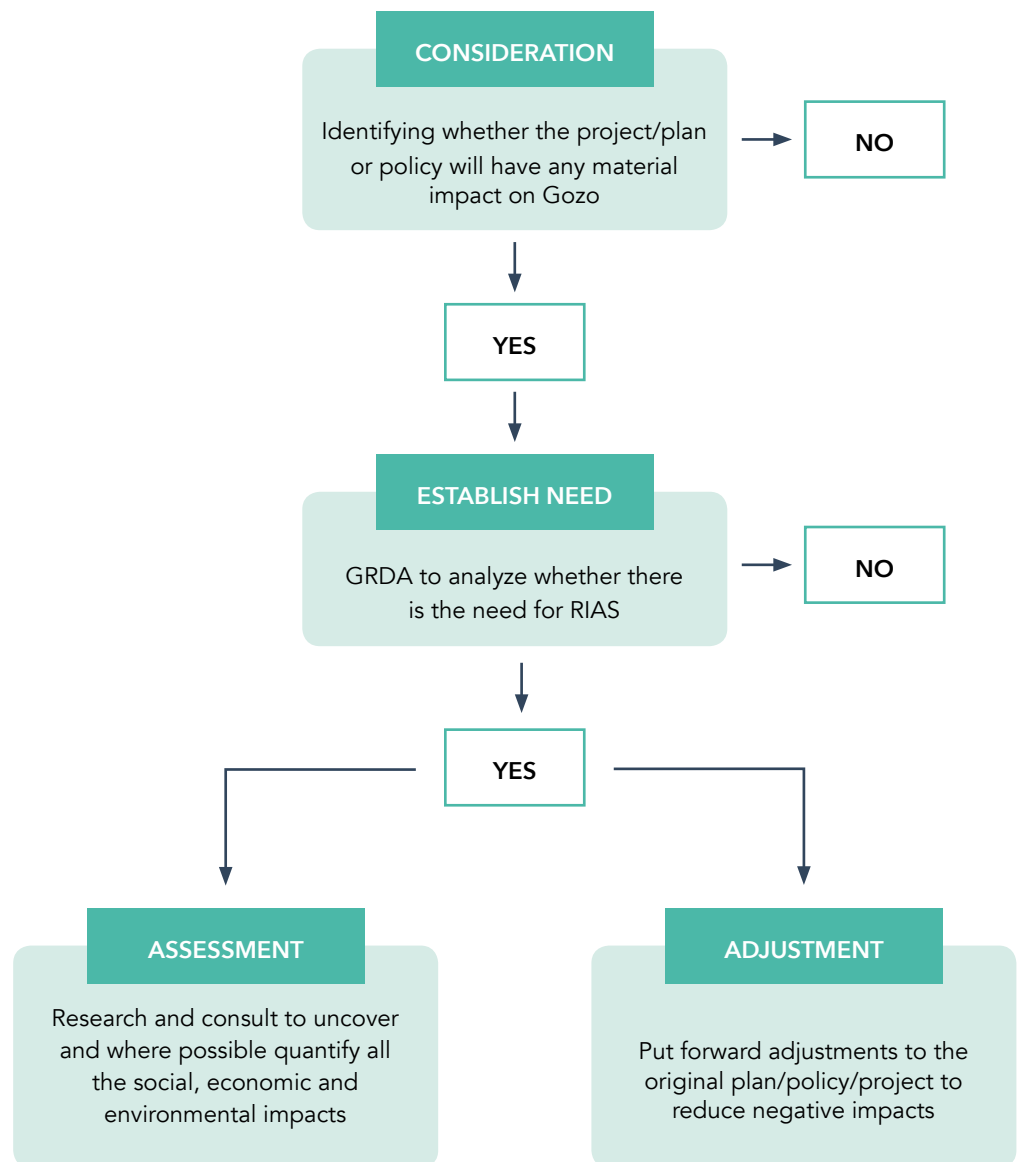


Figure 3: Steps towards the development of an RIAS

A RIAS is to be carried out whenever a Ministry, department, authority, agency or any other government entity undertakes any of the initiatives referred to in point (f) in Box 1. The Permanent Secretary or (Executive) Chairperson of the entity involved will be responsible of ensuring that the RIAS is carried out and will advise the GRDA of this. The GRDA will remain available to assist such entities when they carry out such studies (e.g. through consultations).

Indeed, the RIAS can be seen as a joint study between the GRDA and the responsible government entity. This cooperation and inter-ministerial coordination helps in bringing more synergies to Gozo and ensures that policies are overarching and holistic in nature, and not compartmentalised or siloed. In this way, policies will truly take into account Gozo's distinct regional, social, and environmental characteristics.



The RIAS will need to show that any proposal being put forward has had the appropriate consultation and research in relation to any potential impact on Gozo. Three central aspects in the RIAS should be highlighted as shown in the **Table 1** below.

In such a study both the positive and negative impacts on the Island will need to be considered. As far as possible, the assessment should include a quantitative element through

research analysis, modelling, surveys and/or specifically commissioned research, amongst others.

The impacts assessed should cover the economic, social and environmental aspects. **Table 2** below offers an indicative list of possible indicators which could be assessed whilst carrying out the RIAS. This list is by no means exhaustive and could be augmented as the assessment is carried out.

Consideration	Whether the proposal has an impact on Gozo
Assessment	The significance of the impact on Gozo
Adjustment	How the proposal is adjusted to ensure that Gozo's needs are addressed in so far as it is possible

Table 1: Aspects central to the RIAS, as featured in Act Schedule II

Factor	Checklist of Considerations to be Assessed
ECONOMIC	For existing enterprise and industry
	Employment
	Business or capital investment
	Disposable income
	Cost of business
	Attracting business and capital to Gozo
	Infrastructure
SOCIAL	Effect on population numbers and demographics profile
	Access to education
	Access to healthcare
	Poverty alleviation
	Housing
	Impact on commuting between Gozo and Malta
	Impact on culture and heritage
	Impact on marginal groups
	Local government facilities and services
	Central government facilities and services
ENVIRONMENT	Urban environment
	Rural environment
	Waste management
	Climate change (mitigation and adaptation)
	Transportation
	Marine, maritime and land resources

Table 2: Factors & Considerations to be assessed when preparing the Regional Impact Study - as featured in Act Schedule II



Through the carrying out of the RIAS, the entity putting forward any proposal would need to consult with stakeholders in Gozo. This will give the opportunity for Gozitan economic operators and social partners to be consulted before any changes affecting them are carried out, also allowing for greater sharing of knowledge and expertise directly from the people who will be impacted by the said measures or policies. The GRDA will assist and manage such consultation processes, given its wide reach in terms of stakeholders. It is vital to point out that such processes will have to be carried out before the policy formulation or the project development and not at fait accompli, to ensure that the final proposal is truly a reflection of the requirements of Gozo.

The amount of detail to be included in the RIAS should be equivalent to the complexity of the proposal under consideration. The size and complexity of the policy, strategy or development, as well as the level of sensitivity which comes with such a proposal, will impact the level of assessment required.

In the case where the study indicates negative impacts from the proposed action, the RIAS will have to include strategies which will help in addressing such impacts. These could include:

- i. avoidance strategies, which would require the altering of the proposal so that the negative impacts do not occur in the first place;
- ii. minimisation strategies, which would require the modification of the proposal so that the negative impacts are reduced in terms of their severity;
- iii. mitigation measures which would help in finding ways to alleviate or offset the impact of such negative effects;
- iv. enhancement strategies which would require the adding on of a new positive feature to the proposal to offset the negatives.

Upon finalisation, the RIAS will have to be signed off by the responsible Ministry as well as the GRDA. It will have to include the main conclusions of the study as well as recommendations with regards to which parts of the proposal can be accepted and which parts cannot. It is vital that the RIAS is attached to the proposal of the policy upon publication of such strategy, policy or other action document.

Organisational structure

How will the GRDA be structured?

The GRDA will operate as a distinct legal entity and will be able to acquire and dispose of assets and carry out functions independently. It is free to appoint its officers and employees and establish its own terms and conditions of employment, enter into contracts, acquire and sell property in relation to its functions as well as lend or borrow money, amongst others.

The Minister of Gozo, as provided in the Act, will have the powers to delegate functions to the Authority. This will allow the Authority to target particular issues of relevance affecting public interest, ensuring flexibility to focus on concerns and issues of the Gozitan community as these arise, whilst still operating within the precincts of the Act. The Authority will periodically report back to the Minister in terms of activities and financial status, as prescribed in the law.

The Minister appoints the Board of the Authority, which is itself then responsible for carrying out the functions as set out in the law. The Board will be composed of the Chairperson and a number of other board members (minimum of four other members and a maximum of six, with one acting as Deputy Chairperson).

The CEO will be responsible for overseeing the practical implementation and the carrying out of the functions of the Authority as set out by the Act. This will be done through five specialised units.

- 1 **The Legal and Compliance unit** will be set up to serve the Authority in all its legal requirements. It will help safeguard the authority's legal interests and assist project management and implementation by monitoring of performance agreements.
- 2 **The Research and Policy Development unit** will serve the Authority to encourage, engage and publish research on regional policy; evaluate policy measure; proposed by other regional entities; propose policy measures; and carry out its own RIAS whilst stewarding the studies of other entities. This unit will make sure that all policy recommendations are evidence-based backed up by concrete and reliable research.
- 3 **The Project Management and Implementation unit** will take ownership of projects and programmes, either directly or through delegation, and make sure they are well implemented. Moreover, this unit will also be in charge of monitoring the progress of projects and programs through the agreed performance agreement, KPIs, budgets and timetables.
- 4 **The External Affairs unit** will manage the social dialogue and communications with external stakeholders and entities. Its role will be to constantly engage with the general public, entities and coordinate consultation processes, working groups and panels, so as to make sure that all relevant entities are being considered and consulted. It will also reach out to other regional entities outside of Malta and open channels with a view to transfer knowledge and best practices.
- 5 **The Operations unit** will deal with the day-to-day administration and operations of the Authority, namely the procurement aspects, finance and accounts, human resources and talent as well as exploring options and possibilities of sources of revenues, including EU funding.



The GRDA will also have three committees which will be appointed by the Board of Directors.

- 1. **The Risk Committee** will be entrusted with assisting the board in its oversight of risk, identifying potential elements of risk and helping the board identify which degree of risk is acceptable or otherwise.
- 2. **The Ethics Committee**, guided by the Ethics framework, will make sure that all actions and operations by all members of the Authority will be in line with pre-specified good ethical standards. This committee will be responsible of communicating such standards across all levels of the Authority as well as monitor compliance. The committee will also be responsible responsible for reporting non-compliance instances and make sure that these are followed up as required.

- 3. **The Audit Committee** will be set up to analyse the operations of the various units and the other committees within the organisation and assure the Board of the effectiveness and compliance of all staff members and units. The Audit Committee will ensure the operations are being carried out as they should be, in the most effective and efficient way and if any anomalies are discovered these are reported to the Board immediately to be rectified at the earliest. This committee will ensure the good governance of the Authority.

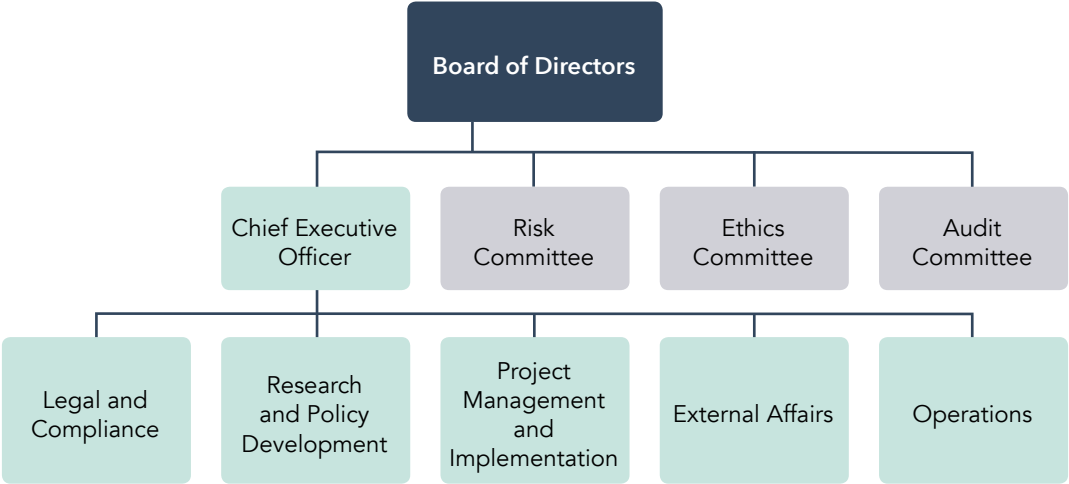


Figure 5: Organisational Structure of GRDA

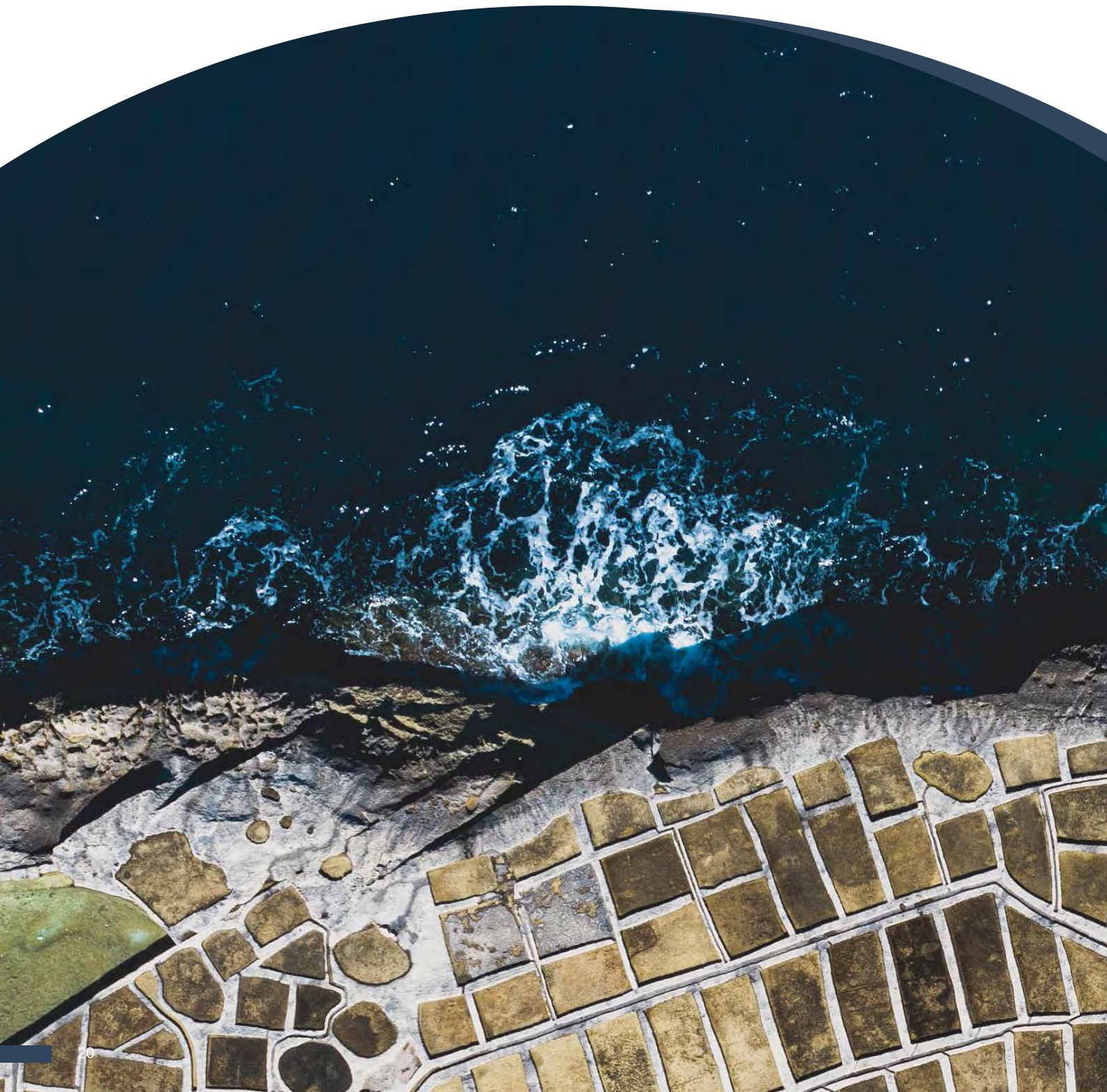


Operations and Conduct of Affairs

How will the Authority operate?

The Board and the CEO shall present the Minister a proposed **three-year corporate plan**, outlining their strategic objectives and how they plan to reach them within the indicated timeframes. This will include the plan for programme management and overseeing of the implementation of the Regional Development Strategy for Gozo, as well as financial plans and budgets.

The Authority will also set a number of transparent and realistic Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which will be used during the strategic review to understand whether the objectives are being reached or otherwise. This will ensure the GRDA has defined targets towards which to work.



A **strategic review** of the operations will be carried out every five years. The process will entail analysing the Authority's performance against the predefined KPIs, whilst analysing the efficacy and effectiveness in implementation.

In terms of **finances**, the Authority will have the power to conduct expenditures which are required to perform its functions. Whilst being allocated a periodic sum of funds from the Consolidated Fund by government, the GRDA will also have the right to levy fees, rates and other payments prescribed by the Act in relation to its functions, thereby generating its own revenue and operating in a more independent and sustainable manner. Such revenue will be collected with the main aim of reinvesting in the Island through the implementation of projects which are beneficial to Gozo. In the case where extra revenue is generated on a periodic basis, the Authority, in liaison with the Ministry for Finance, will create a reserve fund for future use.

Moreover, given approval from the Minister for Gozo and the Minister for Finance, the Authority will also be able to raise funds or borrow money from government in order to fulfil its duties and functions.

Every financial year, the Authority will prepare estimates of the income and expenditure anticipated for the following financial year. This will ensure the adequate budgeting of the operations and the sustainable running of the Authority. Moreover, proper accounts and financial records will be kept throughout the operations of the Authority to ensure the preparation of a statement of accounts. These will then be audited for full transparency of operations and examined by the Auditor General.

Moreover, the Act also lays out a number of other provisions which are still yet to come into force. Firstly, once the Authority starts its operations, the government and/or Ministry might transfer assets which are currently under their possession to the Authority. Such assets could include any property and undertakings which are used to carry out the functions outlined above. These might include movable and immovable assets, rights and privileges. This will ensure that the GRDA is well equipped to carry out its functions at its full potential. These assets might be used to derive income to the same Authority. The Authority might also take the government's place in any transitory provisions, such as in legal proceedings related to assets which will eventually fall under the Authority's possession.

Also, backed by the power vested in the Authority through the Act, **the Minister will be able to authorize the Authority to carry out enforcement duties in pursuance of its functions, and make sure that any policies or regulations put in place are adhered to.** In the case that any appeals arise from the Authority's decisions, an Administrative Review Tribunal shall be the body to hear such appeal.

Value Added

What should the Public expect from the GRDA?

The GRDA is a newly established Authority and a first in Malta to have an overarching regional dimension. The GRDA has great ambition in being of central importance to the sustainable development of Gozo with the aim of enhancing the opportunities of the present and future generations. It will fill the current lacuna in the policy arena and will steer policies, strategies and overall development.

The GRDA, given its role as an Authority, will be able to position itself at the centre of all key players, consulting with all relevant entities to make sure that all opinions and ideas are collected and compiled into one main strategy, the Regional Development Strategy for Gozo.

This will provide a holistic, long-term vision of where we see Gozo in the future, in an attempt to remain relevant and become more attractive to tourists, businesses and investors alike, whilst still safeguarding the quality of life of the local community.

The GRDA will be setting up a number of **stakeholders working groups**, centred around a number of themes, so as to better understand the needs, strengths and opportunities of various sectors of the Gozitan community. Similarly, the Authority will create specific task force groups, set up specifically to target particular issues identified and discuss and portray solutions to such problems, such as challenges with regards to education, job creation, planning and tourism, amongst others.

The GRDA will also support other authorities and governmental entities in creating the adequate ecosystem for Gozo to become a test bed for specific novel areas such as in the fields of medical tourism and health, digital, the



environment, renewable energy and mobility. Given its small size Gozo would act as a perfect space for piloting such ideas that can have wider regional, national, and global applications.

Apart from developing the appropriate environment for businesses to develop and thrive in Gozo, the GRDA will also work to **promote** the island as an ideal destination for both local and international investors. Through specific campaigns, presence in trade conferences, as well as collaborations with existing national authorities responsible for promoting Malta, the GRDA will be able to market Gozo in international markets, attracting new business ventures and FDI to Gozo directly.

The above steps of consulting with stakeholders, creating working groups and collaborating with other agencies will all enable the Authority to come up with an amalgamated vision, reflective of all of society's needs. This will be innovative, in that the GRDA will be one of the first

entities which aims to bring all stakeholders together in a communitarian push to create a better Gozo. A Gozo which is not framed as a dependent region on the wider national economic system, but rather as a distinct and valuable contributor, with its unique features.



Examples of potential GRDA guided measures

The following two examples are indicative of what the Authority could eventually provide to the Gozitan community. These two examples refer to: i) a policy and ii) a project which the GRDA could bring forward, illustrating the variety of services it can offer and objectives to be

attained. It is important to emphasise that these examples are only being used to illustrate better what the Authority could possibly achieve and to highlight the power it has to implement the RDS.

EXAMPLE

1

FISCAL INCENTIVES FOR SPECIFIC PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT AND SALE

Gozo is very unique in its characteristics, both natural and man-made. The latter includes the architectural style and features used in its local dwellings and houses.

Within the current development trends in the Maltese islands, Gozo runs the risk of over-development, with new developments which might disregard the context in which they are being introduced in. Such new developments could lead to the loss of the architectural heritage, such as the traditional balconies and internal courtyards, just to mention a few.

These features are major attractions the island offers to its visitors; hence, their loss would translate not only in a loss of heritage but also in a loss in the offerings to tourists. Therefore, in order to make sure that such unique characteristics continue to feature and to encourage the introduction of additional features such as greening, the GRDA might look at the possibilities of proposing incentives to anyone taking on development projects which fall within a set of predefined guidelines and which respect the specific features of the Gozitan context.

Prior to proposing such incentives, the GRDA could consult with all relevant stakeholders, including the Planning Authority, il-Kamra tal-Periti, the Malta Developers' Association as well as the Gozo Regional Committee, amongst others. Through such a consultation process and hand in hand with the MGOZ, the Authority will be able to come up with a list of features which are desirable to be included in local developments, and together with the Ministry for Finance (MFIN), it will be able to develop a scheme(s) whereby developers including such features would be rewarded through specific monetary incentives.



EXAMPLE

2

CAR PARK IN VICTORIA

Parking in Victoria has been a concern for both the local population as well as the Maltese who visit Gozo regularly. With the increase in visitor numbers, increase in tourists using self-drive cars as well as the increase in cars overall, parking issues are negatively impacting the residents and businesses in the area, as people often do not find parking and thus cannot visit or have a reduced visitor experience.

The GRDA might be able to target such a challenge and push for a solution, thereby supporting both the people who live in Victoria, as well as the shop owners of the area.

Through consultation with these relevant parties, the Authority might be able to better analyse the main points of the current system, and with the support of national stakeholders such as Transport Malta (TM) as well as Infrastructure Malta, it will be able to design an adequate alternative parking area and park-and-ride system to service the increased demand, also taking into account any forecasted increases in the future.

The GRDA will have the power to not only co-design the solution, but also identify the best entity to carry out the actual development of such infrastructure and give the concessions required for such project to take place. By sub-contracting this task to a competent body, the GRDA will make sure that the new car park will be of exceptional quality and that the project time frames agreed upon will be respected. Such a relationship with the sub-contracted entity will be governed through a performance agreement, setting out each entity's responsibilities, time frames and fees agreed upon.

Finally, the Authority will delegate responsibility for managing the car park and making sure that it is well maintained over the years. Such management will be subcontracted to another competent body who will make sure that the adequate management of the car park is maintained. This could be sub-contracted to either a private entity or another public body, as the Authority might deem fit.

Hence, through the power vested in it through the Act, the GRDA will be able to provide solutions to long standing issues in the Island.



Appendix

Art 1	Preliminary
Art 2	Definitions and interpretation
Art 3 (1) - (9)	Establishment and organisational structure
Art 4 (1) - (5)	Corporate plan
Art 5	Setting Key performance indicators
Art 6 (1) - (5)	Strategic review
Art 7 (1) - (3)	Delegation from the Ministry
Art 8 (1) - (8)	Functions
Art 9 (1) - (8)	Conduct of affairs
Art 10 (1) - (2)	Relations between the Ministry and the Authority
Art 11 (1) - (3)	Legal personality and representation of the Authority
Art 12 (1) - (5)	Proceedings of the Authority
Art 13	Staff appointments
Art 14	Appointment and functions of officers and employees of the Authority.
Art 15 (1) - (2)	Detailing of public officers for duty with the Authority.
Art 16 (1) - (4)	Status of public officers detailed for duty with the Authority.
Art 17 (1) - (6)	Offer of permanent employment with the Authority to public officers detailed for duty with the Authority.
Art 18 (1) - (5)	Authority to meet expenditure out of revenue
Art 19 (1) - (2)	Power to borrow or raise capital
Art 20	Advances from government
Art 21 (1) - (5)	Borrowing from government
Art 22 (1) - (5)	Estimates of the Authority
Art 23 (1) - (2)	Expenditure to be according to approved estimates
Art 24	Publications of approved estimates
Art 25 (1) - (4)	Accounts and audit
Art 26 (1) - (3)	Deposit of revenues and payment by the Authority
Art 27 (1) - (2)	Contracts of supply or works
Art 28	Annual Report
Art 29 (1) - (2)	Transfer of Assets to the Authority
Art 30	Construction of laws
Art 31 (1) - (2)	Transitory provision
Art 32	Enforcement powers of the authority
Art 33 (1) - (4)	Disclosures of confidential information
Art 34	Administrative infringements by bodies corporate
Art 35	Prescription for offences and administrative infringements
Art 36 (1) - (2)	Administrative Review Tribunal
Art 37 (1) - (3)	Appeals from decisions of the Authority
Art 38 (1) - (2)	Decisions of the tribunal
Art 39 (1) - (4)	Procedure of the tribunal
Art 40 (1) - (2)	Status of decision pending an appeal before the Tribunal or the Court of Appeal
Art 41	Collection of information regarding appeals
Art 42	Persons deemed public officers
Art 43	Power to make regulations
Art 44	Exemption from liability
Art 45	Service of notice
Art 46 (1) - (4)	Proceedings for debt due to the Authority
Art 47 (1) - (3)	Name of the Authority not to be used in any advertisement
Schedule 1	Performance Agreement
Schedule 2	Regional Impact Assessment Study



GOZO REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Gozo Regional Development Authority,
Innovation Hub, Xewkija Gozo, Malta

Tel: 2226 4491 | **Email:** info@grda.mt

www.grda.mt