



GRDA

FEEDBACK STATEMENT



A SOCIAL VISION FOR MALTA 2035

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A social vision for Malta 2035

Feedback by the Gozo Regional Development Authority

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General Introduction with main issues prevalent in Gozo

Although it is geographically distinct from the Main Island, Gozo still shares many social and economic realities with the Malta including its high population density – albeit it is fair to say that population density is less intensive than the one prevailing on the Main Island. In fact, according to the National Statistics Office¹, Gozo has a total population of 34,563 representing 516 persons per square kilometer compared with 1,524 persons per square kilometer on the Island of Malta. Statistics also show that Gozo, has an aging population, with a higher ratio of persons aged 50 years or more (NSO Regional Statistics, 2022).¹

These two factors add pressure on the services, especially those offered by the Government with regards to social services and the provision of similar services.

These factors are additionally augmented by the changing composition of the local population. Indeed, throughout the past years there has been an increase in migrant populations residing and working on the island of Gozo (GRDA Note, 2021)². In 2010 the number of foreign workers in Gozo amounted to 357 with more than one third of these workers being from the UK and Germany. Following a decade of persistent increases, the number of foreign individuals employed in Gozo reached 3,079 by the end of 2020. The nationalities with the highest representation of workers in Gozo were the UK with 616 and Italy with 534. This was followed by Albania and Serbia with 317 and 202 workers respectively (GRDA Note, 2021)².

¹ [https://nso.gov.mt/en/publications/Publications_by_Unit/Documents/02_Regional_Statistics_\(Gozo_Office\)/2022/Regional%20Statistics%20Malta%202022%20Edition.pdf](https://nso.gov.mt/en/publications/Publications_by_Unit/Documents/02_Regional_Statistics_(Gozo_Office)/2022/Regional%20Statistics%20Malta%202022%20Edition.pdf)

² <https://grda.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Foreign-nationals-employed-in-Gozo-09.11.21.pdf>

Changing Attitudes and Behaviour

On a general level, it is plausible to state that the local community and the migrants' communities co-exist rather distinctively from each other. Instants of tension do emerge occasionally, however, until now they cannot be considered as a structural issue. However, moving forward this new reality needs to be addressed and managed carefully. If left unmanaged it risks giving rise to social tension.

Additionally, consideration must be given to a relatively recent trend where people facing social accommodation issues are being directed to Gozo. This is partly being underpinned by relatively cheaper accommodation in Gozo and by the availability of units being offered to the Housing Authority for its schemes. An unmanaged inflow, without proper consideration of the socio-economic implications risk increasing the likelihood of pressure on the social fabric and infrastructure.

Links with the Social Vision for Malta 2035 and the Gozo Regional Development Strategy

The Social Vision for Malta 2035 highlights the thematic areas regarding the social dimension, where we are and where we want to be, as a nation. It also highlights how we can reach such targets.

However, the Document does not make any specific reference to Gozo. It needs to be accepted that Gozo does face issues that differ from those prevailing at a national level. It must also be accepted that there is an opportunity to try to create (or avoid creating) a social environment more (less) conducive to well-being.

As part of its functions, the Gozo Regional Development Authority (GRDA) is working on a Regional Development Strategy for Gozo. This document will present social development as one of its eight priority areas.

Under this priority, the following goals will be listed:

- Strengthen Gozo's society and its communities' underlying social capital
- Address the needs of the elderly members and promote active ageing
- Support Gozo's youth
- Strengthen and support families
- Develop secure communities
- Eradicate social exclusion and discrimination
- Facilitate the acceptance of diversity and enable the inclusion of different ethnic and

racial minority groups

- Ensure an adequate social development infrastructure
- Develop appropriate and effective responses to housing needs

The GRDA believes that the 'Social Vision for Malta 2035' is broadly in line with the goals in the Regional Development Strategy.³

Concluding Remarks and Reference to the Regional Impact Assessment Studies

The GRDA broadly agrees with the principles listed in the Consultation Document entitled 'A Social Vision for Malta 2035'.

The GRDA continues to encourage its active involvement in the formulation of national strategies and policies so that Gozo's development is factored in the planning, assessment and implementation stages of any Government intervention that will result in a significant impact on the community of Gozo.

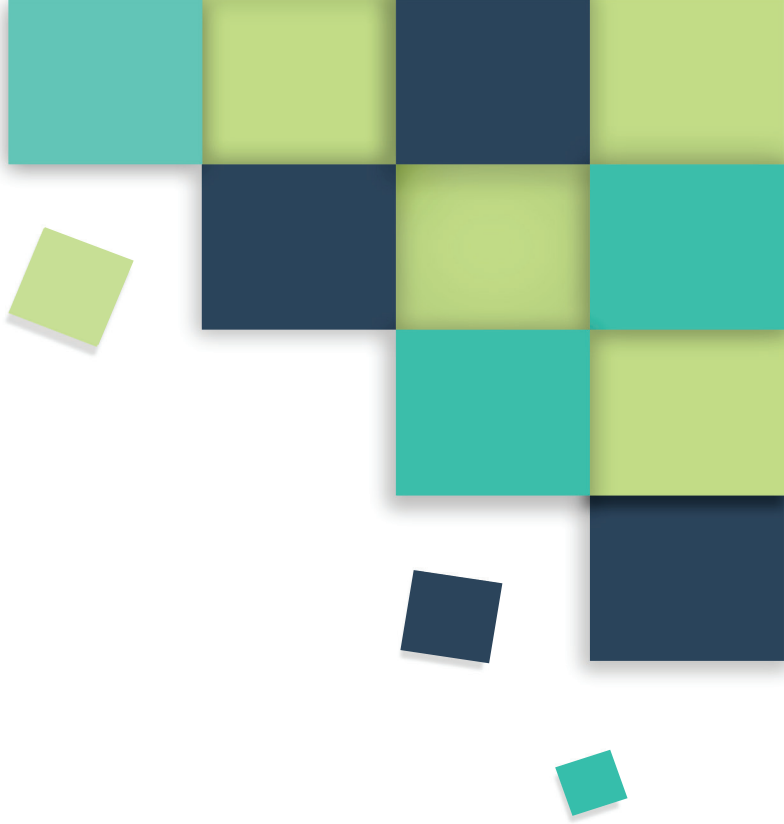
It is also pertinent to note that the GRDA has looked at this Consultation Document in view of the Regional Impact Assessment (RIA). The RIA study arises from the Gozo Regional Development Authority Act, which obliges the GRDA to ensure that a RIA study is carried out whenever a ministry, authority, agency or any other form of government entity intends presenting a proposal that would affect Gozo.⁴

In line with the established methodology⁵, the GRDA has initiated a Screening Process to determine whether an RIA study is required. From preliminary analysis, the Screening Process does not suggest that the proposed intervention will impact Gozo in a materially different manner from its impact on Malta, thus there is no requirement for a full Regional Impact Assessment Study.

³ Up to the date of issuing this feedback, the Regional Development Strategy is not yet published.

⁴ Article 8 (1)(F) and Schedule II of the GRDA Act.

⁵ https://grda.mt/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/GRDA_Regional-Impact-Assessment-System-revised_02.02.22.pdf



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