



# **GRDA**

## **FEEDBACK STATEMENT**

### **STANDARDISATION OF APERTURES FOR RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS IN MALTA**

ISSUED BY THE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY

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# Standardisation of Apertures for Residential Buildings in Malta

## Feedback by the Gozo Regional Development Authority

### Background

Gozo's towns and villages have a relatively different dimension compared to Malta. These urban landscapes and the traditional streetscapes are a central feature of Gozo and are considered a cornerstone of its heritage and identity.

Buildings and dwellings in towns and villages have an impact on the perceived quality of life of communities. This was confirmed through a survey commissioned by the GRDA in 2022 indicating that the majority of Gozo residents consider overdevelopment as a concern.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, efforts should be channelled towards creating more pleasant urban areas that help improve the quality of life of residents and communities. Buildings and dwellings and how they look are central to this.

### Feedback on the Technical Document

The Gozo Regional Development Authority (GRDA) agrees with the concept for the Standardisation of Apertures for Residential Buildings in Malta due to the various related benefits, which are highlighted within the technical document.

However, the GRDA notes that other benefits of well sized apertures were not included. These include natural ventilation and natural lighting. Factoring these in will help reduce energy usage and other related consumption.

Furthermore, the GRDA, also notes that this technical document falls short of the aesthetic of Maltese and Gozitan dwellings and establishments. The GRDA does acknowledge that this might be outside the scope of both the technical document as well as outside the remit of the Building

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<sup>1</sup> GRDA Survey (2022a, February). GRDA Note. A Survey about Gozo among the Gozitan Residents. Gozo Regional Development Authority. <https://grda.mt/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Extract-2-of-3.pdf>.

and Construction Authority (BCA). However, the GRDA emphasises the importance of the aesthetic dimension and town scape for Gozo. Apertures are an integral part of how a building or dwelling looks and their design has impacts that go beyond the ownership of the buildings or dwellings.

The public consultation document for the Regional Development Strategy for Gozo 2021 – 2030, issued by the GRDA includes as a specific priority area “Gozo Spatial Planning and Sustainable Urban Development”, where various related measures which follow the topic are listed.<sup>2</sup> One such measure is “Design According to Context”. This measure ensures that Gozo’s distinctiveness is maintained, by adopting a design according to context policy. Where finishes and façades of both residential and commercial properties would be required to take fully into account the aesthetics aspect, hence also including apertures. This measure will further be supported through the provision of specific funding for the implementation of projects such as embellishment schemes, pedestrianisation programmes, provision of street furniture and other amenities.

The Standardisation of Apertures for Residential Buildings that cater for the aesthetic and ‘design according to context’ principle will not only add value to the document but will also create positive externalities to townscape across the country, not least in Gozo.

A further aspect that is linked to apertures for residential buildings is that of ‘solar rights’. We believe that there is the opportunity for the Maltese Government to start exploring the concept of solar rights and how this might be used for the benefits and better quality of living of citizens and communities.

## Regional Impact Assessment

The GRDA examined this document in view of the Regional Impact Assessment (RIA).<sup>3</sup> In line with the established methodology, the GRDA has initiated a Screening Process to determine whether a RIA study is required. From preliminary analysis, the Screening Process does not suggest that the proposed intervention requires a full Regional Impact Assessment Study.

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<sup>2</sup> Regional Development Strategy for Gozo 2021 – 2030. Public Consultation Document. Gozo Regional Development Authority. [https://grda.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/GRDA\\_Gozo-Strategy-Report\\_VH\\_WEB\\_OP2.pdf](https://grda.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/GRDA_Gozo-Strategy-Report_VH_WEB_OP2.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Regional Impact Assessment System: A Non-Technical Guide (2021). Gozo Regional Development Authority. [https://grda.mt/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/GRDA\\_Regional-Impact-Assessment-System-revised\\_02.02.22.pdf](https://grda.mt/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/GRDA_Regional-Impact-Assessment-System-revised_02.02.22.pdf).



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