



GRDA

FEEDBACK STATEMENT

NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN TO 2030

ISSUED BY THE
THE ENVIRONMENT & RESOURCES AUTHORITY

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National Biodiversity and Strategy and Action Plan to 2030

Feedback by the Gozo Regional Development Authority

Introduction

As highlighted within the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan to 2030, biodiversity needs to be safeguarded due to the ecosystem value it provides and also for its intrinsic value. The Gozo Regional Development Authority is broadly in agreement with the targets and actions in order to minimise the threats and loss of biodiversity. However, it is important, that more concrete measures will follow this strategy, in order to determine exactly how the mentioned targets will be reached.

Gozo's perspective and the Regional Development Strategy for Gozo

Over the past years, Gozo has registered a marked increase in population, which resulted in an increase in build up areas, as well as a rise in registered vehicles. This resulted in some loss of biodiversity, either directly by negatively effecting species or indirectly by damaging the habitats. The draft Regional Development Strategy for Gozo¹ focuses on various measures, under different priority areas, which support and encourage biodiversity protection. Such measures include:

- The rehabilitation of valleys, which are pristine areas, home to unique biodiversity
- The promotion of sustainable farming, even amongst the younger generations since this is essential for thriving biodiversity
- The re-introduction of Gozitan livestock species
- The preservation of the Maltese honey-bee species

¹ Regional Development Strategy for Gozo 2021 - 2030 Consultation Document. Gozo Regional Development Authority. https://grda.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/GRDA_Gozo-Strategy-Report_VH_WEB_OP2.pdf.

- Targeting waste and light pollution
- Mitigating climate change through promoting sustainable mobility and green buildings, encouraging new renewable sources of energy, as well as, promoting afforestation areas, opening green public spaces and people centred streets
- Controlling invasive species, which are of threat to local biodiversity
- Urban planning

Mitigating climate change

As highlighted, one main threat for biodiversity is climate change. Gozo was recently chosen for the EU Mission “100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030”, a fund under Horizon Europe. The aim of this mission is to have 100 climate neutral and smart cities by 2030, an ambitious target of the European Green Deal and in line with the EU’s commitment to global climate action under the Paris Agreement. Through this mission, Gozo, through the Gozo Regional Development Authority, will receive technical advice and assistance from the Mission Platform (managed by the NetZeroCities consortium), which will lead to the publication of the Climate City Contract. The Climate City Contract entails the commitments, action plan and investments in order to reach climate neutrality by 2030. Through the label of Climate Neutral and Smart City, Gozo will have an increased opportunity for funding relevant projects and participating in pilot projects related to climate neutrality. Achieving this target will be beneficial for Gozo, its inhabitants and even its biodiversity.

Conclusion

The GRDA examined this document in view of the Regional Impact Assessment² (RIA) as per Article 8 (1) (f) of the GRDA Act. 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 / strategy, requires a full Regional Impact Assessment Study.

² Regional Impact Assessment System: A Non-Technical Guideline (2021). Gozo Regional Development Authority. https://grda.mt/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/GRDA_Regional-Impact-Assessment-System-revised_02.02.22.pdf.



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