



GOZO REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

# CORPORATE PLAN

2023 - 2025

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GOZO REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

75, Republic Street, Victoria - Gozo, Malta

Tel: +356 2215 6342

[www.grda.mt](http://www.grda.mt)

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gozo Regional Development Authority (GRDA) is publishing an updated Corporate Plan covering the period 2023-2025. This is another important document that sets out the strategic objectives of the Authority together with a very clear and targeted set of strategic deliverables. As has been the practice since its inception, the GRDA has emphasised the importance of being transparent in its conduct including its plans and objectives. In fact, the Updated Corporate Plan is used as a starting point for its yearly reporting on its achievements which are published in the GRDA Annual Report. In this way, the various activities covered by this plan can be monitored in a focused and transparent manner.

The Updated Corporate Plan 2023-2025 is organized in three sections. Section 1 re-states the Authority's mission, vision, and values from which the five strategic objectives emerged. Section 2 presents a SWOT analysis through which the GRDA aims to give a proper context of its environment. Section 3, is perhaps the most important, providing details of how each of the five strategic objectives are to be achieved during the period covered by the Updated Corporate Plan.



**Mario Borg**

Chief Executive Officer

Gozo Regional Development Authority

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STRATEGIC  
OBJECTIVES

## Our Mission:

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The Authority aims to work amongst policy makers so as to ensure that policies, actions, and projects are adequate for the specific nature of the Gozitan regional characteristics.

## Our Vision:

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To formulate, streamline and help in the implementation of regional policies to ensure sustainable socioeconomic development for the island of Gozo.

## Our Values:

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**Sustainable Development:** The GRDA will promote the concept of sustainability in developing policies as it strongly believes in the critical balance between the social, environmental and economic priorities.

**Representation:** The GRDA will strive to ensure that all stakeholders, groups and individuals will be closer to where policy making, related to Gozo, takes place. Their contribution will be encouraged and channelled through formal structures that facilitate social dialogue.

**Long-term focus:** The GRDA's contribution to regional policy development is to target the long-term challenges faced by Gozo.

## Our Strategic Objectives

<b>S1</b>	Promote sustainable economic growth, employment, and living standards across the economic, social, natural, and human dimensions.
<b>S2</b>	Play a key role in the planning stages with regards the upgrading of infrastructure and improvement of accessibility to Gozo, whilst giving due priority to the region's characteristics.
<b>S3</b>	Work so that the national policy and strategies are designed and implemented in full consideration to Gozo's regional dimension and long-term viability.
<b>S4</b>	Strengthen Gozo's institutional framework to improve the planning, decision making, implementation and evaluation processes.
<b>S5</b>	Enhance 'Governance' in internal affairs to promote effective communication and overall operational excellence.



# 2

## SWOT ANALYSIS



The Gozo Regional Development Authority (GRDA) is in a constant process to evolve its strategic framework which serves as the foundation for its corporate planning. In its Corporate Plan, that is reviewed and updated periodically, the GRDA provides concrete ways on how it aims to fulfil its longer-term strategic deliverables.

As part of a wider set of initiatives aimed at keeping the organisation's strategy ambitious and relevant, the GRDA conducted a comprehensive SWOT analysis, comprising amongst other things, broad discussions with its major stakeholders.

A review of the GRDA's strengths and weaknesses was made together with an identification of several opportunities that, if availed of, shall allow the GRDA to fulfil its vision and implement its mission in a more holistic manner.

The SWOT analysis would have been incomplete without a spotlight on potential scenarios that could threaten the GRDA's leading role in supporting the region's long term economic and social development.

## Strengths

### 1.1 Strong sponsorship from the Ministry for Gozo

The GRDA was created through the full support of the Ministry of Gozo. The Ministry for Gozo continue to provide strong backing to this entity which is entrusted with a consultative role as well as with the coordination and overseeing the regional strategy.

### 1.2 Solid credibility amongst stakeholders

Since its inception in September 2020, the GRDA has strived to build close connections with non-governmental stakeholders that have specific interest in the sustainable development of Gozo. The GRDA takes an evidence based and balanced stands on various matters of economic, social and environmental nature and this conduct helped the GRDA build a good level of credibility amongst its stakeholders.

### 1.3 A comprehensive strategic framework

The role of the GRDA is wide and covers several sectors and areas of interest. Despite this, the Authority still has a clear vision and mission, backed by a detailed Corporate Plan as evidenced by this document. This helps the Authority to operate in a focused manner while respecting the wide area of interest entrusted by the Act that established the same GRDA.

## 1.4 Advanced organisational tools and techniques

Organisational tools and techniques permit an effective implementation of an established strategy. Amongst others, the GRDA has developed the Regional Impact Assessment (RIA) framework to evaluate projects of national level and determine their impact on the region. This includes tools intended on supporting governmental entities with assessing the requirements in relation to such impact evaluation.

In terms of its outreach, the GRDA has put in place several channels of communication that have already proven extremely effective in keeping an open and transparent relationship with non-governmental stakeholders.

Moreover, the Authority has succeeded in putting in place an international network of close collaborations with other regional authorities across Europe, opening an array of opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills in the area of regional policy development and implementation.

## 1.5 Supported by Government legal and financial infrastructure

Undeniably, its status within the public sector places the GRDA in an expedient position when dealing with non-governmental stakeholders and suppliers of services, with the Authority being suitably positioned to leverage on the administrative, legal and financial support infrastructure that central Government provides. Whilst operating under strict budgetary framework, the Authority and its stakeholders have the reassurances that come with being a Government entity.

# Weaknesses

## 2.1 Small size

The GRDA is a small organisation with a small number of employees. It has a budget of less than 1 million euro per year. Given it is micro-size the GRDA needs to articulate with particular precision the deployment of resources at its disposal in a concerted effort to fulfil a mandate spanning across myriad aspects that form the basis of the regional economic and social development.

Key amongst its core roles, the GRDA interacts, coordinates and negotiates aspects of policy setting and implementation with other governmental departments, entities, ministries and the public sector at large. In this context the Authority's resource base is far smaller than most of its counterparties. The limited budget precludes the GRDA from hiring more specialised staff, which exasperates the unequal playing field faced when engaging with other more specific and better resourced entities.

## 2.2 Weak mandate to enforce

The Authority has a major challenge in ensuring that the regional dimension is fully considered when national projects are designed and planned; it faces major hurdles in enforcing Regional Impact Assessments (RIA) on other government entities. Even more demanding, is the oversight of projects during implementation phases to ensure these are carried out in line with requirements established following the RIA (when carried out) or according to the requirements established at the stage of project planning.

## 2.3 Bureaucratic processes

The GRDA is duty bound to operate within the complex Government system with high dependence on other Government departments and entities. Decision making, procurement and recruitment processes can be subject to delays and bureaucratic process that can materially hamper the pace at which the Authority can extract best outcomes from opportunities presented to it.

# Opportunities

## 3.1 Strong interest in the sustainability of Gozo's development

There is widespread interest at both regional and national level with regards to Gozo's sustainability. This affirms the need to have an entity like the GRDA, to promote the regional dimension in the context of national policy. It also presents an opportunity for the GRDA to establish itself as a key player that promotes Gozo's regionality. It is an opportunity for the GRDA to serve as point of intersection between the varying, at times conflicting perspectives, of what the Gozo of tomorrow should be.

## 3.2 De-carbonisation efforts and the Climate Neutral and Smart cities mission

Carbon neutrality is gradually becoming integral to a new vision shared by a wider spectrum of the Maltese and Gozitan society. This shift presents an opportunity for the GRDA to pioneer innovative initiatives in Gozo to develop low carbon activities which will not only have a direct impact on the region but can lead to such transformation spreading to the national level.

### 3.3 International network

The concept of a regional authority that influences national policy to the long-lasting benefit of regions, is a concept that is well established across the developed world. There are several regional authorities with a wealth of distinctive knowledge; and the international network that the GRDA has been building since its inception presents an extremely valuable opportunity to learn and adopt best practices. Through its funding programmes the European Union (EU) helps regions and entities like the GRDA to successfully regenerate regions sustainably. The GRDA has an opportunity to tap into EU funding.

## Threats



### 4.1 Resistance to change and innovation

The need to devise innovative solutions to achieve sustainable development is widely acknowledged by various pockets of the Maltese and Gozitan society. However, change tends to happen very gradually. Reluctance to take the leap in adopting ambitious and innovate methods, in full appreciation that new solutions are needed to build a sustainable path towards development, will present a challenge for the Authority in fulfilling its mission.

### 4.2 Financial constraints

Whilst the GRDA has been able to operate autonomously from the Government and the Ministry for Gozo it still has limited space to rise revenue. If future budget allocations do not reflect the plans of the Authority, its potential to deliver might be compromised.

# 3

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

2022 2023 2024 2025 2026

S1

## Sustainable Economic Growth

### 1.1 Promote further regional development in economic and human resource capital

- P.1.1.1 Promote Gozitan youths entrepreneurship by supporting initiatives organised by their representatives and other stakeholders.
- P.1.1.2 Work with competent entities to explore training programmes to young self-employed that wish to develop their business.
- P.1.1.3 Launch a scholarship scheme to encourage researchers including post-graduate students to pursue research in matters related to Gozo.
- P.1.1.4 Prepare study on Gozo's employment and skills profile and assess policies that can enhance Gozitan skill set.

### 1.2 Initiate traction in the 'New Economy'

- P.1.2.1 In collaboration with competent authorities the GRDA will promote Gozo as a place conducive to remote working while making use of the digital infrastructure.
- P.1.2.2 Help guide emerging sectors in Gozo and advocate support where necessary.
- P.1.2.3 Following the publication of a document outlining the various incentives available to business operating in Gozo, the GRDA will work with the Ministry for Gozo and possibly the Gozitan business community, to discuss and assist in setting-up an online portal through which business incentives related to Gozo are compiled and updated regularly.
- P.1.2.4 In collaboration with Servizzi Ewropej f'Malta (SEM), the GRDA will organise

periodic public meetings to help keep the general community informed of opportunities related to EU funds.

### **1.3 Sustainable tourism**

- P.1.3.1 Together with competent authorities consult with local businesses in the tourism sector to further improve their quality and promote their business through digital marketing and e-management systems.
- P.1.3.2 Publish regular surveys on tourists' perspective of Gozo and their average expenditure.
- P.1.3.3 Publish short-term tourism forecast for Gozo, including number of arrivals and their expected expenditure.
- P.1.3.4 In collaboration with stakeholders, implement and communicate measures that can develop sustainable tourism in Gozo.
- P.1.3.5 Continue making the case in favour of ring-fencing eco-contributions collected in Gozo with the aim of investing such funds on the Island.

### **1.4 Pursue Social Development, promoting social equality**

- P.1.4.1 Over the last decade social and economic development had a considerable impact on the Gozitan social fabric. The GRDA will conduct studies on the socio-economic situation of non-local communities in Gozo.
- P.1.4.2 Inclusiveness of all is vital for a strong society. The GRDA will continue working with local NGOs to promote social integration.

## Infrastructure and the Ecosystem

### 2.1 Upgrading of infrastructure and accessibility

- P.2.1.1 Present a detailed concept for the Urban Upgrading of Victoria.
- P.2.1.2 Monitor the proposed regional airfield and assess its impacts on Gozo.
- P.2.1.3 Continue exploring options on the possible expansion of Mġarr harbour and an alternate route leading to the harbour.
- P.2.1.4 Prepare a study to identify a model to manage the Gozo Rural Airfield.
- P.2.1.5 Prepare a study for the provision of an airlink service.

### 2.2 Safeguard the ecology of Gozo, support rural development

- P.2.2.1 Assess the possibility of proposing the introduction of a Gozitan foodscapes market.
- P.2.2.2 With relevant stakeholders, establish and implement a long-term strategy on Gozitan foods and produce, to increase awareness and knowledge on local food and recipes along with agriculture and farming processes.
- P.2.2.3 Publish a study which analyses the agricultural sector in Gozo.
- P.2.2.4 Support ongoing discussions with various stakeholders on climate neutrality and the island of Gozo.



### 2.3 Upgrading spatial planning, sustainable urban development

- P.2.3.1 Publish a study on the energy consumption at a regional level.
- P.2.3.2 Prepare and publish guidelines on the 'Design according to context'.
- P.2.3.3 Continue working with local NGOs and national authorities to protect the urban and rural dimension of Gozo.

## The Regional Dimension at the Heart of Decision Making

### 3.1 Regional Development Strategy

- P.3.1.1 Prepare and publish a methodology to adopt an index which complements the more traditional indicators, such as per capita GDP, and factors the well-being aspect including the social and environmental dimension.
- P.3.1.2 Publish the Regional Development Strategy.

### 3.2 Regional Impact Assessment

- P.3.2.1 Communicate with various Government entities to utilise the Regional Impact Assessment tool on projects/policies pertaining to Gozo.
- P.3.2.2 Ensure that a Regional Impact Assessment is carried out when Government ministries intend to present to Cabinet a national strategy, policy or action plan, major new projects or services, regulatory or legislative provisions which affect Gozo.

### 3.3 Regional research

- P.3.3.1 Develop and publish a framework for a study on Gozo's carrying capacity.
- P.3.3.2 Produce and publish quality research papers and analysis that can help policy makers and entities take informed decisions with regards to Gozo.
- P.3.3.3 In collaboration with Oxford Economics, publish short-term economic forecasts for Gozo.

- P.3.3.4 On a yearly basis, prepare and publish a set of budget proposals for the consideration of the Government and the Ministry responsible for finance.
- P.3.3.5 Produce and publish economic indicators in relation to specific sectors in Gozo.
- P.3.3.6 Provide feedback on the different issued consultations which are relevant to the island of Gozo and its community.
- P.3.3.7 Continue promoting the regional identity of Gozo by producing podcasts and publication of an annual journal on themes pertaining to Gozo.
- P.3.3.8 Participate in various EU funded projects mainly in those related with sustainability and agriculture. Such projects entail an opportunity for Gozo to serve as a test bed, where new technologies and techniques are key, while also reaping benefits for Gozo and its community.

## Gozo's Institutional Framework

### 4.1 Implementation of the Regional Development Plan

- P.4.1.1 Prepare an annual report that gives an evaluation of the performance agreements signed with entities entrusted with delivering aspects of the strategy and input to specific projects that the GRDA would be coordinating from time to time.
- P.4.1.2 Active participation in both governmental and non-governmental fora that are responsible for matters pertaining to Gozo and its economic, social, and ecological spheres.
- P.4.1.3 Prepare an annual report on activities carried out by the GRDA directed towards the implementation of the regional strategy.

### 4.2 Establish a framework of communication

- P.4.2.1 Prepare an annual report on ministerial meetings held by the GRDA as part of its functions to ascertain the effective and expedient implementation of the Gozo Regional Development Strategy.
- P.4.2.2 Make use of the various communication channels so as to ensure an open and two-way communication at all times, both as a means for the GRDA to provide updates on progress of implementation of its strategic plan and its policy direction; and at the same time to receive the necessary input in the form of concerns, feedback proposals from key stakeholders and the community at large.

### 4.3 Promote social dialogue and cooperation

P.4.3.1 Hold regular stakeholders working groups to discuss specific themes.

P.4.3.2 Sign a number of agreements and MoU with NGOs and other organisations, including international organisations.



S5

## Governance

### 5.1 Ensuring accountability, compliance and risk mitigation

- P.5.1.1 Engage external auditors, to obtain independent assessments of the financial statements and compliance of the GRDA and publish annual report.
- P.5.1.2 Carry out an Internal Audit function to maintain a robust governance structure.
- P.5.1.3 Compile a monitoring dashboard that tracks compliance with the GRDA Act.
- P.5.1.4 Identify, analyse, and evaluate potential risks across various areas of operations and implement proactive risk management strategies.



**GOZO REGIONAL**  
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

75, Republic Street  
Victoria, VCT 1018,  
Gozo

**Tel:** +356 2215 6338 | 2215 6342

**Email:** [info@grda.mt](mailto:info@grda.mt)

**[www.grda.mt](http://www.grda.mt)**