



THE GOZO BUSINESS CHAMBER

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Press Release: The Gozo Business Chamber (GBC) publishes its Strategic and Policy Document post COVID-19

The GBC has published its post COVID-19 Strategic and Policy Document. This can be accessed through the following [link](#). This document has been forwarded to Government.

The document targets various sectors principally: (a) a clear and focused digital strategy for Gozo; (b) the financial sector; (c) a tourism strategy for the island; (d) important capital projects and major initiatives for Gozo; (e) construction and real estate; (f) the agricultural, fisheries and artisanal sectors; (g) sustainability; (h) the manufacturing, wholesale and retail sectors; and (i) the banking sector.

The document focuses on both short-term mitigating measures which are still required at this stage, and also on long-term measures which should make the Gozitan economy more sustainable. Some of the main proposals contained in the document are the following:

- Creating an eco-system of incentives specific for Gozo, for business enterprises within the wide spectrum of the digital technology sector alongside a holistic strategy for Gozo in this area.
- Formulate a packet of incentives to attract companies in the financial sector to establish themselves in Gozo. This might also include tax benefits.
- Incentivise operators in the tourism / catering sector to upgrade their product through subsidised loans and grants.
- Promote Gozo in foreign markets through digital virtual reality experiences (integrated in the www.visitgozo.com), and positive stories in the local tourism industry.
- Continue and start important capital projects for Gozo such as the new primary school in Victoria, the new hospital in Gozo, the archaeological museum, the park and ride facility at Ta' Xhajma, and the permanent link between Gozo and Malta.
- Consider the implementation of a multi-store parking facility in Victoria. This is necessary for the regeneration of the area as a hub of economic activity.
- Reduce the tax rate on the purchase of property in Gozo to 1% from the present 2% for an interim period in order to enable the market to recuperate. Development however should never come at a cost to the environment. Safeguarding Gozo's environment means that the green belts between localities are maintained, and that the urban conservation areas are protected. The Chamber is studying the situation to make specific long-term recommendations about the subject.
- Promote the local agricultural produce to encourage the consumption of local agricultural produce.
- Promote and assist local artisans to promote their products, sustain their activity and explore new business models.
- Prepare a long term plan for the agricultural sector targeted towards addressing long term issues such as land entitlements and ownership, with proactive policies to combat land fragmentation. This may also include incentives to both the tourism and the agricultural sector to create links and synergies which may be mutually beneficial to both.

Incorporated by Public Deed on 20th December 1999

- Electric vehicles of Maltese residents crossing over to Gozo are to pay a reduced fare. On the other hand Gozitan residents with electric vehicles would cross for free on Gozo channel ferries.
 - Refund on electric vehicles for Gozo residents to be raised to € 9,000 instead of the present maximum of € 7,000.
 - Replace the present leased Gozo Channel ferry with a hybrid ferry.
 - Extend the assistance being provided on the transportation costs between the two islands (re manufacturing sector) to the wholesale sector as well.
 - Provide assistance on commercial rents through a burden sharing mechanism between the landlord, the person renting the premises and the Government, based on ascertained loss of income being sustained. Despite the gradual reopening it will be difficult for various economic sectors to be profitable in the short and medium term, as is being shown at present. Such a measure is necessary to provide the required incentive to all sectors at such a crucial stage.
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