



## THE GOZO BUSINESS CHAMBER

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### **Press Release: The Gozo Business Chamber (GBC) 's reactions with respect to the announcement by Government that four offers were received with respect to the subsea tunnel project between Gozo and Malta.**

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The GBC notes with satisfaction that four offers were received with respect to the subsea tunnel project between Gozo and Malta. Despite the current economic climate this project generated considerable interest, considering also that all construction and maintenance costs would be borne by the winning bidder.

The GBC reiterates that such a project is necessary if Gozo is to continue moving forward and be an important contributor to the national economy. This project is necessary now more than ever. Though there have been many significant developments in the past years, Gozo was not in a position to participate fully in the national economy, mainly due to issues related to accessibility.

While the GBC is in favour of all forms of accessibility, the fact that the link between the two islands will be a permanent one, would ensure the required peace of mind to current potential investors and those who would like to live in Gozo permanently while working on the main island of Malta. Gozo moreover can specialise in particular segments of the economy, as accessibility between the two islands will no longer be a concern.

However, this project should not in any way impinge on Gozo's environment. As already reiterated in the past, especially in the 2019 budget proposals presented to Government, this project:

“should be accompanied by a holistic plan ensuring the sustainable development of the island of Gozo, such as for example that the green belts between localities are retained, and that the unique character of each locality is preserved. The Chamber believes that the present Outside Development Zones (ODZ) in Gozo should not be touched. Accessibility needs to be accompanied by a sustainable development approach.”

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