



THE GOZO BUSINESS CHAMBER

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Press Release: The Key Priorities for Gozo for the Next Legislature

The Gozo Business Chamber has issued a document outlining the key priorities for Gozo for the next legislature. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that Gozo now more than ever needs to diversify its economy. Its inherent structural economic problems have been significantly exposed by the pandemic showing its overreliance on sectors such as tourism, construction and real estate. While the Chamber's document is focusing on key priority areas for Gozo, this must not in any way divert the attention from important points of action on which any party in government should continue to focus, mainly strengthening the country's governance and justice system, and removing Malta from the grey list. The key priority areas being outlined by the Chamber are the following:

Accessibility

Accessibility remains key if we are to see Gozo move forward in the coming years. Strategic and priority areas in this direction include:

- The subsea tunnel between Gozo and Malta.
- A more modern and cleaner ferry to substitute the present fourth ferry operating between the two islands.
- Regulating the present fast ferry service between the two islands to ensure that the level of service is maintained.
- A Rural Airfield for Gozo.
- Ensuring that the Port of Mġarr is expanded to cater for all the types of maritime services between the two islands.
- Ensuring the adequate transport of goods through dedicated maritime links between the two islands. Other points on the main island of Malta besides Ċirkewwa should also be considered.

The Environment

One of Gozo's key priority areas should remain the environment. Gozo's natural offering is one of its key selling points. Nonetheless the rampant construction and the lack of adequate design and planning policies have severely damaged substantial parts of the island. The key priority areas outlined by the Chamber include:

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- Specific regional planning, spatial and design policies for Gozo.
- Gozo achieving carbon neutrality prior to Malta creating a strong basis for the creation of a green economy on the island through projects and initiatives which create added value to the Gozo and national economy.
- Gozo acting as a test bed for the deployment of new technologies targeted towards reducing the carbon impact on the whole nation.
- Linking effectively research with the green economy in Gozo.

Essential Infrastructural Projects for Gozo

Similarly to the discourse on the subsea tunnel, the Chamber considers that there are important infrastructural projects which are necessary for the island of Gozo to continue to move forward. These should include:

- Parking facilities in Victoria.
- The construction of the Marsalforn Breakwater.
- A new hospital for Gozo.

Digitalisation

Digitalisation should be a key enabler that should see Gozo creating economic niches which on the main island of Malta have already taken shape. The key priorities in this area should include:

- A Clear Strategy for the setting up and development of the Digital Economy in Gozo.
- A specific investment incentive package targeted towards companies in the digital sector setting up in Gozo.

Tourism

Efforts in this sector need to focus not only on marketing but also on strengthening the tourism product especially in niches which in Gozo have showed significant potential for growth. These include niches such as sustainable, walking, cultural and religious tourism. The key priorities in this area should include:

- Clear Strategy and Actions to attract foreign inbound tourism.
- Clear Actions to strengthen specific tourism niches in Gozo.

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Stqarrija għall-Istampja: Il-Prijoritajiet għall-Għawdex għall-leġiżlatura li jmiss

Il-Kamra tan-Negozju għal Għawdex ippublikat dokument li jelenka il-prijoritajiet għal Għawdex għall-leġiżlatura li jmiss. Il-pandemija tal-COVID-19 uriet li Għawdex iktar minn qatt qabel għandu bżonn jiddiversifika l-ekonomija tiegħu. Il-problemi ekonomiċi strutturali ġew murija iktar minn qatt qabel mill-pandemija, li uriet kemm l-ekonomija f'Għawdex tiddependi minn setturi bħat-turiżmu, il-kostruzzjoni u l-propjeta mmobiljari. Għalkemm id-dokument tal-Kamra jiffoka fuq il-prijoritajiet ewlenin għal Għawdex, dan ma għandu bl-ebda mod inaqqas l-attenzjoni minn dawk l-affarijiet li kull partit fil-Gvern

għandu d-dmir li jkompli jiffoka fuqhom, prinċipalment li tissaħħaħ il-governanza tal-pajjiż u s-sistema ġudizzjarja, u li Malta titneħħa mil-lista l-Griża. Il-prijoritajiet ewlenin li qed telenka l-Kamra tan-Negozju huma dawn:

L-Aċċessibiltà

L-Aċċessibiltà tibqa' element kruċjali biex aħna naraw lil Għawdex jimxi l-quddiem fis-snin li ġejjin. Għalhekk jibqgħu strateġiċi u ta' prijorita' dawn l-elementi:

- Il-mina ta' taħt il-baħar bejn Għawdex u Malta.
- Vapur iktar modern u nadif biex jisostitwixxi r-raba' vapur li qed jopera preżentament bejn iż-żewġ gżejjer.
- Jiġi rregolat s-servizz tal-*fast ferry* bejn iż-żewġ gżejjer biex jiġi assigurat livell ta' servizz adegwat.
- *Rural Airfield* f'Għawdex.
- Jiġi żgurati li l-Port tal-iMgarr jikber biex ikun jista' jakkomoda is-servizzi marittimi kollha li qed jiġu preżentament offruti minn dan il-port.
- Li jiġu żgurati iktar servizzi għat-trasport tal-merkanzija bejn iż-żewġ gżejjer. Wieħed għandu jikkunsidra wkoll punti oħrajn ta' tluq fil-gżira ta' Malta, minbarra ċ-Ċirkewwa.

L-Ambjent

Prijorita mportanti għal Għawdex għandha tibqa' l-ambjent. Dak li għandu x'joffri Għawdex bħala ambjent natural jibqa' wieħed mill-iktar affarjiet li jattiraw viżitaturi lejn il-gżira. Madankollu il-kostruzzjoni sfrenata u n-nuqqas ta' politika reġjonali fejn jidhol id-disinn u l-ippjanar wasslu għall-qerda ta' partijiet sostanzjali mill-gżira. Il-prijoritajiet li l-Kamra qed telenka hawnhekk jinkludu:

- Politika reġjonali għal Għawdex fejn jidhol l-ippjanar u d-disinn.
- Għawdex jiġi newtrali fejn jidhol l-impatt tal-karbonju, filwaqt li tinholq bażi soda għall-ħolqien tal-ekonomija l-ħadra f'Għawdex permezz ta' proġetti u inizjattivi li jikkrejaw valur miżjud kemm fl-ekonomija Għawdxija kif ukoll dik nazzjonali.
- Għawdex jiġi użat bħala *test bed* għal teknoloġiji ġodda li l-għan tagħhom ikun li jnaqqas l-impatt tal-karbonju fuq livell nazzjonali.
- Jinholqu opportunitajiet ta' riċerka fuq l-ekonomija l-ħadra f'Għawdex.

Proġetti Infrastrutturali Essenzjali għal Għawdex

Simili għall-proġett tal-mina, il-Kamra tikkunsidra li hemm proġetti nfrastrutturali importanti li huma neċesarji għal Għawdex biex dan ikompli jimxi 'il quddiem. Dawn huma:

- Faċilitajiet ta' parkeġġ fir-Rabat.
- Il-kostruzzjoni ta' *breakwater* għal Marsalforn.
- Sptar ġdid għal Għawdex.

Id-Diġitalizzazzjoni

Id-Diġitalizzazzjoni għandha tkun katalista li għandha tara biex f'Għawdex jinholqu niċeċ ekonomiċi li fil-gżira ta' Malta ġa issawru. Il-prijoritajiet għandhom jinkludu:

- Strateġija ċara biex tiġi stabbilita u żviluppata l-Ekonomija Diġitali f'Għawdex.
- Pakkett speċifiku ta' inċentivi li għandu jkun immirat lejn kumpaniji fis-settur diġitali li jkunu jridu jstabilixxu ruħhom f'Għawdex.

It-Turiżmu

L-isforzi f'dan is-settur għandhom jiffokaw mhux biss fuq ir-reklamar imma wkoll biex jissahhaħ il-prodott turistiku speċjalment f'niċeċ li wrew li Għawdex għandu potenzjal qawwi fihom, b'hat turiżmu sostenibbli, dak tal-mixi, it-turiżmu kulturali, u dak reliġjuż. Il-prijoritajiet ewlenin f'dan il-qasam għandhom jinkludu:

- Strateġija ċara u azzjonijiet biex jiġi attirat it-turiżmu barrani.
 - Azzjonijiet ċari li jsahhu niċeċ speċifiċi ta' turiżmu f'Għawdex.
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