

Għal Ghawdex Statement

Joint Statement by the Gozo eNGO's, the Business Bodies, all Fourteen Local Councils representing all Gozitan communities and the University Students Union proposing an 8-point plan to implement a change of direction for the construction and development policies in Gozo. The plan is designed to ensure that the long-term fabric of Gozitan society and the built and natural environment are respected, while promoting long-term sustainable development and prosperity of the island.

Participating entities :

- *Din L-Art Helwa Ghawdex*
- *Ghawdex*
- *Wirt Ghawdex*
- *Gozo Business Chamber*
- *Gozo Tourism Association*
- *Kunsill Reġjonali Ghawdex*
- *Gozo University Group*

1. NEW REGIONAL PLAN & POLICES FOR GOZO

Develop a new regional plan and policies specifically designed for Gozo, to preserve as an island of villages within a modern world, promoting the concept of responsible architecture, respecting the fabric of traditional village cores, village and ridge skylines and protecting the coastal environment with guaranteed access to all parts of the coast for the general public.

2. NEW & AMENDED PROPERTY FISCAL INCENTIVES

Correct the implementation of fiscal incentives on the sale and purchase of property in Gozo by :

- a) removing all fiscal incentives on sale of land and property for development into apartments
- b) retaining the existing incentives on sale and purchase of properties in UCA where the purchaser signs a guarantee to restore the property without subdivision



- c) extending the incentives in (b) above to all vernacular and postwar properties outside UCA where buyers undertake to preserve the integrity of the property, respect and not exceed the surrounding traditional village heights. Subdivision may be allowed only if it does not impact in any way the integrity of the property.

3. NEW INCENTIVE SCHEMES FOR RESTORATION OF PROPERTIES

Implement a new incentive scheme to encourage the restoration and conversion of existing large traditional properties and bring them back to life as high quality boutique hotels and guesthouses on condition that the fabric of the traditional property, the surrounding built environment and the existing traditional heights are respected and not exceeded unless it is in an area that is already heavily and irreversibly committed.

4. GOZO AS A DESIGN PRIORITY AREA

Designate Gozo as a Design priority area enforcing stricter architectural standards and use of traditional materials for all new buildings, with traditional limestone or reconstituted stone compulsory on all facades except in committed areas where more modern, but creative designs subject to careful scrutiny, can be implemented that blend in well with the surrounding environment.

5. BUFFER ZONES AROUND HISTORIC/SCHEDULED BUILDINGS

Strictly enforce a 150-metre buffer zone around historical and scheduled buildings and monuments, respecting and not exceeding the existing height of the historical and scheduled buildings, eliminating all existing loopholes and prohibiting the use of summary applications but only allowing full development applications to be submitted in such areas.

6. SUSPENSION OF KEY REGULATIONS & EXTENDING UCA BOUNDARIES

Until such time as a new regional plan for Gozo is finalised and agreed with all stakeholders implement the following measures to arrest the present assault on Gozo:

- a. Suspension of DC2015 Annex 2 regulations (with some exceptions in areas that are already committed in an irreversible manner including areas of Xlendi and Marsalforn).



- b. Extend UCA boundaries to the maximum possible, subject to the characteristics of each village with strict imposition of UCA rules in all towns and villages.
- c. Moratorium on new ODZ applications with exceptions for **genuine** agricultural use and strict application of the Rural Policy and Design Guidelines (RDG) prohibiting summary applications for any warehouses/sheep/cattle farms and stables, and only allowing full development applications in exceptional circumstances under strict conditions and monitoring of long-term use, with no subsequent sale of the property, or applications for change of use, allowed for a 20-year period following approval.

7. MANDATORY PARKING FACILITIES FOR NEW APARTMENT BLOCKS

Render illegal the development and sales of new apartment blocks without adequate parking facilities and make it compulsory to purchase at least one parking space with each unit (where available).

8. ACTIVATE STRICT PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

This plan should not in any way preclude the strict enforcement of current policies/rules and regulations, which if properly enforced by the Planning Authority would already lead to better development within the region.

