

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE GOZO BUSINESS CHAMBER
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QualityCoast BasiQ Bronze Award To the Island Region of Gozo

On the 13th May 2011, Mr Manuel Tabone, Director Tourism & Economic Development in the Ministry for Gozo (MoG), and Mr Joe Grech, President of the Gozo Business Chamber (GBC) attended the 3rd International QualityCoast Award Ceremony and Workshop at the medieval castle of Kouklia (Cyprus), near the Rock of Aphrodite.

Their presence at this Award-Giving-Ceremony was the end result of the GBC's full cooperation with Dr. Marlyse Cremers and Mr Foppe Seekles (International QualityCoast representatives - EUCC Malta), to nominate Gozo for the 2011 QualityCoast BasiQ Bronze Award. The GBC had also the backing of Mr M. Tabone.

The Hon. Prof Johan Vande Lanotte, Minister of State of Belgium and President of the Coastal & Marine Union delivered his welcome address during the opening of the Award Ceremony. This was followed by presentations about sustainable tourism by high profile speakers, including that by Mr Albert Salman, DG, Coastal & Marine Union – EUCC.

The highlight of the event was the announcement and the presentation of the QualityCoast Award 2011 to the Southern European Top 50 Tourist destinations. Gozo was classified as first of the top 10 tourist destinations. A QualityCoast workshop



followed the presentation. Representatives from all the regional authorities exchanged experiences on sustainable tourism. A video about Gozo was also shown.

Gozo was an all-round beneficiary, when it participated in and was honoured by the presentation of the QualityCoast BasiQ Bronze Award. Gozo now forms part of the world-wide network of coastal communities, who share the same views on sustainable development, on nature and its biodiversity, on cultural heritage and on preserving the Gozitan identity. Discussions are on to hold next year's Award Ceremony in Gozo. This Award gives GOZO the right to display the QualityCoast flag/banner and other material throughout its territory.

Furthermore, Gozo will be marketed, through the media, as one of the most attractive international coastal destinations. Gozo will also be featured in the widely circulated QualityCoast Awards 2011 brochure and website, which will surely attract the attention of the largest Dutch tour operator, TUI Nederland. In fact, Ms Elise Allart, Sustainable Development Coordinator of TUI Travel Western Europe, stated 'we (TUI) warmly recommend the QualityCoast certification to all our customers'.

Finally, this award will increase the 'green profile' of Gozo, which fits perfectly in the MoG's regional policy of turning Gozo into an Ecological Island by the year 2010.



Gozo Business Chamber

Business Survey for the period January – March 2011

In the first quarter of 2011 the businesses in Gozo registered a drop in business when compared to the same period last year.

This results from a survey carried out by the Gozo Business Chamber among all sectors of the Gozo business community covering sectors in the wholesale and retail, manufacturing, restaurants and hotels, financial and other professional services spread out all over Gozo.

The respondents indicated that the number of persons employed during this period remained the same in 77% of the businesses, increased in 13% and decreased in 10%.

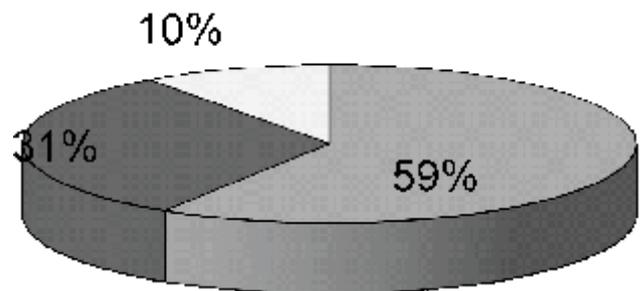
According to the replies received, the larger part of the business was carried out with Gozitan customers (65%), followed by Maltese visitors (18%) and tourists (16%).

With regards to business return, 59% said that they were operating on a break even situation, while 31% said that they were operating at a profit and 10% operating at a loss.

The survey asked for reasons that the businessmen thought could help their enterprise during the period under review. Most of them mentioned the good services of transport between Malta and Gozo, followed by the activities organised by local councils and others during the weekends, while a small number mentioned the parking places availability and good road signage.

On the other hand, the factors which the businessmen thought might have hindered their enterprise and resulted in less turnover than last year's period were, in order of preference, high water and electricity bills, lack of parking spaces and traffic congested roads, high prices, the attitude of traffic wardens, useless waiting time for visitors to cross over from Malta to Gozo, approval for applications for EU funds, and suitable employees.

Prospects for the coming months indicate that 56% of businesses think that demand for their



Break even situation	59%
Operating at a profit	31%
Operating at a loss	10%

services is to remain the same while 33% think that it is to decrease and only 11% think that there will be a greater demand.

Regarding the number of employees, 89% of enterprises are thinking that they will keep the same number while 11% think that their workforce will decrease. None indicated that their workforce will increase.

The survey also asked whether respondents are in agreement or not with the idea of a permanent link between Gozo and Malta. 81% consider this as a high priority measure and are in agreement while 19% are against.

While 7% of respondents said that they have applied for and/or participated in a project connected with Eco Gozo, 93% said that they did not. 72% said that they have not benefited from EU funds.

Suggestions made by respondents to help businesses to operate from Gozo included the importance of keeping young workers in Gozo; help in costs of inter-island transport; less beauracracy; more routes by Air Malta; building a permanent link; less taxes; control of the cost of living; factual projects instead of talk only; cheap night ferry-crossings; control of mobile kiosks; just competition; MEPA permits; and real help and support to the crafts village. Other suggestions also included the need to bring more tourists to Gozo.

Note to Survey respondents

Some respondents have replied that they are not members of the Gozo Business Chamber because they have not been approached. If you are interested to become a member of the Gozo Business Chamber please contact the office on 2155 0305, morning only.

GOZO-MALTA LINK

by Mr. George Galea
Member of the Permanent Link Committee

A lot has been said and written about a permanent link between Gozo and Malta, be it an undersea tunnel, a bridge or a causeway. Discussions on TV talk shows, letters in the newspapers, radio programs, printed opinions by politicians and aspiring politicians, etc. have appeared in the media. It seems however, except for the Gozo Business Chamber, nobody is addressing the potential benefits and disadvantages of such a link. I say except for the GBC because they have made their opinion very clear that with such a link business will grow in Gozo. At least GBC has put its money where its mouth is, formed a committee, which by the way is made up of members and NON members, organized meetings with Government, made the necessary research and contact with experts from abroad and is mobilizing the population in Gozo, for or against, to voice its opinion.

Parliamentary Secretary Chris Said is the one politician that did not stay on the fence but rather has taken the bull by the horn and is working very hard to see that a well informed decision is taken in as short a time as possible. Since this past February, on the initiative of both Dr. Said and Mr. Joseph Borg of GBC, a number of meetings have taken place with Government, Gozo Local Councils and the general public to get the ball rolling. In mid June we had a 2 day visit by Profs. Eivind Grø, President of the Norwegian Tunnelling Society. During a very hectic 2 days, Profs Grov had meetings with Government, the Gozo Business Chamber and also addressed a very well attended public conference on the technical aspects of tunnel building. Although there are some who say 'Gozo, where time stood still', it seems this project has taken a life of its own and is gaining momentum due mainly to interested Gozitans. The progress so far is impressive; not bad work in such a short time.



What are the next steps? I believe it is time we start itemizing the potential benefits of such a link. We need specialists in Education, Health, Environment and Business to come forward with opinions of how Malta and Gozo can benefit from a permanent link. I am no expert, but to mention just two points, if today we have a bed shortage at Mater Dei, I do not think it will be too long before we will also have a 'desk' shortage at University. On both counts Gozo can help alleviate these problems with better use of the Gozo General Hospital and Malta University, Gozo Centre.

There are some who are contributing to the discussion on all media and it seems they are more concerned of who said what first and who should get credit etc. This is amateurish and if these opinion makers wish to contribute they should do so by being constructive in their ideas, be it for or against. By the way, for those who are interested, the idea of a permanent link goes back to the early sixties!

The Gozo Malta Permanent Link committee set up within the GBC has continued with its work during the past months. More information has been gathered about tunnels built below the sea bottom. The committee also organised a meeting with the Regional council of the Gozo Mayors and was in the forefront during the visit to Gozo by Prof. Eiving Grov who held a meeting with the committee and another meeting with the general public.

The committee is still receiving contributions from interested persons expressing their views on the utility, impact, and / or feasibility of a permanent link. These views will be used to help the Chamber in formulating a balanced opinion on the matter.

INSULEUR

The President and the CEO of the Gozo Business Chamber have attended the INSULEUR Board of Directors' Meeting and also the General Assembly held on 27 May 2011 at the offices of the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels.

Both meetings were attended by representatives of the various island Chambers of Commerce and were held under the Chairmanship of Juan Gual, President of INSULEUR.

Two of the topics which came up for discussion concerned the regional policy and the future of territorial cohesion and the revision of the guidelines on state aid for regional purposes. The meeting was informed of progress registered so far about the above and what action still needed to be taken by INSULEUR.

Another topic concerned the financing of the Chambers of Commerce. Due to different methods used by different countries, the Assembly decided to pass a motion which is to be transmitted to Eurochambres and the European Commission with the aim of finding a solution agreeable to all countries within the EU.

Various projects like InnoNauTICs, Isle-PACT, Road of the Islands and EUROISLANDS / ESPON were discussed and members informed about progress.

The Assembly also approved the appointment of Mr. Flavio Burlizzi and Ms Silvia Delgado as, respectively, the Italian and the Spanish members of the technical committee of INSULEUR.



Meeting with Mr Alan Camilleri Chairman of Malta Enterprise

The Council has met Mr Alan Camilleri, Chairman of Malta Enterprise, during a meeting held at the Gozo Business Chamber.

Among the topics discussed were the state of the Xewkija Industrial Estate and the new management fees as well as the planned garages for small enterprise. Those present had the opportunity to discuss foreign investment in Gozo and ways of better communication for essential information. The GBC made several suggestions especially in connection with the area where the roads still have to be constructed.



BOV signs three year support agreement with the Gozo Business Chamber

Bank of Valletta is being recognized as the Official Bank of the Gozo Business Chamber for the forthcoming three years following the signing of a three year support agreement between the Bank and the Chamber.

The agreement was signed by Michael Galea, Chief Officer Operations at Bank of Valletta and Joe Grech, President of the Gozo Business Chamber who was accompanied by Chamber CEO Joseph G Grech.

“We are delighted to extend our support to the Gozo Business Chamber for a further three years, consolidating a strong partnership that commenced over ten years ago,” said Mr. Galea upon signing the agreement. He highlighted BOV's strong presence in Gozo and the importance that the Bank gives towards supporting sustainable development within the Gozitan region.

“Our continued support also shows that the Bank, as a key player within the Gozitan economy, supports the efforts of the Gozo Business Chamber directed at enhancing commercial opportunities in Gozo and addressing various issues particularly those associated with the regionality and insularity of Gozo”, said Mr. Galea.

Mr Grech thanked Bank of Valletta for supporting the efforts of the Gozo Business Chamber. “The Gozo Business Chamber has always found the Bank ready to support its initiatives and we are grateful towards Bank of Valletta for supporting us financially for the past eleven years,” said Mr. Grech. “The new agreement that we have signed today is of encouragement to the Council of the Gozo Business Chamber in its efforts to work unstintingly towards supporting the Business Community in Gozo,” added Mr. Grech.

The Gozo Business Chamber was founded in 1999 to promote the common interests of business operators in Gozo.



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André Grech
 Managing Director
 MIRACHEM (marketing) Ltd.

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Members' Participation in Fairs

Members of the Gozo Business Chamber had the opportunity to take part in local and overseas Fairs over the past months. These included Ecotur 2011, which was held in Abruzzo, Italy; the Lejlet Lapsi – Notte Gozitana, held in Gozo; and the Malta Fair, held at Ta' Qali in Malta.

The Ecotur 2011 was the 21st edition of the fair and this year's objective was "ECOTUR – nature Tourist Workshop" held on 6-8 May at the Exhibition Centre of the Chieti Chamber of Commerce in Abruzzo, Italy. Participants were from several countries and each displayed his/her country's agri-products. Gozo was promoted through Ta' Mena Agri Limited with their agritourism complex in the Marsalforn Valley. The stand promoted Gozo in general with its various tourist attractions that include culture, the environment, scuba diving and agritourism.

Important contacts were made with tour operators, typical food producers and the general public. Many visitors did not know that Gozo exists and very good promotion was made since now there are direct flights from Bari to Malta. The result of our participation is very encouraging because a typical food producer from Chieti visited Gozo two weeks ago and concrete plans are being made to set up a joint venture to export our typical products to various European countries. Furthermore a tour operator will be sending his first group of divers in September.



Furthermore several individuals showed a lot of interest to visit Gozo and hopefully we will welcome them in the near future.

For the Lejlet Lapsi – Notte Gozitana, the participants were from the Crafts sector. The products presented were in the large majority hand produced and included products made from recycled glass and other material, lace and related articles, traditional food and wines as well as costume jewellery.

Once again, members of the Gozo Business Chamber had the opportunity to make use of space in the Ministry for Gozo's pavilion at the Malta Trade Fair.

Fourteen members took this opportunity to take up a stand and exhibit their products throughout the duration of the Fair. Products included Gozo food and wine, woodwork, arts and crafts as well as home decorations and accessories.

The Chamber would like to express its thanks to the Minister for Gozo, Hon. Giovanna Debono, for offering the space to our members who, otherwise would have found it beyond their means to take part. Special thanks also go to Mr Manuel Tabone, Director, Tourism and Economic Development, at the

Ministry for Gozo and to member Mr George Cassar as the GBC's representative at the Fair.

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ICT Gozo Malta Project Progresses

by David Pace

Our ICT Gozo Malta (ICTGM) Project continues to make progress. The contract for phase-1 funding of the project between the Ministry for Gozo and the GBC was signed in June 2011.

Following a public call for applications we are pleased to have appointed a Project Manager and Assistant to manage the Project. David Pace, an ICT Professional for over 20 years in the UK, will coordinate the project on a day-to-day basis. He is joined by Euchar Sultana, an ICT Graduate, on a part-time basis. Current development of the portal includes an ICT skills-register and a series of online surveys, which are important to the success of the project, and creation of new opportunities and jobs in Gozo.

We encourage all ICT Students and Graduates in ICT working in Malta and Gozo to register on the website when it is completed, which should be by August 2011. It gives you the opportunity to showcase your skills, and the potential to also participate in International cutting-edge ICT projects, developed in Gozo. There will also be a series of Online Business Surveys, related to ICT connectivity in Gozo, and surveys related to ICT skills for ICT students and Graduates in ICT related disciplines.

Businesses and or individuals who have new Innovative ideas in ICT related solutions will be able to list your own ideas/projects alongside those already building up in Cyber Security by project co-founders

Synaptic Laboratories. There are no restrictions provided ideas are innovative/cutting-edge and are related to ICT.

The purpose of the project is to create a one-stop shop for Innovation, R&D, support, collaboration and Investment. Placing your project here will therefore expose you to potential funding opportunities, angel investors, new partners or collaborators interested in helping you take your ideas further. The potential for exposure will be International. In turn the ICTGM projects seek to attract inward investment for Innovation and development in Gozo, and also Malta,



leading to the creation of new jobs and opportunities in Gozo and Malta, as well as the development and enhancement of new skills and specialisations can contribute to the



Government aim of Malta becoming an ICT Regional Hub of excellence in Europe and beyond.

To support this, a new ICTGM Steering Committee has been set up and includes the heads and top officials from key stakeholder entities, including the Ministry for Gozo, Malta Information Technology Agency, Malta Enterprise, Malta Communications Authority, Malta Council for Science and Technology, MCAST, The Malta Chamber of Commerce (MCCEI), and project founders The GBC and Synaptic Laboratories. The committee will advise and contribute towards the realisation of the longer term objectives of the project.

The ICTGM project will be formally launched by the Minister for Gozo on 5th August 2011 at 11:00 am at the Calypso Hotel, Marsalforn, Gozo. Businesses, Banks, ICT Educationalists, ICT Graduates and students are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please call the GBC on +356 2155 0305 or email gbc@ictgozomalta.eu for details and to confirm if you will be attending.

For further details on the ICTGM Project contact David Pace on +3567963 0221 or email dave.pace@ictgozomalta.eu. The ICTGM office, based at the GBC is open from 9am-1pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays



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