



NATIONAL STRATEGIC VISION

**FOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT**
2023 - 2030



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIAT
FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

NATIONAL
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**FOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT**
2023 - 2030

MAY 2023

CONTENTS

01	Good and Effective Government	4
02	Regional Resource for Local Councils	10
03	A Cleaner Environment within Localities	16
04	People-Centred Local Councils	22
05	Digital Priority for Local Government	28
	Conclusions	34





BËS SUBMARONË
AHNA GETIN
U LKOLL KEMM
AHNA KBURIN
GHAJ AHNA
LE AQWA FOST
U-CHEKONK!

01

01

GOOD AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

The Vision

A RESPONSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRIVING
TRANSPARENTLY TO
PROVIDE A QUALITY AND VALUED
SERVICE TO RESIDENTS WITHIN THE
RESPECTIVE
COMMUNITIES.

The Strategy and its Objectives

1.1. Holistic training in governance for the elected members and administrative staff of Local Councils.

A regular training course will be introduced for elected members and administrative staff of Local Councils. Training will be tailor-made to relate directly with the individual roles in the respective Local Council and, in certain cases, will have to be mandatory.

While taking the Local Council to a higher standard, the courses will help create better interaction among all those involved.

1.2. Encouraging and supporting Local Councils in their applications for EloGE (European Label of Governance Excellence). This will relate with our target of achieving a standard of excellence.

A national system of standards will be established to serve as a framework for Local Councils seeking to qualify for evaluation in the process to obtain the label. The Local Government Division will need to have the necessary resources to help Local Councils in this process. This should lead to a uniform evaluation phase for all Local Councils and the creation of standard operating procedures.

Central Government will set up targets and incentives that would eventually assist more Local and Regional Councils to achieve a level of excellence.

13. Strengthen Internal Structures.

New systems of communication between Local Councils and the Citizen will be introduced. The systems are meant to eliminate bureaucracy as much as possible, make it easier for the citizen to make direct contact with the Local Council, facilitate the Local Councils' work schedule, and ensure communications reach their addressees in a short time.

Such measures cannot be effective unless utilised in the best way possible. In this way we will ascertain that Local Councils get the necessary resources, including human resources, to help make them function.

Difficulties that may exist between Local Councils and Regional Councils will be scrutinised followed up by an exercise through which a holistic list of guidelines could be created. This will help facilitate the synergy among all Local Government partners.

14. Strengthening accountability through a detailed guide and more professional help to Local and Regional Councils.

A new mechanism will be introduced whereby Regional Councils will have more professionals employed rather than consultants. Staffs need to have experts in various sectors, among them Data Protection, the Law and Acquisition. Professionals must be consulted by councillors and regional members prior to any decisions on matters that require the respective competence of professionals.

Specific measures will be taken to ensure more accountability, with the main aim of clarifying expectations, communication and alignment to achieve pre-established common objectives.

15. **Vote 16 - Sanctioning the right of appointment to a post before the age of 18.**

Discussions will be held with major partners in the Local Government sector with the aim of launching mentoring programmes for all those elected to serve in Local Councils, making them conscious of their responsibilities and duties they would be assuming, irrespective of their age.

16. **A study will be undertaken of a mechanism that would pave the way for a wider representation within Local Councils. This needs to be concluded by the next election in 2024, serving as a basis the mechanism applied to Maltese Parliament representation.**

A study will be undertaken and action taken to put in motion a mechanism which, as occurred in the case of the Maltese Parliament, would ensure equal representation of the sexes in the Local Government sector.

While the mechanism's framework is to be the one adopted for Parliament, modifications will need to be made for the mechanism to reflect the realities of Local Government.





02

02

REGIONAL RESOURCE FOR LOCAL COUNCILS

The Vision

A HOLISTIC VISION FOR LOCAL
REGIONS TO ADDRESS LOCAL COUNCIL
NEEDS IN THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND
PROFESSIONAL MANNER.

The Strategy and its Objectives

- 2.1. **A concentrated exercise by Regional Councils to make sure that Local Council rights are protected in the development of national policies.**

Constant consultations between Regional Councils and Central Government authorities to discuss, at regional level, the implementation of projects which could have a direct or indirect impact on the workings of Local and Regional Councils.

A closer relationship will be established with various government entities, as a way to make sure Local Councils are consulted regarding public projects in their localities.

The concept will be introduced of liaison officers for Local and Regional Councils to have a point of reference when prompt aid or assistance are sought. We are committed to launching an information campaign on Local and Regional Councils.

The aim is to create an on-going educational process available to everyone, featuring, in a practical way, the role, responsibility and work of Local and Regional Councils.

- 2.2. **Local Councils will receive a percentage from the proceeds of activities that cause inconvenience in their localities.**

These measures cover activities organised by commercial entities as well as those in which the Local Councils are already involved. Commercial entities and guest houses with activities that require the installation of tables and chairs will be expected to contribute to the locality they operate in.

2.3. **Regional Councils will be instrumental in making the use of resources more efficient through collaboration on initiatives among various localities.**

Common projects and systems will be introduced on a Regional basis. We will also strive for funds from different authorities like LESA, the Planning Authority and the Malta Tourism Authority among others, are more accessible to Local Councils. For this purpose, these same funds should no longer be administered solely by the respective entity, but with the involvement of Regional Councils.

This will all help to improve efficiency and enhancing a greater collaboration between Local Councils, particularly those with geographic proximity.

2.4. **A mechanism will be found to share good practices with other regions and awards given to the region or regions which excel in the work for the benefit of their communities.**

A schedule of regular meetings will be set up for members of Regional Councils and the Administration aimed at stimulating an exchange of ideas. Besides the sharing of good practices and new concepts, this would also help Regional Councils to see what internal improvements can be made within the respective Regional Council.

2.5. **A study will be made of how markets in the localities can best be organised to minimise inconvenience to the public.**

Open markets will be adequately regulated and, in a sustainable manner, helped to serve communities and not be a source of inconvenience. To achieve this, the regulators, in this case the Local Councils, will need to have access to the necessary resources.

2.6. **A revision of the Restoration Scheme in connection with historical and artistic sites by particular criteria.**

An analysis of regional assets of historical and artistic value will be made of the respective regions as they appear in the Cultural Heritage Audit.

This will ensure that such schemes provide a way to avoid the loss of historical and artistic heritage. These same schemes will be protecting intangible artistic heritage to ascertain that every aspect is preserved and, where possible, improved.

2.7. **Shared information among a number of partners in the Local Government sector for better planning and communication.**

Will be striving to ensure that information that entities or individuals who have relevant information or studies on some aspect of every locality would be required to share them with the main partners in the planning and management of localities. This would help avoid duplication, maximise resources and establish a synergy of all parties concerned for developments and projects to be expediently implemented for the common good.





UB

03

A CLEANER ENVIRONMENT WITHIN LOCALITIES

The Vision

MORE INVESTMENT IN PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH MEASURES THAT PROMOTE A CLEANER AND MORE INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

The Strategy and its Objectives

- 3.1. A more efficient waste collection system that caters for the needs of each locality within a regional context while minimising the administrative burden on Local Councils.

Surveillance and increased resources for Regional Councils to implement more efficiently and maximise the resource measures taken in 2022. These measures, based on the National Plan for Waste Management 2023, became effective and started generating an instant positive impact on waste management systems.

- 3.2. Automatic public conveniences at revised prices to make them sustainable.

Consultations will be held with Local and Regional Councils to decide on how many public conveniences are needed in each locality. These will, over the years, eventually be switched to automatic mode.

Where necessary, new public conveniences need not be constructed thanks to the introduction of mobile toilets that use an automatic system of cleansing and sanitisation. This measure will ensure better cleanliness and efficiency in all public conveniences, while at the same time minimising the need for human resources and doing away with limitations on time schedules.

3.3. Cleaner air thanks to incentives and measures aimed at reducing emissions.

Local Council vehicles will continue to be environmentally friendly and, preferably, electric.

The concept of free transport services offered by Local and Regional Councils will be bolstered to reduce emissions and traffic in city and village centres.

Local and Regional Councils will be involved in distribution systems of supplies to commercial establishments to help decrease delivery routes and improve efficiency.

Local and Regional Councils will be introducing measures aimed at implementing pro-environment projects and initiatives such as the use of bicycles. Local and Regional Councils will be provided with the necessary means to provide the required infrastructure.

Stronger structures and bigger investments will be made to turn strategic zones, with particular reference to town and village cores, into pedestrian areas. This will be done without impacting negatively on the respective communities.

3.4. Implementing more efficient and effective methods of street cleansing in localities across the Island.

Following a detailed study, where possible mechanised systems of street cleansing will be introduced. Besides reducing the possibility of abuse and mistakes, these same systems will also need to provide for a better monitoring procedure.

To help in the implementation of these initiatives, Local Councils will, where needed, be assisted by both the Local Government Division and Regional Councils. The two entities will be identifying common challenges and propose ways to have them ratified in a holistic manner.

Discussions will be held to make sure that Local and Regional Councils and central government authorities work in synergy to have the work carried out in a harmonious operation. This should lead to more efficiency.





04

PEOPLE-CENTRED LOCAL COUNCILS

The Vision

LOCAL GOVERNMENT THAT PUTS
RESIDENTS AT THE CENTRE OF ALL ITS
ACTIVITIES

The Strategy and its Objectives

- 4.1. Local Councils which sustain a healthy style of living through a programme of initiatives and projects that improve and raise to a higher level their residents' quality of life.

Local and Regional Councils hold consultations with their communities to establish the needs of their localities.

There will be adequate monitoring aimed at ensuring that proposed projects would be for the common good and the introduction of new concepts that actively involve residents in the decision-making.

The implementation of concepts such as community gardens, services to residents and other initiatives that involve minorities. The Parliamentary Secretariat for Local Government will see to the implementation of projects and initiatives that cater for a more integral society. This will be achieved through discussions that result in the formation of measures aimed at minimising social problems that are the product of problems like dementia, domestic violence and inequality.

With the relevant authorities, we shall, where possible, put the School Grannies service on a national footing. Such initiative would be of benefit to both children and families while contributing towards active ageing.

4.2. **Putting government entities nearer to residents through better accessibility from Local Council offices.**

We will strive for the introduction of more Local and Regional Council services by the provision of the necessary resources to make them more efficient.

The modernisation and restructuring of these services and the introduction of technology to help improve efficiency and accessibility.

A plan is to be evaluated aimed at extending Local Council office hours. This will first be introduced as a pilot project and only after it is ensured that the Local Council concerned has been provided with the required resources that it can be implemented.

4.3. **Following a scientific study commissioned by Regional Councils, Local Councils will be identifying projects that address the needs of their residents.**

We will endeavour to have all Regional Councils to commission, within a pre-established time frame, a scientific study of the needs and potential of every locality within the confines of the respective regions. The gathered information will be referred to the Local Councils, which hold a better picture of their communities and localities, with the aim of identifying projects they deem ideal for a better quality of life for their residents, and ratifying difficult situations.

Eventually, we will be there to assist Local and Regional Councils in the provision of the required tools for the identified projects to become a reality rather than just a sitting plan.

4.4. **Ensuring that projects will be inclusive and, where applicable, children's views will also be sought.**

Consultations will be held to make sure that public spaces are accessible to everyone and, where possible, introduce the concept of all-inclusivity, by apportioning spaces for children and adults with emotional, sensory and other problems.

A new mechanism will be put in motion for Local and Regional Councils to benefit from incentives for the implementation of all-inclusive spaces.

Discussions will be held with commercial enterprises on the implementation of CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility. This would encourage commercial enterprises to give inclusive projects back to the communities wherein they operate.

A mechanism will also be introduced through which Local Councils are encouraged to identify inclusive projects to be incorporated within the work framework to be adopted by the Local Councils themselves. This would make the process of financial procurement easier and enhance the possibility of the projects being implemented.

4.5. **The Community Police service will be extended to other localities to provide communities with protection and security.**

The concept of Community Policing to be strengthened and the required resources provided for the project to be run efficiently.

The possibility will be evaluated for Local Councils to be the basis of Community Police activities, with space being assigned for an appropriate interaction with residents as assistance is provided with the assurance of privacy.





05

05

DIGITAL PRIORITY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Vision

WE WILL STRIVE TO MAKE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AVAILABLE AND ABLE TO ASSIST IN ALL NEEDS AT ALL TIMES.

The Strategy and its Objectives

5.1 A common platform for Local Councils.

Based on an analysis of the work schedules of Local and Regional Councils at all levels, results will help create a common technology (accounts software system and a platform providing direct contact with other government entities etc) for all Local and Regional Councils. Besides facilitating the Council's everyday work, this initiative will allow the Local Government Division to monitor and assist where needed.

5.2 Regional coordination to digitally issue permits, where possible.

An analysis needs to be made of existing systems and a study carried out aimed at avoiding the inconvenience that residents presently face.

A Community Sponsorship Programme system will be launched to help communities to be able to be involved in projects and initiatives from the planning stage. This would help assure the citizen is a part of the solution, not the problem.

5.3 Launching of a holistic mobile app to enable residents to access services provided by all Local Councils in Malta and Gozo.

A list of services will be made to be offered on the platform, giving residents the opportunity to receive feedback within a pre-established time limit.

The mobile app will give residents the opportunity of submitting their suggestions regarding issues in their respective localities and how they can be tackled.

A common platform will be set up for monitoring and assistance by the Local Government Division which would then have no need to request the information from Local and Regional Councils. The Division would, at the same time, be able to help where necessary.

5.4 Quality, accessibility and the right to communicate.

Strategic digitalisation will help ensure that information about Local and Regional Councils is easily accessed. The same information will have to be presented in a way that can be understood by both technicians and the general public, and accessible for free use. Everyone will have the right to obtain any required information, with the possibility of submitting suggestions. In this way, it will ensure that published Local Government information is relevant.

5.5 Digital information about the localities.

It is well-known fact that every locality in Malta and Gozo has the potential to serve as an attraction for both international and local tourism. This is because the tangible and intangible heritage of our localities can hardly be quantified. Unfortunately, most of the information is unavailable except for a few known sources.

For this reason, we plan to make information about places of interest and culture in general is made available at all hours to Local and Regional Councils via a common software.

For persons who have no access to this technology, interactive interpretation panels will be installed to make the same information available.

5.6 The introduction of chatbot.

It is an established fact that Local and Regional council offices and employees are not available at all times to assist residents. We plan to introduce a chatbot able to gather the information and send replies on Local Government operations and the services on offer.

This technology will be available and common to all Local and Regional Councils, aimed at ensuring regular updating and relevance.

5.7 Activities.

While Local and Regional Councils have systems that provide live streaming of their meetings, it has not been established there has been live streaming of their activities.

It is acknowledged that Local Council activities are often of an excellent standard, but there is no digital evidence of them on video.

We will be striving to provide Local Councils with the opportunity of live streaming their activities and events. Such digital broadcasts will of course need to reach an adequate standard to serve as a promotion of the respective localities and offer persons unable to attend an opportunity to virtually experience the event.

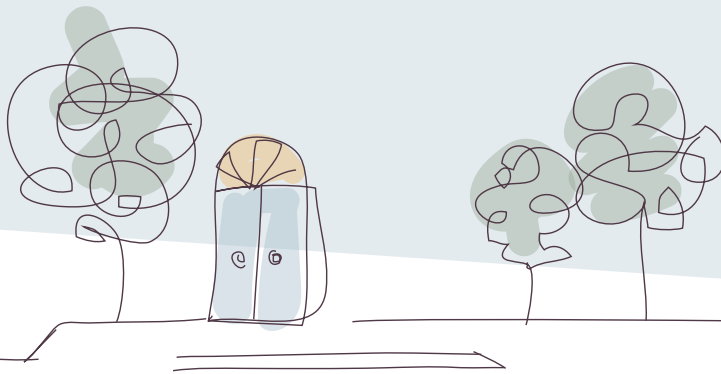
5.8 Virtual teaching.

Over the years, Local Councils have become a source of teaching for residents in their localities. The teaching varies from academic subjects for schoolchildren to various trades and other specific subjects like computer and other e-skills.

In recent years a good number of Local and Regional Councils started offering training sessions relating to mental health and other social problems.

Fully aware of the benefits and positive impact that this would have on our communities, we will be working to have Local and Regional Councils in line with educational institutions and, where possible, virtually make available the same teaching to residents.

CONCLUSIONS



The Local Government sector has an important role to play in the complex society that we live in. This is because the work of Local Government is reflected in all the aspects of the citizen, and every decision taken by Local and Regional Councils impacts on their respective communities. So it is crucial that all partners in the Local Government sector have all the information and tools required to enable them to judge wisely and to continue to foster the ideal of a better quality of life for us all.

ENBOLDENED BY THIS STRATEGIC VISION, THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIAT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT, WITH THE COLLABORATION OF THOSE WHO HAVE SHOWN AN INTEREST IN CONTRIBUTING TO IT, AIMS TO BUILD ON THE BASIS ESTABLISHED DURING THE PAST THIRTY YEARS, SERVING AS A CATALYST TO A MORE EFFICIENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT SECTOR REFLECTING THESE TIMES.

In this way, it will not only remain relevant but also be a point of reference for residents and in tune the local communities.

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Parliamentary Secretariat for Local Government

185, Triq Melita, Il-Belt Valletta. VLT 1443
Malta

t +356 2226 4800

www.localgovernment.gov.mt

