



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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The Gozo Tourism Association believes that overall this is a balanced budget which also reflects the economical growth environment in various sectors including the tourism industry.

However the Gozo Tourism Association is concerned on the announced introduction of the environmental tax that will be collected from every tourist. Whilst acknowledging the impact of the tourist industry on the environment, the Gozo Tourism Association will be seeking further clarifications on this measure especially on the domestic market and on the already contracted rates for 2016. Furthermore the GTA is expecting that the tax collected from bednights spent in Gozo should be aggregated in a special fund, proceeds of which will be specifically spent on the tourism product upgrade on Gozo.

This year's budget is once again emphasizing the connectivity issues with the allocation of €500,000 for the related technical and geological studies of the underseabed tunnel. Further environmental impact studies on a green airfield on Gozo, are also being contemplated to be carried out during the upcoming year. While further investment on a new mooring buoy, off Xlendi Coast is also another measure towards connectivity to Gozo with regards to boutique cruise ships. The Gozo Tourism Association also expects further development on the the yacht marina and the cruise liner terminal, as mentioned in this budget

The Gozo Tourism Association positively notes the measures in this budget aimed towards the improvement of the touristic product. The building of public swimming, the restoration of the water Aquaduct, the upgrading of St. Francis Square, as well as the rebuilding of rubble walls in the Gozitan countryside are all measures that enhance the island's touristic offer.

Although several budget proposals put forward by the Gozo Tourism Association, were not catered for, however the Association acknowledges that overall this budget promotes further economic growth.

**Joe Muscat  
Chief Executive Officer  
Gozo Tourism Association**