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# GRTU NEWSTRING



## Review of waste collection system in Valletta

Following a set of consultation meeting with its members and ongoing communication with Hon. Dr Deo Debatista, GRTU is pleased to note that the GRTU and the government have found solid ground regarding the Waste Collection pick up times and quality of the waste collection service in Valletta.

This was sparked by a number of complaints by both the general public, business owners and tourists on waste collection in Valletta which is not fit for a capital city. Initial suggestions by the authorities were that waste collection would take place at 6am in the morning so that there would be no tourists in the capital city however this was flagged as very inadequate by business owners as they would have to send in staff at an extremely early hour just to take out the waste.

So far it appears that there will be two main separate collection times, at least for the business community. One will be in the afternoon to cater for the retail sector

and businesses serving lunch and another one will be at night for businesses serving dinner and entertainment establishments.

GRTU also requested a certain degree of flexibility especially for late collections so that businesses do not have to pay employees extra to wait to take out the garbage.

That is if **multiple small and clean trucks would operate during that timeslot in order to make the collection as efficient and of least inconvenience as possible.** These changes go in tandem and one cannot be introduced without the others.

GRTU has also brought forward other proposals for improvement of waste collection. A **collection for glass should also be introduced.** Catering establishments throw away an incredible amount of glass bottles every day because there is nothing catering for such a collection at the moment.

**Bins found on the main streets need to be cleaned more frequently.** These have been reported to be many times full and in a very dirty state. Emptying of bins in the main streets should be carried out more than once a day and these and their immediate surroundings should be properly cleaned if we want to have a truly clean environment.

Some of the shop owners also have shops in **Sliema** and **Bugibba** and they have reported that the situation with waste and cleanliness is very precarious. Some have informed us that in Bugibba even street sweeping has stopped.



## We need your **OPINION**

GRTU Malta Chamber of SMEs has just launched a survey focusing on Local Innovative practices in Business. The aim of the survey is to analyze how local businesses visualise Innovation and in what ways do they implement innovative practices in their business if any at all. GRTU is aware that Malta lags behind other countries in innovation. Following this study, GRTU will publish a policy paper through which it will urge authorities to act towards.

We strongly encourage you to participate, as we would like to know more!

**Kindly in this survey by clicking on this [link](#).**

**It will only take you few minutes, We Promise!**

Data gathered will only be used for the scope of this survey and any information submitted will be kept in the strictest confidence as applicable under the Data Protection Act 2001.

# Budget 2018 next on the Agenda

The end of July saw the launch of the pre-budget discussions at the MCESD. The meeting was attended by the government's top officials including the Minister for Finance, Minister Helena Dalli and Parliamentary Secretary Aaron Farrugia.

Minister Scicluna emphasised on the success of the legislature, especially in terms of management of finances and savings. On a warning note the Minister said that while the economy is growing, one needs to keep an eye on investment and infrastructure. Low investment in infrastructure will lead to stalling growth because of the wear and tear and also because growth requires a higher level of infrastructure. This year's budget will therefore be oriented at the external costs and what infrastructural investments are needed.

GRTU President Paul Abela questioned why Malta invests half what the rest of the Euro average invests on port facilities. He emphasised on the essential function of the ports in Malta's economy and that the issue of investment should certainly be addressed in the next budget. Mr Abela also brought to the attention of the Minister that the Freeport is lacking space and we need to expand



to accommodate local operations. The Minister said that soon EU funding targeting ports will be announced and government will continue to see possibilities of further expanding the Freeport.

Mr Abela also asked for an explanation for the projected reduction in growth and also projected reduction in revenue. The Minister said that the numbers are conservative and Malta will most probably exceed them.

## GRTU discusses inclusion of outside City Gate Shops in the Valletta Shop Scheme

GRTU has recently met with Hon Chris Agius, Parliamentary Secretary, for Planning & the Property Market to discuss the Valletta Shop Scheme with the aim of including Valletta city gate shops in the Valletta shop scheme.

During the said meeting GRTU informed Hon Agius that the Valletta Scheme was first launched by the previous Government, a scheme to which GRTU was not in agreement with the proposed arrangements and resulted with only a few businesses interested in applying.

Following a change in Government GRTU was given the chance to discuss and present its proposals to the then Parliamentary Secretary for Planning who agreed to most of GRTU's proposals, most of which were taken on board and then launched in May 2015.

Hon Agius was also informed that GRTU's concern remains that, Shops operating from the City Gate Arcades were once again not included in the Scheme. It is a pity, that was once a first class shopping arcade, is today in shambles with few remaining shops operating. Other businesses wish to invest but are however discouraged due to the fact that this scheme does not apply to them and therefore their lease is renewed every three months.

GRTU has asked Hon Agius to look into the matter and consider including the said retail outlets to be part of the scheme or something similar. Hon Agius promised that he will be doing his utmost to find the best solution which will be beneficial for all concerned.



# Panel Beaters going Strong at GRTU

A large number of Panel Beaters have joined GRTU in the last months following the introduction of a new certification system that claims to be of a higher quality and guarantees safe repairs. Both GRTU and the Panel Beaters are not against standards, in fact the absolute majority of them are already abiding to the national minimum standard and are referred to as MCCA approved.

The MCCA standard was introduced not very long ago and therefore its relevance is still very high and with the difference to the QVR, which is the new certification, it was agreed between all stakeholders and not simply imposed by one party.

The real quality of the QVR is already questionable since in GRTU's opinion and in the opinion of the panel beaters, this is just a nice overall and there is nothing of added value behind it. The worse part of this however is that the four main insurance companies that practically dominate the market have agreed between themselves of this new certification system and took a decision that customers will not be allowed to carry out repairs unless the repairer is QVR approved. Due to the dominance of the insurances this practically meant that repairers that do not subscribe to the costly QVR would eventually run out of business. This, in GRTU's opinion and that of its lawyers, is anti-competitive and against consumer law.

The MCCA has also taken serious note of the insurances' dealings in this and has issued a statement of objections that puts the insurances in a bad light, all filled with facts that can be backed by GRTU and its members.

During the past months GRTU and its legal team was engaged with the MFSA with supplying its own version of events and building a strong case based on competition law and consumer law and we are currently awaiting an outcome. Meanwhile GRTU is still working on building its case and has been approached by insurance companies to initiate dialogue on the subject and it will be organising a meeting for its members in the coming days.

Panel beaters report that since GRTU stepped in to protect their interest the situation has improved drastically but we are not yet out of the woods. The issue with QVR and insurances is just one of the many issues GRTU intends to tackle to improve the working conditions and the viability of businesses for panel beaters.

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# GRTU is in close contact with Government

## Meeting with Hon. Dr. Aaron Farrugia Parliamentary Secretary for EU funds and Social Dialogue

As part of the ongoing meetings GRTU is holding with the different Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries, on the 14 of July GRTU President, Mr. Paul Abela and GRTU CEO, Ms. Abigail Mamo were invited to attend a one to one meeting with Hon. Dr. Aaron Farrugia who is in charge with Eu Funds and Social dialogue. These two areas are closely monitored from GRTU as they form part of the GRTUs key functions.

Mr. Abela briefly explained the work GRTU conducts on a daily basis and the importance of keeping a close contact with members in order to identify any issues they might have. Mr. Abela re-confirmed GRTUs commitment to work close to the parliamentary secretariat in order to ensure that members benefit the most from any schemes and EU funds available to them. Hon. Dr. Farrugia, thanked Mr. Abela for his assistance and for his support.

Ms. Mamo explained the main challenges members face when applying for EU funds. Ms. Mamo welcomed the fact that through the recommendations put forward by GRTU in relation to the Business Enhance Grant Schemes, some of the schemes have improved and became more practical (e.g. the elimination on the required business plan under the e-commerce grant scheme), however room for improvement remains and GRTU will continue working on this, putting forward its recommendations.

Ms. Mamo also raised the problem with the uptake of such funds and recommended that practicality should be given importance this is following a number of complaints received, GRTU is also concerned on the selection process in general. A number of applications are rejected

as they do not have all the documentation in place. Instead of being informed and given a chance to amend / submit, applications are simply being rejected. This issue clearly de-motivates applicants and decreases the chance of increasing the number of applications submitted. Ms. Mamo suggested that the managing authority introduces vetting mechanism that would ensure the applications submitted have all the required documentation.

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In relation to EU funds, Ms. Mamo mentioned another concern that is the lengthy evaluation process, the Managing authority takes to approve proposals submitted. Ms. Mamo called for a better approach as such delays can jeopardise the whole project in general, especially in light that applicants are given a deadline to submit such proposals. During this meeting GRTU also discussed the role of civil societies and the important role the civil society plays in society at large for the benefit of all citizens. Mr. Paul Abela highlighted the importance of the Malta Council for Economic and Social Dialogue (MCESD) and why this should be fully autonomous in order to be fully representable. Moreover Ms. Mamo highlighted GRTU's proposal in the manifesto launched earlier this year where GRTU suggested that the government should commit to adopt any measures agreed upon between all social partners.

Following this successful introductory meeting, both parties agreed to hold regular meetings in order to ensure a healthy relationship and a good communication flow.



## GRTU meets New Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms, Citizenship and Simplification of Administrative Processes

GRTU met with cabinet newcomer Julia Farrugia as Parliamentary Secretary within the office of the Prime Minister.

Ms Farrugia was very welcoming to GRTU and she was interested with on the ground feedback GRTU could provide. The Parliamentary Secretary assured GRTU that within her remit and within the context of the important reforms envisaged all will be done within partnership. She assured GRTU that she believed in the good and genuine interest of all parties and these should be safeguarded. GRTU officials offered the structure of GRTU in order to organise consultation meetings and focus groups that will enable a sound consultation process and informed decisions.

On the issue of third country nationals, GRTU explained that the authorities took a very long time to adjust and the employment market started to overheat with the doors to third country nationals tightly closed and an oversupply of vacancies. GRTU explained that third country nationals today are a very important and essential source of employment and while many Maltese businesses prefer to employ Maltese since it is by far easier and language and culture is an advantage, they do not find Maltese to employ.



GRTU officials also explained what difficulties businesses experienced with processes and so far through consultations we have managed to improve the situation significantly, mostly by doing away with the excessive requirement to request experience across the board and the length of the process has diminished. GRTU therefore welcomed the election commitment to further reduce the timespan by 15 days and having a one-stop-shop system.

The discussion also focused on the important reforms that would be coming up. In the coming months there will be a discussion about the regularisation of prostitution and the use of marijuana for recreational use. Being the main representative of the entertainment mecca in Paceville GRTU gave an overview of the initial position of businesses in the area on the subjects and said that the discussions are very delicate and whilst some might have an ideal outcome in mind for these discussions, Malta is not necessarily like other countries and it is important that serious research is conducted. GRTU however gave assurance that when it comes to the private sector there are certainly players who are ready to rise to the occasion and will do it in a serious manner.

GRTU assured the parliamentary secretary that it will be providing its full support and work with the parliamentary secretary in partnership and bring valid individuals that can provide valuable contributions to the discussion table.



## GRTU meets New Minister for Energy and Water Management



GRTU met with Minister Joe Mizzi under his new remit as Energy and Water Minister. GRTU has already very well established relations with Minister Mizzi, built during the period he occupied the role of transport Minister.

In its introduction, GRTU officials explained that as an organisation that represents wide business sectors, the subject of energy is very important for us because the cost of energy is one of the largest running costs for businesses. Apart from this however GRTU also has a strong renewable energy sector that it is very proud to represent. GRTU explained how this sector started off on the wrong foot and inexperience led to the sector gaining a bad name. This sector has however made a leap in quality thanks to the work and time invested by GRTU. Today GRTU is proud to have standards for the sector, which are awaiting the confirmation to become basic MCCA standards.

GRTU and the Minister spoke about a number of projects already in the pipeline including GRTU and government's partnership MaltaEnergy that is

being set-up for the purpose of PV farms.

GRTU also emphasised the importance of having a new feed-in-tariff as soon as possible and that this should not be lower than Eur 15c. Having a lower feed-in-tariff will generate a risk of lower investments by consumers, higher dependency on grants and Malta not reaching its renewable energy EU 2020 targets.

The discussion also focused on the research fund that will be created by government. This was a proposal that was made originally by GRTU specifically to help the private sector carry out research projects that would adapt current renewable energy technologies for the Maltese climate and conditions. GRTU will be discussing this idea further with the Ministry and the University of Malta. The involvement of GRTU is important because research should no longer remain on the shelves but should be utilised for product development to be used within our markets and service society at large.

GRTU will seek to maintain a continuous and healthy working relationship with the Ministry.

# GRTU acquainted with Parliamentary Secretary for Financial Services, Digital Economy and Innovation

On Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July GRTU Vice President Mr. Chris Vassallo and GRTU CEO Ms. Abigail Mamo had an introductory meeting with Hon. Dr. Silvio Schembri. Hon. Dr. Schembri is the Parliamentary Secretary responsible for Financial Services, Digital Economy and Innovation within the Office of the Prime Minister.

During this cordial meeting Mr. Chris Vassallo thanked Hon. Dr. Schembri for meeting with GRTU and briefly explained GRTU's functions and how GRTU can assist the Parliamentary Secretary in being closer to the business community particularly the Small and Micro Enterprises. Dr. Schembri thanked Mr. Vassallo and also explained his portfolio and the areas he intends to focus on. In particular Hon. Dr. Schembri explained his intentions of restructuring the Malta Financial Services Authority (MFSA) and also to implement a regulatory framework to regularize the Blockchain industry. This in order to make such institutions better prepared for the near future.

Ms. Mamo explained that GRTU is concerned on the lack of tools available to make businesses more innovative.



Although there are a good number of schemes available for this reason they are not always accessible to these businesses which do not have the capacities. Ms. Mamo explained that Innovation is generally seen as a concept to create a new product. This coming from the fact that the majority of the schemes available are normally connected with research and rarely focus on innovative practices which local businesses can easily adopt. Moreover Ms. Mamo highlighted the importance that availability of funds in this area need to increase.

Ms. Mamo explained that in Malta, local businesses have a huge potential to grow especially in the e-commerce sector, however, the right tools need to be provided through assistance from local authorities.

Ms. Mamo followed by saying that in order to increase awareness on innovation, GRTU's annual SME week event, will be addressing innovation and will be demonstrating how businesses can be innovative without being extraordinary in their implementation.

Finally Ms. Mamo extended her invitation to cooperate with the Parliamentary Secretary on issues which have a direct effect on businesses specifically SMEs. Hon. Dr. Schembri welcomed this and stated that he intends to fully cooperate and keep GRTU involved on such issues. Both parties also agreed to keep a healthy communication flow for both parties to benefit.



# Exploring Outsourcing for your Business



Do you want to optimize your resources to ensure stable business growth? Outsourcing may be the solution for you! In the past outsourcing was generally connoted to subcontracting manufacturing of certain components within factories of long product lines. Nowadays a big shift towards service outsourcing is visible among all business sectors. Outsourcing refers to the practice of companies engaging outside business firms to help them with specialized work.

Most generally outsourcing providers preside to one of the following categories, with regards to the services that they provide whilst some offer several;

- In-house Customer Service
- Telemarketing
- Web Design & Development
- Online Marketing
- Administrative Support
- Accounting and HR Management
- Marketing & Sales Support

By giving **away some of your business tasks** that can easily be managed by an external entity, your life as a business owner is made much easier. Even more so, a more experienced entity handling these tasks will also save you up to 60% of the costs of employing a full time employee. These monetary resources can be allocated to business divisions which require more eminent attention otherwise allocated to new windows of opportunity.

Outsourcing allows your enterprise to focus on other business issues while having the details taken care of by outside experts. A scenario would be, knowing that marketing is the best way to spreading the word regards a new product or service you're launching, but realistically it might not be your strength. You can hire an outsourcing company that provides these services, **whilst you concentrate on getting ready for the influx of inquiries** following the a campaign. With outsourcing, there also comes increased speed to market and flexibility.

This also implies that a large amount of resources and attention which could be shouldered by managerial professionals is specifically used for more important, broader issues within the entity. The specialized company that handles the outsourced work is often able to access to new technology that a growing company simply couldn't afford to invest in on their own, hence is managed on the principal of economies of scale. Plus, if a company is looking to expand, outsourcing is a cost-effective way to start building foundations abroad.

In reality, outsourcing does have some disadvantages. A company may have lesser control of the service/product it purchases or market strategy, language barriers, lack of communication and security issues are also challenges faced by enterprises which outsource. However, these problems can be easily tackled by selecting the right outsourcing provider.

Our advice is to look at outsourcing providers which have a good and sturdy reputation of excellent service provision with the business community in order to ensure that your enterprises' confidential information is kept in safe hands. Maintain a good stream of communication with your outsourcing providers in order to avoid miscommunication on the details of the tasks they have at hand.

With this information background at hand, it is easy to see why outsourcing could be your business' next step. It's a service that expands and contracts with your business needs. Whilst giving space for faster development through increased focus on the profit-generating activities.

# Development of Business Units at Ta' Qali Artisan Village

## Grant Scheme and Project Development

### Grant Scheme

This month the Malta Enterprise has formally launched a grant scheme specifically designed to support tenants of Malta Industrial Parks Ltd. situated at the Artisan Village, Ta' Qali. The scheme has a total budget of 4 million, with the prospect of assisting a total of 40 tenants.

GRTU has organised an Information Session for tenants regarding the Scheme in which Malta Enterprise Representatives explained and followed upon queries regarding the scheme.

An undertaking is only eligible if it has a regular temporary emphyteutical agreement with Malta Industrial Parks (MIP).

The support will assist in the development and refurbishing of business premises the development of immovable property situated at the Artisan Village, Ta' Qali and any plant, machinery and equipment located within the property. In doing so, to carry out the activity agreed to with Malta Industrial Parks Ltd.

The grant can either be awarded through a **Cash grant** or as a **Loan guarantee. A Loan Guarantee** of up to One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Euro (€150,000) and cover up Seventy Five Percent (75%) of costs funded through a Bank loan. Otherwise a **Cash Grant** of up to Seventy Thousand Euro (€70,000) to part finance up



to Fifty Percent (50%) of costs incurred. ME explained that the land given to the tenants for 65 years can act as guarantee for the rest of the loan not covered by the grant.

The six to seven page application for grant can be accessed online. Further information on the scheme, as well as information and guidance on the filling in of the application form may be obtained by contacting Malta Enterprise Corporation or Malta Industrial Parks Ltd. during office hours. Otherwise through the Malta Enterprise website; following this [link](#).

### Project Development

GRTU urges tenants to submit their DNO to the MIP in a prompt manner. Especially since the cash grant will close on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2019, and will only cover cost invoices and paid after 31st May 2017 and before 31st December 2018. Following application and acceptance from Malta Enterprise, Tenants may submit their receipts every three months.

GRTU is also pleased to inform tenants that the VO status for the Tenants Association has been now officially registered. Tenants are reassured by MIP that the Artisan Village will be protected from vandals and that road planning is set to leave no room for hawkers in the area.

Contact GRTU Malta Chamber of SMEs on **21232881 / 3** or e-mail **admin@grtu.eu**



Operational Programme II – Cohesion Policy 2007 – 2013  
Empowering People for More Jobs and a Better Quality of Life  
Project may be part-financed by the European Union  
European Social Fund (ESF),  
Co-financing rate: 85% EU Funds; 15% National Funds



*Investing in your future*