

GCAF



LEARNING HOW TO GROW WITHIN OUR LIMITS

The Challenge of Farming in a Region Restricted by Space and Resources, 2027-2038

A Gozo discussion on growth, value and resilience in a small double-insular farming economy

A GCAF discussion document for farmers, sector organisations, public authorities, researchers, buyers and the wider Gozitan community.

This paper is presented as a basis for discussion and reflection on the long-term future of farming in Gozo. It aims to explore ideas, compare experiences and encourage dialogue on how the sector can grow and remain viable within the island's limited space and resources.

Executive Summary

GOZO LENS | Small scale. Double insularity. Limited land and water. Strong identity. The question is how these realities can shape a different model of growth rather than simply limit it.

Gozo's farming sector operates within limits that cannot simply be removed. The island has finite land, fragmented holdings, water pressure, a small labour pool, high input costs and a limited local market. It also operates within a second layer of insularity: Gozo depends heavily on Malta for administration, services, inputs, transport connections and access to wider markets.

This double-insular setting matters. A farm in Gozo is not simply a small farm. It is a small farm operating on a small island which itself depends on a larger island. Goods may need to cross more than one transport link, specialist services may be located elsewhere, and national policies designed for Malta as a whole may not always reflect the additional cost or practical difficulty of operating from Gozo.

The central argument of this document is that the future of farming in Gozo should not be discussed only in terms of physical expansion. Growth can also come from better quality, stronger management, specialist products, better use of information, improved skills, cooperation, processing, stronger links with buyers and more value from each unit of scarce land, water and labour.

This is the idea behind 'growing without getting bigger'. It is not an argument against production, investment or viable farm expansion. It is an argument that, in a constrained island economy, size alone is a poor measure of progress.

The approach is supported by experience from other Mediterranean islands. Corsica has built a strong quality-and-origin model, with 44% of farms involved in recognised quality or origin schemes. The Balearic Islands now receive differentiated CAP treatment because insularity raises production and market-access costs, while their recent strategies link local food more deliberately with tourism. Crete shows both the opportunity and tension created when agriculture and tourism compete for water and when local food is used to strengthen destination value. Sardinia provides long experience with young-farmer support, while research on small Mediterranean islands confirms that double insularity creates additional vulnerability for satellite islands such as Gozo.

However, Gozo should not copy Corsica, Crete, Sardinia or Mallorca. Its scale is much smaller, its administrative relationship with Malta is different, and its double insularity is particularly important. The purpose of the case studies is therefore to identify principles that can be adapted, not programmes that can be transplanted.

The paper develops a Gozo farming framework around six ideas: value before volume; specialisation; cooperation without loss of independence; knowledge and management capability; people and succession; and resource productivity. It then considers how these ideas could shape farming between 2027 and 2038.

Key Questions for the 2027-2038 Period

- Can farm income and value grow faster than the physical resources used to produce them?
- Can small farms cooperate enough to gain some advantages of scale while remaining independent?
- Can Gozo develop stronger specialist products rather than compete mainly on price and volume?
- Can knowledge, management and technology become as important to farm development as physical investment?
- Can tourism and local food be connected in a way that gives farmers a fairer share of value?
- Can farming offer a realistic future to younger people without assuming that every new entrant must begin with a large farm?

- Can the extra cost and complexity of double insularity be identified more clearly and reflected in how the sector is supported?

1. Learning How to Grow Within Gozo's Limits

Conventional business growth is often measured through size: more land, more employees, more customers, more output or a larger turnover. This is understandable, but it becomes problematic when the physical environment is tightly constrained.

In a small island economy, expansion can quickly run into limits. More output may require more water, more imported feed or fertiliser, more labour, more transport and more storage. A larger operation can improve efficiency, but it can also increase exposure to resources that are already scarce or costly.

The alternative is not stagnation. It is to distinguish between extensive growth and value growth. Extensive growth depends mainly on adding physical inputs. Value growth aims to improve what is generated from the resources already available.

For farming, this means asking different questions. Instead of asking only how many tonnes are produced, it also asks what return is generated per hectare, what value is retained by the farmer, whether water productivity is improving, whether waste is falling, whether a product is differentiated, whether the farm is building skills, and whether the business can continue into the next generation.

This approach also changes the meaning of productivity. Productivity is not simply about making a farmer work harder. It is about organising land, labour, knowledge, capital and markets in a way that creates a stronger and more durable return.

Gozo as the Starting Point

Gozo's agricultural landscape is itself a record of adaptation to limits. Terraced fields, rubble walls, small parcels and valley systems show how generations of farmers worked around scarce soil, uneven terrain and limited water. The landscape was shaped not by abundance, but by making restricted resources usable.

That history provides a useful starting point for the 2027-2038 discussion. The challenge is no longer simply how to cultivate difficult land. It is how to keep farming economically viable when the same physical limits are joined by modern pressures: labour shortages, climate change, input costs, market concentration, regulation, transport dependence and competition for land.

A Gozo-based strategy should therefore begin with the island's own geography, economy and farming culture. International case studies can inform the discussion, but the framework must be built around Gozo rather than imported from a larger region.

2. Smallness, Double Insularity and the Gozo Context

Smallness is not one problem. It is a combination of related constraints. A small market can limit demand. Small farms can struggle to justify specialist equipment. A small labour pool makes recruitment difficult. Limited land increases competition between agriculture, housing, infrastructure, recreation and environmental uses.

Gozo adds another layer: double insularity. Research on small Mediterranean islands describes this as the situation of smaller satellite islands that depend on a larger island for important services, administration and connections. Gozo is specifically identified in recent literature as an example of this condition.

Double insularity can affect farming in several ways:

- Inputs may first enter Malta and then need a second movement to Gozo.
- Specialist repair, veterinary, technical, laboratory or advisory services may be less immediately available.
- Small volumes can make dedicated transport or processing less economical.
- Farmers may need to travel to Malta for meetings, services, training or administration.
- National policy may recognise Malta's island status at EU level while still failing to distinguish the additional position of Gozo within Malta.
- Market access depends not only on the distance to the final buyer but also on ferry, port and inter-island logistics.
- Young people can access a wider labour market in Malta without permanently leaving the country, increasing competition for agricultural labour and succession.

These factors do not make farming impossible. They do mean that the normal assumptions behind scale, logistics, labour and service access need to be tested carefully before being applied to Gozo.

3. Smallness Can Also Create Advantages

A discussion of island constraints should not become a list of disadvantages. Smallness can also support flexibility, identity, closer relationships and faster cooperation.

A small farm can sometimes change direction faster than a large industrial operation. A small island can build a recognisable food identity. Producers and buyers are geographically close. Farmers can know their customers directly. Tourism brings consumers to the place of production rather than requiring every product to travel to the consumer.

The strategic question is therefore not whether Gozo is too small. It is whether its farming system is organised to turn some of the characteristics of smallness into economic advantages.

A focused farm producing a distinctive product for a clear market may be better suited to Gozo than a farm attempting to compete directly with high-volume continental production. Flexibility, specialisation and quality become especially important when land and output cannot expand indefinitely.

4. A Framework for Growth Within Gozo's Limits

4.1 Value before volume

Production remains essential, but output should not be the only measure of success. The sector should pay more attention to the value retained locally and by the farmer. This can come through quality, grading, processing, packaging, direct sales, stronger contracts, reduced waste and more reliable market access.

4.2 Specialisation and niche development

Small markets make it difficult to compete across every product category. Specialisation allows farms and groups of farms to build deeper knowledge, stronger quality and clearer market identity. A niche does not have to be exotic. It may be a traditional product, a particular variety, a premium fresh product, a processed food, a seasonal product or a reliable supply offer for local hospitality.

4.3 Cooperation without losing independence

Small farms often need the functions of a larger organisation without wanting to become one. Cooperation can provide access to machinery, logistics, storage, purchasing, training, technical expertise and marketing while farms remain individually owned. The important issue is to identify specific areas where interests genuinely overlap.

4.4 Knowledge and management capability

Land and machinery are visible assets; information is less visible but equally important. Knowing production costs, water use, buyer demand, market prices, crop performance and customer preferences improves decisions. Farm management, planning and leadership therefore deserve the same attention as technical production skills.

4.5 People, skills and succession

A sector cannot be sustainable if it cannot replace its people. Development should include the farmer, family members, employees and potential successors. Mentoring, meaningful roles, delegation, business skills and structured succession can build capacity from within rather than relying entirely on finding ready-made skills outside Gozo.

4.6 Resource productivity

Gozo should aim to create more economic and social value from each scarce resource. This includes land, water, energy, labour, feed, capital and infrastructure. Resource productivity connects farm viability with environmental resilience rather than treating them as separate agendas.

5. Management Culture Matters in Small Farming Businesses

Small businesses are strongly shaped by the person who leads them. In family farms this can be even more pronounced because ownership, management, labour and family relationships often overlap.

This has advantages. Decisions can be quick, knowledge can be deep and responsibility is clear. But it can also create bottlenecks when too much knowledge and decision-making remain with one person.

For the 2027-2038 period, farm development should therefore include management development. This does not mean turning farmers into corporate managers. It means practical skills such as costing, investment decisions, negotiation, delegation, planning, record use, marketing and succession.

A farm that buys new equipment but does not improve its management may remain constrained. A farm that develops the people around the owner can increase its capacity even when its land area does not change.

This is particularly relevant to succession. If the next generation has no responsibility, no decision-making role and no opportunity to develop, succession becomes a transfer of assets rather than a transfer of a viable business.

6. Collaboration: Creating Scale Without Creating Bigger Farms

Collaboration is one of the clearest ways to respond to small scale. The purpose is not to force farmers into one structure. It is to identify functions where duplication is expensive and cooperation is practical.

Possible areas include machinery rings, refrigerated transport, storage, packing, specialist maintenance, agronomic advice, digital tools, purchasing, training, marketing and temporary labour.

Collaboration is more likely to work when it begins with a clear problem rather than a general call for farmers to cooperate. For example, five farms may not want to market under one brand, but they may all need the same expensive machine for a few days each year.

The practical model should therefore be 'common ground first'. Start with one shared need, define the rules, test the service, measure use and cost, and expand only if trust develops.

This approach can also reduce the risk of building shared infrastructure that looks attractive on paper but is not used enough to cover its operating costs.

7. Knowledge Management for Farming

A recurring weakness in small organisations is that useful information exists but is not organised or used systematically. Farming generates information every day: yields, animal performance, water use, input prices, disease events, buyer requests, weather patterns and customer feedback.

The opportunity is not to create more paperwork. It is to turn existing information into better decisions.

At farm level, simple records can help identify which crops or products generate the strongest margin, where water use is high, where losses occur and which buyers are most reliable. At island level, aggregated information can identify market gaps, common problems and opportunities for joint action.

A future Gozo farming intelligence function could provide short, practical information on market demand, seasonal supply, input costs, weather and water, research findings, funding deadlines and relevant experience from other islands.

The key principle is that knowledge should move in both directions. Research and policy need to reach farms, but farm experience also needs to reach researchers and decision-makers.

8. Quality as a Growth Strategy

Quality should not be understood only as certification. It includes consistency, reliability, freshness, appearance, taste, traceability, service and the ability to deliver what a buyer expects.

For a small producer, quality can reduce the need to compete purely on price. But a premium cannot be assumed simply because a product is local. The product must give the buyer or consumer a reason to pay more or choose it more often.

A quality strategy therefore needs three elements: a product that is genuinely differentiated; a system that delivers consistent quality; and communication that makes the difference understandable.

Customer and buyer feedback should also be used more systematically. Restaurants, retailers and consumers can reveal problems that may not be visible from the farm. Repeated complaints about size, packaging, reliability, delivery timing or consistency are management information, not merely criticism.

The same principle applies to positive feedback. If buyers repeatedly value freshness, a traditional variety, flavour or provenance, that information can help define where the farm should specialise.

9. People Development and the Next Generation

The future of Gozo farming depends on more than attracting new entrants. It also depends on developing the people already inside farms.

In a small labour market, searching continuously for fully trained workers may not be realistic. An alternative is to identify promising people and build skills through mentoring, structured experience and responsibility.

This can apply to family successors, employees and new entrants. A younger person may begin with technical work but gradually learn purchasing, customer relations, compliance, machinery planning and business decisions.

Meaningful work matters. If farming offers only long hours, physical work and little decision-making, it will struggle against other employment opportunities. Better job design, technology and delegation can make agricultural work more attractive while improving farm efficiency.

Succession planning should begin well before retirement. It should address ownership, management responsibility, skills, finance, family expectations and the commercial direction of the farm.

10. Case Study: Corsica - Turning Island Identity into Product Value

Corsica is a useful Mediterranean reference because it has made quality and origin a major part of its agricultural economy. Corsica's economic development agency reports that 44% of farms were involved in at least one recognised quality or origin scheme in 2020, above the French national average. The island has numerous AOP, AOC and IGP products across wine, fruit, meat, cheese and other sectors.

The lesson is not that Gozo should copy the French certification system. Corsica is much larger, has different institutions and has access to French national structures. The relevant lesson is that island identity can become an economic asset when it is connected to enforceable product standards, processing, marketing and a coherent food sector.

For Gozo, a stronger origin strategy could begin with a limited number of products where provenance is meaningful and supply can be verified. The aim should be credibility before scale.

A second lesson is the importance of agro-processing. Corsica's agro-food sector is a significant industrial activity on the island. For Gozo, retaining more value may sometimes depend less on increasing farm output and more on what happens after harvest or production.

11. Case Study: Balearic Islands - Recognising the Cost of Insularity

The Balearic Islands are particularly relevant because Spain's current CAP arrangements introduced differentiated treatment to recognise that island farmers face higher production costs and greater difficulty accessing markets than farmers on the mainland.

This is an important principle for Gozo. Malta is itself an island Member State, but Gozo has an additional layer of transport and service dependence. A national average can therefore hide a regional cost.

The Balearics are also strengthening the connection between local food and tourism. Their 2025-2035 gastronomic tourism strategy aims to integrate the tourism and agri-food sectors, while a multi-year local-product marketing programme targets residents, hospitality businesses, tourists and international audiences.

The Gozo lesson is twofold: first, insularity can be treated as an economic condition that should be measured rather than simply described; second, tourism can be used as a market for agriculture when the relationship is deliberately organised.

However, Mallorca's tourism scale is vastly larger than Gozo's. Gozo should therefore focus on reliable local supply, selected products and buyer relationships rather than trying to replicate a large destination-marketing model.

12. Case Study: Crete - Agriculture, Tourism, Local Food and Water

Crete shows both the opportunity and the tension in linking agriculture with tourism. Research on Western Crete finds that local quality food can strengthen the tourism experience and that better coordination between agriculture, tourism and other stakeholders is important for promoting local products.

At the same time, agriculture and tourism compete for water during the same dry summer period. Research on Crete describes irrigation as the dominant water use and identifies losses from inefficient transfer and field use. Other studies stress the need for better information, water monitoring and cooperation between authorities and users.

For Gozo, the important lesson is that agriculture-tourism integration cannot be discussed only as a marketing opportunity. It is also a resource-management issue. The visitor economy creates demand for local food, but it also increases demand for water, labour, land, transport and waste capacity.

A Gozo model should therefore ask whether tourism helps agriculture capture more value while also ensuring that shared island resources are managed fairly.

13. Case Study: Sardinia - Generational Renewal Over Time

Sardinia offers a longer-term example of young-farmer support. An EU CAP Network evaluation reports that almost 6,000 young people were supported in setting up farms across successive rural development periods, with close to EUR 200 million spent on premiums. In 2026, Sardinia launched another young-farmer installation call.

The scale is not comparable with Gozo, but the experience raises an important question: what happens after the start-up grant?

For Gozo, generational renewal should be evaluated through survival, income, succession and business development over five or ten years, not simply through the number of approved applications. A new entrant who receives funding but cannot access land, markets, labour or advice may still leave the sector.

The Sardinian case also shows that generational renewal is a long-term policy area rather than a one-off scheme. Gozo's smaller scale could actually make long-term mentoring and follow-up easier to organise.

14. Case Study: Small Mediterranean Satellite Islands - The Double-Insularity Lens

A 2025 systematic review of agriculture on small Mediterranean islands identifies double insularity as a distinct problem for satellite islands, including Gozo. It notes that goods and passengers may need to move first through the larger island, adding cost, while administrative dependence can mean that support designed at a wider regional level does not always reach smaller territories effectively.

This comparison is especially important because large Mediterranean islands such as Sardinia, Sicily, Corsica and Crete are not direct equivalents of Gozo. They have larger internal markets, more administrative capacity and more room for specialised services.

Gozo may therefore have more in common, in structural terms, with smaller islands located around larger island systems than with the large islands themselves. This suggests that future benchmarking should include places such as the smaller Aegean islands and circum-Sicilian or circum-Sardinian islands, where the extra transport link and dependence on a larger island are part of everyday economic life.

The policy implication is not automatically higher subsidy. The first step is better measurement: which costs, delays, service gaps or market barriers are genuinely caused by double insularity, and which can be reduced through organisation, digital access, shared services or better logistics?

15. From Case Studies to Gozo: What Transfers and What Does Not

Jurisdiction	Useful idea	Why relevant	Important difference
Corsica	Quality/origin and processing	Shows how island identity can support value-added food	Much larger; French institutional and certification context
Balearic Islands	Recognition of insularity costs; tourism-food links	Similar island cost pressures and strong tourism demand	Much larger visitor economy and direct regional government powers
Crete	Local food-tourism networks; water management	Tourism and farming share markets and scarce water	Far larger agricultural area and population
Sardinia	Long-term young-farmer support	Shows generational renewal requires sustained effort	Scale and land base are not comparable
Small satellite islands	Double-insularity perspective	Closest structural comparison to Gozo	Data and institutional arrangements vary widely

16. Applying the Framework to Gozo's Farming Economy

16.1 Land: improve value, access and continuity

Land policy should not focus only on the number of hectares. It should also consider whether productive land is actively used, whether parcels can be managed efficiently, whether young or expanding farmers can access land, and whether succession keeps viable holdings together.

Where physical consolidation is difficult, operational consolidation may still be possible: neighbouring parcels can share machinery, irrigation planning, access routes or crop planning without changing ownership.

16.2 Water: move from supply thinking to productivity thinking

More water security is important, but supply alone is not a complete strategy. Farms should also know where water creates the greatest economic and food-security value, where losses occur and which practices improve soil moisture and resilience.

A future water discussion could combine storage, irrigation efficiency, crop choice, soil health, monitoring, treated-water quality and drought planning.

16.3 Livestock: value, resilience and circularity

Gozo's livestock sector is economically and culturally important but exposed to feed costs, waste-management pressures, energy costs and limited processing options. A value approach would examine animal

productivity, product differentiation, local processing, manure and nutrient management, energy recovery where feasible, animal welfare and market returns together rather than as separate issues.

16.4 Horticulture: reliability and market coordination

For horticulture, one of the strongest opportunities may be better coordination between seasonal production and local demand. A simple crop and supply calendar shared with buyers could help restaurants, retailers and institutions plan purchases while helping farmers identify periods of shortage or oversupply.

16.5 Processing: keeping value on the island

Processing can extend shelf life, reduce waste and create higher-value products, but small volumes can make facilities difficult to sustain. Shared or modular processing, contract processing and carefully selected product lines may therefore be more realistic than large standalone facilities.

16.6 Local procurement and hospitality

The local market should not be romanticised. Buyers need price, quality, consistency, traceability and delivery. Farmers need fair terms and realistic volumes. Structured buyer-producer dialogue could identify where these requirements can meet.

16.7 Digital tools

Digitalisation should solve a practical problem. Useful examples may include irrigation monitoring, shared machinery booking, simple stock and order systems, direct-sales platforms, traceability, weather alerts and record management. Technology that adds another administrative burden should not be treated as progress.

17. A Gozo Value Test

A simple way to keep the discussion focused is to apply a 'Gozo Value Test' to major ideas, investments or schemes. The test would not decide policy automatically. It would force a broader discussion before resources are committed.

- Does it improve the farmer's long-term economic return?
- Does it create more value from limited land, water, labour or infrastructure?
- Does it reduce dependence on an input or service that is difficult to access from Gozo?
- Does it improve quality, reliability or market differentiation?
- Can small farms use it, or is it designed mainly around larger operators?
- Can farmers cooperate around it without losing independence?
- Does it build skills or knowledge as well as physical assets?
- Does it strengthen succession or create a more attractive role for younger people?
- Does it reduce waste, environmental pressure or climate exposure?
- Does it recognise the extra practical effects of double insularity?
- Is there evidence of demand, use or a viable operating model after grant funding ends?

18. A Possible 2027-2038 Learning Roadmap

Because this is a discussion document, the period should be treated as a learning process rather than a fixed list of projects.

Period	Purpose	Examples	Main evidence needed
2027-2029	Understand and test	Farm and buyer surveys; double-insularity cost study; shared-service pilots; water-productivity demonstrations; mentoring; selected value-chain studies	Baseline data, actual use, costs, farmer and buyer feedback
2030-2033	Build what works	Expand useful shared services; stronger origin systems; processing/logistics solutions; market agreements; applied training and farm management support	Farm income effects, market uptake, service utilisation, resource savings
2034-2036	Deepen specialisation	Develop successful product niches; strengthen external markets where justified; improve succession pathways and technical networks	Product value, business survival, quality consistency, new entrants
2037-2038	Review and renew	Independent review; retain effective measures; stop weak ones; update island constraints and opportunities; prepare next strategy	Long-term viability, resilience, generational renewal and resource productivity

19. What Should Be Measured?

If Gozo adopts a broader idea of growth, it also needs broader indicators. These should complement, not replace, conventional agricultural statistics.

- Farm income and value added.
- Value generated per hectare for relevant activities.
- Water use and value supported per unit of irrigation water where data are reliable.
- Farmer share of final product value.
- Share of output sold through differentiated, direct or higher-value channels.
- Use and financial sustainability of shared services.
- Local hospitality and retail purchasing of Gozitan products.

- New entrants, successful successions and five-year retention.
- Participation in management, technical and mentoring programmes.
- Adoption of practical resource-saving technology.
- Processing and value retained within Gozo.
- Farmer-reported barriers linked specifically to double insularity.
- Buyer satisfaction with reliability, quality and availability.
- Farmer confidence and investment intentions.

20. Questions for a Wider Gozo Discussion

- What does a viable Gozitan farm look like in 2038?
- Which products should Gozo specialise in, and which are unlikely to compete sustainably?
- Where is the largest gap between the price paid by the consumer and the return received by the farmer?
- Which parts of the value chain could realistically remain or return to Gozo?
- Which machinery, services or facilities should be shared?
- How should Gozo measure the real additional cost of double insularity?
- Which services currently require farmers to depend unnecessarily on Malta?
- Can some of those services be delivered digitally, periodically in Gozo or through shared specialist capacity?
- How can tourism demand be converted into stable agricultural demand rather than occasional promotion?
- What would make hotels and restaurants commit to more local purchasing?
- What would make a young person choose farming over another career?
- How can older farmers transfer knowledge as well as land and assets?
- Which farm data would be genuinely useful to farmers rather than another reporting requirement?
- Where does water create the highest long-term value for Gozo?
- What can Gozo learn from Mediterranean islands without importing policies that do not fit its scale?

21. A Possible Role for GCAF

GCAF can use this framework as a neutral platform for discussion. It does not need to begin with a fixed list of demands. It can begin by testing the questions with farmers and other stakeholders.

Possible work during the early years could include an annual farming roundtable, a farmer survey, buyer meetings, a double-insularity evidence paper, visits or exchanges with Mediterranean island organisations, short case studies, shared-service feasibility work and a periodic State of Farming in Gozo report.

GCAF could also act as a bridge between practical farm experience and policy. This is particularly useful where national statistics describe Malta as a whole and do not fully show the operating conditions of Gozo.

The objective should be evidence-led representation: identify the problem, understand its scale, compare possible solutions, test practical ideas and then advocate for what the evidence supports.

22. Conclusion: Learning How to Grow Within Gozo's Limits

Gozo's farming future cannot be built on the assumption that land, water, labour and infrastructure will always expand to meet demand. They will not.

The more useful question is how the island can increase the value, resilience and quality of its farming economy within those limits.

That means looking beyond physical size. A farm can grow through knowledge. It can grow through better people. It can grow through stronger quality. It can grow through specialisation. It can grow by cooperating with other farms. It can grow by retaining more value from processing and markets. It can grow by wasting less water, time and inputs.

The experience of other Mediterranean islands shows that there is no single island model. Corsica demonstrates the value of origin and quality. The Balearics show the importance of recognising insularity costs and connecting food with tourism. Crete shows why water and tourism-agriculture relations must be managed together. Sardinia shows that generational renewal needs long-term commitment. Smaller satellite islands show why double insularity deserves separate attention.

Gozo's model must therefore be its own. Its small scale and double insularity are not temporary conditions to be solved away. They are the starting conditions around which a more focused, flexible and value-led farming economy can be designed.

The purpose of the 2027-2038 period should not be to prove that Gozo can farm like a larger region. It should be to learn how a small, double-insular region can grow within restricted space and resources: by improving value, knowledge, quality, organisation, skills and the productivity of the resources already available.

Reference Notes and Case-Study Sources

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About this Discussion Document

This document has been prepared by the Gozo Confederation for Agriculture and Fisheries (GCAF) to encourage a long-term discussion on the future of farming in Gozo. It uses a management and small-island perspective

centred on the idea that growth in a resource-constrained economy can come through quality, knowledge, people, specialisation, cooperation and better use of resources, rather than through physical expansion alone.

The international examples are reference points. They are not presented as direct models for Gozo. Further work should include consultation with Gozitan farmers, livestock breeders, buyers, technical experts, public bodies and younger people considering entry into agriculture.