

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER AND INTERRELATED REGIONS AND DISTRICTS

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*Update Note to the Addendum
“Interrelated Regions and Districts for Malta and Gozo”
Annexed to the Study Paper
“Proposals For An Improved Malta Electoral System”*

This note proposes another solution of interrelated regions and districts, now based on the six regions as detailed in the Local Government White Paper. It also serves as a comparative study to the one put forward in the Addendum where a similar organizational structure of interrelated regions and districts for Malta and Gozo was proposed, with the districts also serving as electoral divisions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Reference to the Local Government White Paper

The Local Government White Paper, published on 19th October 2018, refers to the existing five Regions of Malta as established by Act No. XVI of 2009, namely, Southern Region, South Eastern Region, Central Region, Northern Region and Gozo Region. Then, in section 1.2, the White Paper proposes to revert from five Regions to six Regions, namely, Region 1, Region 2, Region 3, Region 4, Region 5 and Region 6.

1.2 Reference to the Addendum

The Addendum “Interrelated Regions and Districts for Malta and Gozo” to the Study Paper “Proposals for an Improved Malta Electoral System” details a mathematically based system that establishes a districts format within the Regions of Malta organisation structure. In so doing, it also proposed a revision to the Regions of Malta.

1.3 Main Objectives of This Update Note to the Addendum

This note updates the proposal included in the Addendum and aligns it with reference to the proposed regions as detailed in the White Paper. It is to be noted that the same method for establishing the districts (as described in the Addendum) is here used to define a set of new proposed districts within the newly proposed regions as detailed in the White Paper.

This update note also serves as a comparative study using a different regional organisational structure to check the method used to establish a districts format within the respective regions. In fact, the method used is proved to be effective to define a set of districts within both formats of regions.

Should the final format of districts as approved in parliament be different from the one proposed in the White Paper, the proposed method would also be successful to define the districts format within the finally approved regions format as part of the local government organizational structure.

1.4 Parameters Governing this Exercise

All the parameters listed in the Addendum are applied, with the exception of this alternative proposal:

- The number of members to be elected to parliament from each district is to be a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 8.

2. THE REGIONS AS ESTABLISHED IN THE WHITE PAPER

Table 2a

Definition of the Regions and the Number of Districts in Each Region					
Region	Localities	Registered Voters in Region	Region Size Factor	Projected Number of Districts	Actual Number of Districts
I	Attard, Balzan, Iklin, Lija, Mellieħa, Mgarr, Mosta, Naxxar, San Pawl il-Baħar	69,095	12.807	2.13	2
II	Birkirkara, Gżira, Għargħur, Pembroke, San Ġiljan, San Ġwann, Sliema, Swieqi, Ta' Xbiex	62,603	11.604	1.93	2
III	Dingli, Ħamrun, Mdina, Msida, Mtarfa, Qormi, Rabat, Santa Venera, Siggiewi, Żebbuġ	65,496	12.140	2.02	2
IV	Birgu, Bormla, Fgura, Floriana, Isla, Kalkara, Marsa, Paola, Pietà, Santa Luċija, Tarxien, Valletta, Xgħajra, Żabbar	64,553	11.965	1.99	2
V	Birżebbuġa, Gudja, Għaxaq, Kirkop, Luqa, Marsaskala, Marsaxlokk, Mqabba, Qrendi, Safi, Żejtun, Żurrieq	59,437	11.017	1.84	2
VI	All Localities in Gozo and Comino	29,508	5.470	0.91	1
TOTAL	(Electoral Quota = 350,692 ÷ 65 = 5,395)	350,692			11

Table 2a lists the localities forming part of the proposed regions as defined in the Local Government White Paper. The figures in this table are based on the data taken from the latest electoral register published in April 2018.

First, the “region size factor” is determined for each region by dividing the number of the registered voters in each region by the electoral quota. This factor is then divided by the average number of seats allowed in each district [(4+8) divided by 2 = 6] so as to define the number of districts required in each region.

2.1 Maps of the Regions

The map of the existing Regions of Malta is shown in Appendix 2, whilst the map of the Regions proposed in the Local Government White Paper is shown in Appendix 3.

3. ESTABLISHING THE DISTRICTS

Table 3a

Definition of the Districts and the Distribution of the 65 Seats						
Region	District	Localities	Registered Voters	Projected Seats	Round Up	Actual Seats
I	1	Mellieħa, Mġarr, Naxxar, San Pawl il-Baħar	34,382	6.373	6	6
	2	Attard, Balzan, Iklin, Lija, Mosta	34,713	6.434	6	6
II	3	Birkirkara, Għargħur, San Ġwann, Swieqi	37,114	6.879	7	7
	4	Gżira, Pembroke, San Ġiljan, Sliema, Ta' Xbiex	25,489	4.725	5	5
III	5	Ħamrun, Msida, Qormi, Santa Venera	33,218	6.157	6	6
	6	Dingli, Mdina, Mtarfa, Rabat, Siġġiewi, Żebbuġ	32,278	5.983	6	6
IV	7	Floriana, Marsa, Paola, Pietà, Santa Luċija, Tarxien, Valletta	29,639	5.494	5	6
	8	Birgu, Bormla, Fgura, Isla, Kalkara, Xgħajra, Żabbar	34,914	6.472	6	6
V	9	Birżebbuġa, Marsaskala, Marsaxlokk, Żejtun	29,713	5.508	6	6
	10	Gudja, Għaxaq, Kirkop, Luqa, Mqabba, Qrendi, Safi, Żurrieq	29,724	5.510	6	6
VI	11	All Localities in Gozo and Comino	29,508	5.470	5	5
Total		(Electoral Quota = 350,692 ÷ 65 = 5,395)	350,692		64	65

Table 3a defines the required eleven districts in the respective regions, two districts in each of the five regions in Malta, and the remaining one defined as the district for Gozo. The number of members to be elected from each district (in Table 3a indicated as “seats”) is calculated by dividing the number of the registered voters in each district by the electoral quota. The number of seats in each district is adjusted with the least mathematical intervention so that the total of seats in parliament totals up to 65. As can be seen, the number of seats defined ranges from 5 to 7. The range of the allowable number of seats in each district (between 4 and 8) serves as a guarantee that the system would be flexible enough to contain any fluctuations in the number of registered voters in each district in the foreseeable future. The map of the (white paper) regions and the proposed districts is shown in Appendix 1.

3.1 Hamlets

The Local Government White Paper lists the sixteen hamlets that to date are run independently by their respective local administrative committees.

Out of these sixteen hamlets, Swatar is the only hamlet with its territory spread out within the boundaries of two separate localities, namely, Birkirkara and Msida, which now, as proposed in the White Paper, are to be located in two separate regions. So, unless modified, Swatar will not only be located within two different localities, but also within two different regions. It is here being proposed to have Swatar defined as one hamlet responding to one locality only and situated within one particular region only.

3.2 Numbering of Regions and Districts

It is here being proposed to identify the Regions using Roman numbers, namely, Region I, Region II, Region III, Region IV, Region V and Region VI; and to identify the Districts using Arabic numbers, namely, District 1, District 2, District 3, District 4, District 5, District 6, District 7, District 8, District 9, District 10 and District 11.

4. COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES

To further check the validity of the proposed organisational structure made up of interrelated regions and districts, other similar exercises (not included in this paper) were carried out relative to the electoral registers published in October 2007, January 2013 and May 2017 respectively. All these exercises projected the same number of districts within the respective regions.

4.1 Proposed Organisational Structure and Registered Voter Changes

As to the number of seats in each district, had the proposed organisational structure been effective at the time of the last three general elections, the results that would have been obtained are shown in Table 4a. For comparison purposes, the result relative to the April 2018 electoral register is also shown in Table 4a.

Table 4a

District	Electoral Register							
	October 2007		January 2013		May 2017		April 2018	
	Registered Voters	Seats	Registered Voters	Seats	Registered Voters	Seats	Registered Voters	Seats
1	26,237	6	30,264	6	33,154	6	34,382	6
2	29,028	6	31,667	6	33,709	6	34,713	6
3	33,559	7	35,438	7	36,180	7	37,114	7
4	25,360	5	26,098	5	25,390	5	25,489	5
5	32,232	7	32,823	6	32,542	6	33,218	6
6	28,638	6	30,069	6	31,217	6	32,278	6
7	30,681	6	30,171	6	29,243	6	29,639	6
8	32,636	7	33,841	7	34,057	7	34,914	6
9	24,845	5	27,069	5	28,766	5	29,713	6
10	25,844	5	27,809	6	28,846	6	29,724	6
11	26,188	5	27,714	5	28,648	5	29,508	5
TOTAL	315,248	65	332,963	65	341,752	65	350,692	65

The data in Table 4a shows that the proposed organisational structure of interrelated fixed regions and fixed districts would have reacted well to the changes in the number of the registered voters over the considered period of more than 10 years.

As can be seen from Table 4a, from one election to another, there would have been changes in the number of seats allocated to some of the districts. This would have been due to the heavy increase or decrease of the registered voters within the respective districts between 2007 and 2017.

4.2 District Seat Value

Table 4b

% Deviation of the District Seat Value from the District Mean				
		Gozo District	Positive Deviation	Negative Deviation
Actual Figures for Districts in 2017 General Election		+ 8.97%	+ 0.39% to + 8.97%	- 0.19% to - 5.36%
Projected Figures for (White Paper) Districts based on Data from Electoral Register	October 2007	+ 8.01%	+ 2.47% to + 8.01%	- 0.23% to - 9.82%
	January 2013	+ 8.22%	+ 1.91% to + 8.22%	- 1.16% to - 9.51%
	May 2017	+ 8.99%	+ 3.17% to + 9.44%	- 1.03% to - 8.55%
	April 2018	+ 9.39%	+ 2.62% to + 9.39%	- 0.28% to - 8.44%

Table 4b presents the figures relative to the positive and negative percentage deviations of the district seat value from the district mean. The values thus obtained are compared to the percentage deviations recorded in the 2017 general election. The figures for the Gozo district are also compared directly in Table 4b.

Here, reference is made to the second part of the concluding note in section 5 of the study paper:

«It is pertinent to observe that electoral division 13 (Gozo & Comino) has already been defined as a fixed district, irrespective of the varying number of registered voters within it. Once such a change has been proven to be possible and workable for one district, the same principle could be applied when defining the other districts in the island of Malta. »

Table 4b confirms that the highest positive and negative percentage deviations obtained when defining the district seat value from the district mean, compare very well with the actual highest positive percentage deviation recorded for the Gozo district in the 2017 general election.

Similar percentage deviation to those that has been acceptable for the Gozo district in the last three general elections, when the registered voters in the Gozo district were not regulated, should also be acceptable for all the districts of Malta and Gozo in all future general elections.

As has been proposed in the study paper “Proposals For An Improved Malta Electoral System”, the registered voters in all the districts are no longer to be regulated.

4.3 Registered Voter Changes between October 2007 and April 2018

Part of this comparative exercise includes also a study of the changes that actually happened to the number of the registered voters in each locality, district and region between October 2007 and April 2018.

Table 4c summarizes the main figures that show the tendencies of the changes experienced. It presents two sets of percentage increases and decreases in the number of the registered voters, one that happened over a period of 10 years between October 2007 and October 2017, and the other for the changes that occurred between October 2017 and April 2018, when all voters above the age of 16 were included for the first time in the electoral register.

Table 4c

REGION	DISTRICT	LOCALITIES	REGISTERED VOTER CHANGES	
			OCT. 2007-2017	APR. 2018 (16+)
I	1	Mellieħa, Mgarr, Naxxar, San Pawl il-Baħar	+27.13%	+3.08%
	2	Attard, Balzan, Iklin, Lija, Mosta	+16.53%	+2.62%
	TOTAL	REGION I	+21.56%	+2.85%
II	3	Birkirkara, Għargħur, San Ġwann, Swieqi	+7.74%	+2.64%
	4	Gżira, Pembroke, San Ġiljan, Sliema, Ta' Xbiex	-0.41%	+0.92%
	TOTAL	REGION II	+4.24%	+1.93%
III	5	Ħamrun, Msida, Qormi, Santa Venera	+0.81%	+2.23%
	6	Dingli, Mdina, Mtarfa, Rabat, Siġġiewi, Żebbuġ	+9.35%	+3.07%
	TOTAL	REGION III	+4.83%	+2.64%
IV	7	Floriana, Marsa, Paola, Pietà, Santa Luċija, Tarxien, Valletta	-5.11%	+1.80%
	8	Birgu, Bormla, Fgura, Isla, Kalkara, Xgħajra, Żabbar	+4.33%	+2.54%
	TOTAL	REGION IV	-0.24%	+2.20%
V	9	Birżebbuġa, Marsaskala, Marsaxlokk, Żejtun	+16.09%	+3.02%
	10	Gudja, Għaxaq, Kirkop, Luqa, Mqabba, Qrendi, Safi, Żurrieq	+12.25%	+2.46%
	TOTAL	REGION V	+14.13%	+2.74%
VI	11	All Localities in Gozo and Comino	+9.99%	+2.45%
	TOTAL	REGION VI	+9.99%	+2.45%
GRAND TOTAL FOR MALTA AND GOZO			+8.56%	+2.47%

The main salient points in Table 4c are the following:

- Whilst in the 10 year period 2007-2017 the number of the registered voters in Region IV decreased by -0.24%, that of Region I increased by +21.56%, and that of Region V increased by +14.13%.
- The increase in the number of the registered voters in the other regions was relatively nearer to the average increase for the whole of Malta and Gozo which was +8.56%.
- In particular, the number of the registered voters in Districts 4 and 7 registered a decrease of -0.41% and -5.11% respectively.
- The increase of the registered voters that resulted in the latest published electoral register is more balanced relative to the average increase for the whole of Malta and Gozo which was at +2.47%.

5. CONCLUSION

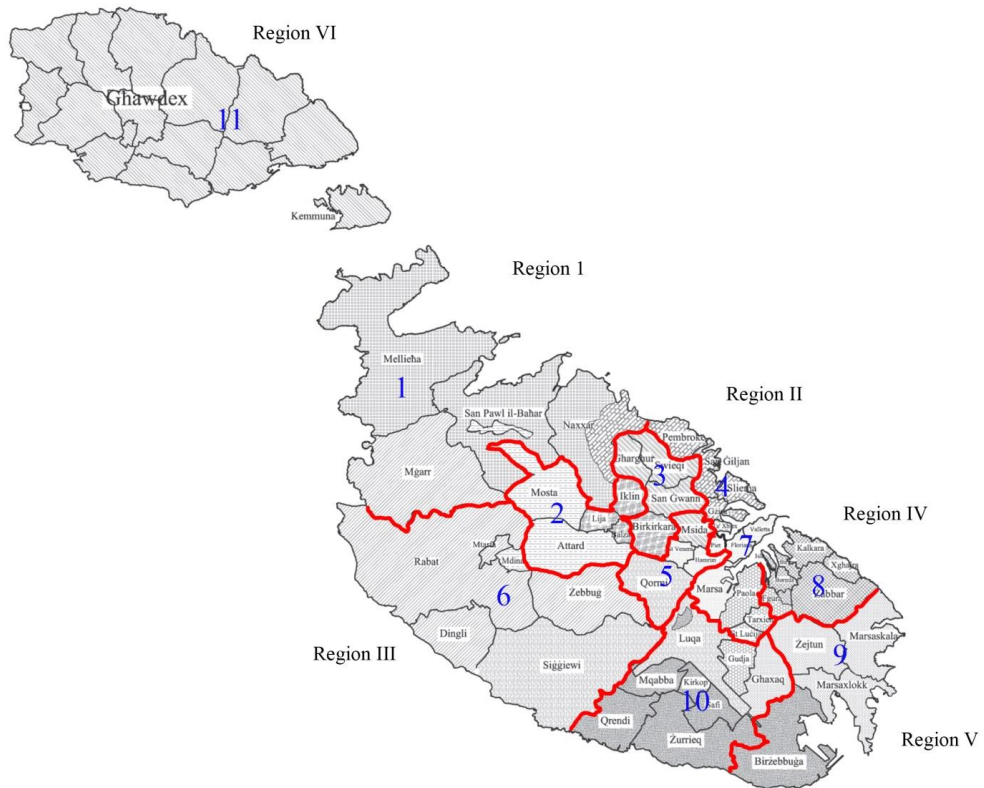
Whilst one of the objectives of the Local Government White Paper is to establish a new format of regions for Malta and Gozo, it is here being proposed to also establish fixed districts within the said proposed regions. The total number of fixed districts, here established at eleven, is expected to remain stable in the foreseeable future. These districts would also be used as electoral divisions, and there would be no need to revise electoral divisions prior to future general elections.

The local government organisational structure as proposed in the White Paper should also include the districts as detailed in this note, and these are to be established in line with an appropriate revision of the Electoral System as outlined in the Study Paper "Proposals for an Improved Malta Electoral System". This would provide a tangible link between the Local Government structure and the Parliament at national level.

APPENDIX 1

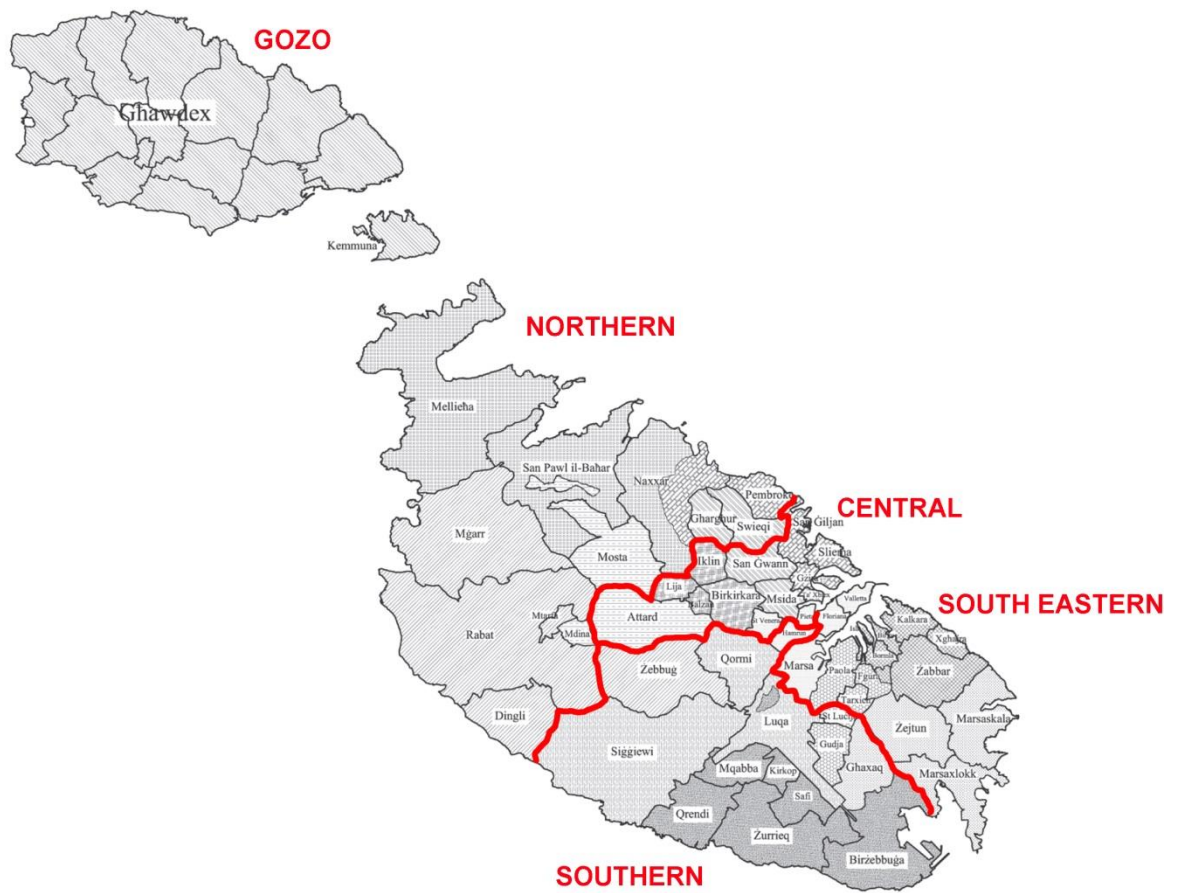
MALTA AND GOZO

MAP OF THE (White Paper) REGIONS AND PROPOSED DISTRICTS



APPENDIX 2

**MALTA AND GOZO
MAP OF THE EXISTING REGIONS OF MALTA**



APPENDIX 3

**MALTA AND GOZO
MAP OF THE REGIONS AS PROPOSED IN THE WHITE PAPER**

