

**Ministry for
Gozo**

Directorate General Operations

OBJECTIVES

The overall objectives of the Directorate General (Operations) are:

- to participate actively in the development and implementation of the Ministry's strategic, operational and resource plans and co-operate and collaborate with senior staff towards the achievement of the Ministry's goals by sharing resources, providing support and assistance, disseminating information of mutual interest, etc;
- to provide direction to Heads of Directorates, including the Chief Information Officer within the Office of the Permanent Secretary, in the preparation of operational plans to support the Ministry in the implementation of policy directives;
- in liaison with respective Heads of Directorates, to plan, develop and ensure the implementation of work standards within the Office of the Permanent Secretary to ensure quality, timeliness and cost-effective results;
- to establish and maintain effective channels of communication with client groups, and with other ministries, departments and agencies to enhance the exchange of information and ideas on matters of common interest and to ensure that services and programmes are appropriate to the needs of clients, as well as being compatible and complementary to other service initiatives;
- to co-ordinate the operations and activities of the line departments of the Ministry;
- to manage the day-to-day operations of the Back Office Unit as well as those of the Gozo Offices of the Land Registry, Public Registry and Notary to Government.

NOTARY TO GOVERNMENT OFFICE

The Office of the Notary to Government in Gozo prepares, drafts and publishes deeds to which the Government, including parastatal bodies, are a party.

This Office is also responsible for the conservation of Notarial Acts according to law and for their safe-keeping and custody regarding immovables situated in Gozo and Comino. Such acts can be inspected by the public who can also demand a copy of relevant deeds according to the relevant laws. During the year, 864 individuals requested copies of relevant deeds. Revenue collected amounted to €4,338.29.

The majority of notaries practising in Malta continued to send copies of deeds published in Malta relating to transfers of immovables situated in Gozo and Comino.

This Office also has a storage room in the Gozo Administration Centre, where registers of deeds deposited at this Office are kept.

CIVIL STATUS REPORTING OFFICE

The functions of the Civil Status Reporting Office are to input data regarding birth certificates.

During 2008, the total of birth certificates inputted was 123,506. Moreover, 57,328 birth certificates were verified during the same period.

In the course of the year, 14 employees attached to this section started to work on telework.

LAND REGISTRY OFFICE

This section deals with applications regarding the registration of property in Gozo. The following applications were received during the year:

Applications LRAs	1,665
Charges	584
Official searches	520
Site plans	2,000

Compared to previous years, there was a record number of applications for both charges and official charges. There was a slight decrease in the number of applications for registration of properties whereas the number of site plans issued was the same as in previous years.

PUBLIC REGISTRY OFFICE

During the year, 2,498 Notes of Enrolment and 1,734 Notes of Hypothec were registered in this Office. Notes of References relating to hypothecs amounted to 677 while 28 Legal Hypothecs were registered. The number of Schedules of Deposit relating to redemption of ground rent of immovables in Gozo and Comino was 85. There were also 20 Warrants of Prohibitory Injunctions and 18 sales by auction (*subbasta*).

The acts registered by the Civil Status Section were the following:

Births	315
Marriages	194
Deaths	246

The certificates issued by this section were:

Extract Certificates	7,376
Full Certificates	233

The Marriage Registry processed 199 marriage applications. During the same year there were:

Religious Marriages	150
Civil Marriages	43
Other Religions	Nil

During 2008, searches regarding transfers and hypothecs, as well as their input and testamentary searches were ordered through the Gozo Public Registry. The official searches were delivered through the Public Registry.

SALARIES SECTION (HEALTH DIVISION)

The main functions of this section are to:

- pay the salaries due to personnel within the Health Division after the required amendments or adjustments are received by the respective sections within the same Division; subsequently provide the Treasury Department with the necessary information via the computer-based network program *Payper*;
- co-ordinate with the Personnel Section on matters concerning the attendance, transfers, resignations and change in working hours of the employees;
- issue reports relative to the Personal Emoluments block on a regular basis; and

- effect the required payments to governmental and non-governmental entities which provide their services to the Health Division.

THE TREASURY SALARIES AND PENSIONS SECTION

This Section is responsible for:

- the proper processing of salary and the timely issue of payrolls thereof;
- the proper maintenance of adequate records of promotions, progressions and appointments of all employees on the government payroll;
- the correct interpretation of the various government collective agreements, MPO and Finance circulars and the relevant paragraphs in the Public Service Management Code;
- the processing of data supplied by the salaries officers in every department to ensure the timely printing of payroll and cheques;
- the introduction of a new Payroll system in conjunction with the Section's Payroll Administrator (IT System) and the Malta Information Technology Agency;
- liaising with departments in order to attend to queries raised by employees and the public in general;
- the payment of Treasury pensions on a monthly basis; and
- the issue of gratuity to eligible retirees.

During the year the Treasury Salaries and Pensions Section succeeded in ensuring the timely processing of salaries and pensions and the timely issue of payrolls.

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICE SECTION

The Freephone 153 helpline forms part of the Government Information Service. The helpline provides the general public as well as government entities, with information ranging from a simple query, such as the contact details of a particular office, to more complex requests on current government policies.

During 2008, a total of 65,777 calls were manually logged by the operators working on Freephone153. Requests by e-mail averaged five per working day. Average messages recorded after office hours and replied to on the following working day involved ten queries daily. However, the Unit often refers directly to government departments and entities particularly on matters that are directly affected by changing policies and procedures.

CONSUMER UNIT

The Consumer Unit deals with consumer complaints. The office offers the freephone service to both Maltese and Gozitan customers. Complaints may arise when buying a product and even when getting a service from a particular establishment. It is to be noted that this office accepts complaints amounting to €3,494 only. Complaints exceeding this amount will be dealt with at the Civil Court.

Complaints are registered on the Complaints Handling system, where all the details of both the customer and the trader are registered together with the details of the complaint.

The following is a table showing the number of cases received every month during 2008 via the freephone service:

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
377	155	463	550	733	774	1,047	1,316	766	861	1,057	1,195

ENERGY BENEFIT SECTION

The main functions of this section are:

- keying of energy benefit applications which are then assessed and authorised;
- authorisation of Humanitarian cases;
- dealing with PA 109's and call letters forwarded by A/O's;
- carrying out the necessary amendments on SABS as regards EB application details;
- paying arrears wherever applicable;
- providing responses to queries raised by the Social Security Department, District Offices and the Social Policy Information Centre;
- dealing with error/warning reports issued with every voucher generation process; and
- dealing with MITA regarding the running of the Energy Benefit System.

The following table outlines the work performed by the section during 2008:

	Total
Authorised Applications	3,074
Assessed Applications	2,648
Humanitarian Assessed	53
Humanitarian Authorised	51
PA 109 's Assessed	1,626
PA 109 Authorised	1,562
Overpayments Created	24
Arrears Created	213
Vouchers for Re-dating	650
Incoming Mail: <i>Call Letters</i>	1,511
<i>PA 109</i>	2,206
<i>New Applications</i>	2,854

INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT (CALL CENTRE)

The Call Centre's main objective is to answer all incoming telephone and e-mail queries relating to Income Tax and Social Security Contributions. Queries are made by all categories of taxpayers, namely individuals, companies, employers and expatriates.

On 4 January, 2008 the Call Centre started receiving its first live telephone queries. In May the Call Centre also started receiving general correspondence regarding changes to be made to Taxpayers Personal Index. The following table is a breakdown of telephone calls, e-mails and correspondence answered by the Call Centre during 2008:

Month	Telephone calls	E-mails	Correspondence
Total	90,561	6,744	3,168

The feedback received through the Call Centre is used to help the Inland Revenue Department update its policies, procedures and legislation.

MARIO CALLEJA
Director General (Operations)

Corporate Services Directorate

Mission Statement

To provide through the Permanent Secretary a central support service and to co-ordinate the corporate activities of the departments falling under the Ministry for Gozo.

During 2008, the Directorate of Corporate Services (DCS) continued to improve the quality of the support services provided to the other departments and branches of the Ministry for Gozo, particularly in the areas of financial planning and management, human resources management, information technology development and office services. The Directorate co-ordinates the compilation of the Business Plans and Financial Estimates and ensures the timely and accurate preparation of management information. It contributes to the collective management of the Ministry through policy development.

Other works carried out by the Directorate during 2008 consisted of:

- compiling information related to replies to parliamentary questions;
- co-ordinating progressions and promotions of staff in the Ministry and line departments;
- approving advance payments made by the various departments under the Ministry;
- raising financial returns as requested by the Ministry of Finance, the Treasury Department and the National Statistics Office;
- raising quarterly returns of suppliers who do not provide the department with a fiscal receipt;
- facilitating the implementation of central and ministerial policies and initiatives across the Ministry;
- vetting requests for the receipt of a 'qualification allowance';
- updating monthly returns regarding commitments raised under the various capital projects;
- recording Inventory items procured by this Office and making the necessary information available to the departments in order to update their respective asset records;
- co-ordinating requests for information made by the central agencies; and
- raising on a quarterly basis financial information regarding Accrual Accounting.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The DCS liaised with the other departments to ensure the effective implementation of corporate human resources policies, systems and procedures prescribed by the Management and Personnel Office. It also continued to provide support and assistance to the Ministry's line departments in the recruitment and deployment of human resources. In all, 48 appointments were issued during the year and the Directorate co-ordinated the promotion exercise in respect of one officer as well as the progression of two Senior Principals, two Principals, 16 Assistant Principals, one Staff Nurse, one Enrolled Nurse, one Court Messenger, one Supervisor and one employee in Group II. Moreover, the DCS processed the confirmation of appointment of four employees.

In particular, the Directorate provided support services in the field of human resources management and development. It also ensured conformity with policies, systems and procedures and the provision of data and other information required by central government agencies. As part of its task to ensure the effective implementation of corporate human resource policies, systems and procedures, the DCS continued liaising with the Ministry's other line departments. In this connection the staff complement of the Ministry was monitored and vacancies were filled in accordance with the requirements of the departments.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

During the year staff development continued to be given a high priority by the Directorate. Training programmes on the following topics were organised, in collaboration with the Staff Development Organisation and other departments, for government employees serving in Gozo in order to enhance and upgrade their competence level in accordance with today's needs and challenges:

- MS Word Introduction
- MS Word Advanced
- MS Windows XP
- MS Access XP
- MS Excel XP Introduction
- MS Excel XP Advanced
- MS PowerPoint XP
- Introductory course to the Internet
- Introductory course to Government Mail
- Admitting and Emergency Department: on Infection Control Standard
- Mentorship
- For newly appointed Executive Officers
- Developing Assertiveness and Self-confidence
- Hyperbaric Unit
- Accrual Accounting
- Data Protection
- Building the Future
- Environment Assessment Past, Present and Future
- Basic Life Support Provider and Renewal
- Orthopaedic and Trauma Nursing
- Occupational Health and Safety Principles and Risk Assessment
- Basic Life Support Provider

CO-ORDINATING ACTIVITIES

During 2008, the Directorate took measures to ensure that government services in Gozo are provided in an efficient and effective manner. *Inter alia*, the DCS was responsible for the co-ordination of the verification of sick leave availed of by government employees with a view to curbing abuses, on which initiative the DCS maintained a database. During the year, the DCS asked for 4,126 medical visits to be carried out.

The DCS was also involved in a number of initiatives in accordance with the legal obligations stipulated in the Data Protection Act as well as the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

The Directorate continued to maintain inventory lists and temporarily store and dispose of obsolete, unserviceable and surplus items within the Ministry as provided by the Financial Regulations.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Since November 2007, information systems and information technology related matters fall under the responsibility of the Information Management Unit (IMU) headed by the CIO (Chief Information Officer).

During 2008, IT infrastructure and services were expanded and improved. The whole network infrastructure available within many departmental branches has been enhanced.

This was done through 25 separate Local Area Network extension works in several sites including the Passports Office, Sentinella, Gozo General Hospital and the new ITS Training School. This involved trunking, cabling and patching works which were carried out both by third party contractors and in-house resources depending on the magnitude of the works.

Wide Area Network (fibre) connectivity was also provided to new leased premises at the Downtown Hotel. LAN works in this location have already gone through the design stage.

Extensive LAN extension works were also carried out in various sections at the administration building with a view to connect all users via CAT5 cabling to the new PABX. This is to support the other telephone related initiative involving the laying of multi-core cables (GO) connecting the PAPX and the various data cabinets.

The PABX was upgraded with over 200 extensions and two PRA 32-channel digital external line connections over fibre were installed replacing a number of analogue lines. This represented a substantial improvement in the service complemented with substantial cost savings.

Teleworking facilities were provided to users at the Public Registry Inputting Section and various other sections. Around 20 employees are benefiting from this family friendly measure. The provision of these facilities involved, in most cases, broadband and VPN installations at the users' residence.

During the year, new users were given access to e-mail and internet accounts. At the end of the year the number of e-mail account users and internet account users were 695 and 211 respectively. Five generic email accounts were opened for various sections/departments.

In addition, the IMU, within severe financial constraints, started the process of replacement of PCs under the government wide PC Leasing programme. A total of 84 new PCs, including 26 procured through EU co-funded projects at the new ITS training school, were installed, among which total site hardware replacement at the Private Secretariat (17) and the Gozo Law Courts (21).

Furthermore 30 of the replaced PCs were upgraded/refurbished and redeployed at other sites, in turn replacing even older hardware. This means that a total of 116 users had their hardware upgraded/renewed.

Four videoconferencing sessions were held mainly involving the Gozo and Malta Law Courts and Australian and UK Law Courts/sites.

During the year the department continued to fund and monitor the contracts for the provision of support for technical infrastructure and software applications entered into with MITA.

E-PROCUREMENT

The Chief Information Officer introduced a policy for the leasing of monochrome laser printers. Only one quotation was awarded in the e-procurement system during 2008.

SCHEMES

The Directorate of Corporate Services processed 34 applications for special passes submitted by Gozitans who reside in Malta and have either one of their partners or a close relative residing permanently in Gozo.

The DCS also administered the scheme for the payment of a monthly accommodation subsidy of €116.47 to Gozitan students following University courses in Malta on a full-time basis – 669 students benefited from this subsidy in 2008. A subsidy of €1.26 is also paid to Gozitan employees with government-funded or government-owned institutions for every day of attendance at their workplace – 3,446 applications were received.

The scheme aimed at giving financial assistance to non-government organisations continued to operate in 2008 – 49 Gozitan voluntary organisations have benefited from this scheme which should help them in their endeavours to strengthen the social fabric of the Gozitan community.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

During 2008, the Directorate continued to monitor the expenditure performance under both the Capital and Recurrent Votes of the Ministry for Gozo and to keep a constant watch to maintain financial accountability in the Ministry. The DCS was involved in the processing of Gozo Treasury Pensions; stocking and distribution of counterfoil books; accounting for receipts of all government departments in Gozo and winding up of bank accounts held with the Government Savings Bank. The following figures show revenue/expenditure of the Ministry and the number of Treasury pensioners in Gozo as at end 2008:

Revenue	€	Treasury Pensions	
Fees on contracts/Notarial fees	4,512	Civil	1,082
Court Fees	275,211	Police	138
Services rendered to Local Council	58,640	Widows	147
Miscellaneous Reimbursement	10,498	P.I.S.	2
Miscellaneous Receipts	74	Total	1,369
Expenditure			
Recurrent	€52,967,779.13		
Capital	€4,337,092.00		

Another very important task carried out by this section is the DAS consolidated function in Gozo including the vetting and processing of the Ministry's financial transactions and the performance of the cheque run routine. This office also continued to deal with requests from the general public regarding, *inter alia*, the division of holdings between the heirs of deceased stock holders, changes of addresses, power of attorney, re-dating of dividend warrants and the application of the 15% Final Withholding Tax on dividends.

EMANUEL GRECH
Director (Corporate Services)

Department of Customer Services

INTRODUCTION

The objectives of the Department of Customer Services are to:

- ensure a liaison system among the various operation centres with the objective of improving customer services for the population;
- ensure proper planning relating to customer services;
- manage the branches, offices and sections of the Ministry for Gozo which provide a direct service to the public, ensuring that customers are always given a service of high quality;
- provide a quality health service to Gozitans and visitors to Gozo; and
- co-ordinate and support initiatives of a cultural and/or social nature taken by NGO's, local councils and other organisations.

During 2008, the Department of Customer Services was directly responsible for 23 sections and liaised with the Gozo branches of the Inland Revenue Department, VAT Office and Electoral Office.

EDUCATION OFFICE

The Education Office in Gozo provides a wide range of services to the Gozo College Schools (state schools), church schools and to the three special schools namely the Art School, School of Music and Drama School. Pupils and the public in general were offered services which throughout 2008 were also improved by new initiatives.

Construction works, refurbishment and maintenance works were carried out in practically all the Gozitan schools.

- Construction works at the Agius de Soldanis Girls' Secondary and Junior Lyceum included the finishing of the lift installation and the Technology labs and the Hairdressing room. Two toilets were also refurbished.
- Ninu Cremona Lyceum Complex was given maintenance needed but was kept to a minimum since with the building of the New School the old premises would be demolished in a short time.
- Routine maintenance works were carried out in Nadur Primary School in connection with roofs. Works to start refurbishing the other wing were started.
- Corridor at School of Drama was closed with aluminium apertures to match the primary wing.
- Minor routine works were carried out at Ghajnsielem Primary to render an area safe. New office furniture was manufactured at Gharb carpentry workshop.
- A room for watchman was erected at School of Art. Landscaping was carried out on school ground.
- School hall apertures at Gharb Primary school were replaced by aluminium apertures and other maintenance works involving painting and plastering were carried out.
- Refurbishment works at Xaghra Primary School Hall were finalised.
- Routine roof maintenance was carried out at Żebbuġ Primary
- New electrical installation with energy saving fittings was undertaken at San Lawrenz School corridors.
- Lift at Victoria Primary School was constructed and commissioned
- Lift was constructed and commissioned at Sir M A Refalo.
- A playroom for kinder was constructed at Kerċem Primary. Garden boundary wall was also constructed.
- At Sannat Primary School the ramp for handicapped vans finished and other routine works were carried out.

- Various works were carried out by the carpentry and blacksmith sections for different schools.
- Carpenters constructed toilet furniture for Xewkija Primary.

The Literacy Centre was further equipped with books and periodicals and all schools could make use of its resources throughout the whole scholastic year. This Centre is now open all the time by assignment of a person to supervise when the teacher in charge is performing duties in schools

Peripatetic teachers posted at the Education Office continued to offer their services to all primary schools. Exhibitions were held by the Science Group and the Health and Safety Group.

The YSO section is responsible for the holding of Adult Education courses in Gozo. This section is responsible for the organisation of evening classes in a number of subjects both at Ordinary and Advanced level. This unit also provided the necessary support for the organisation of the Children's Carnival, the Annual Sports Rally and other extracurricular activities. The YSO Section is also responsible for the organisation of weekly visits by students from primary schools to the Environmental Centre at Lunzjata. Programmes are also being organised regularly throughout the scholastic year.

The Hands-on Farming section continued to give regular programmes for all Gozitan schools and there were also visits by schools from Malta.

Education Salaries Section

As in previous years, this section continued to offer its services to all employees who fall under the Education Division in Malta.

Correspondence and communications received by e-mails and telephone calls from Leaves and Records Sections were dealt with efficiency due to Service Standards, and amendments were sent to the Treasury Department in time. Around 674 returns in respect of casual staff were received every four weeks and wage sheets were then issued to every casual employee. Throughout the year, the section processed around 15,275 mid-day break supervision claims which were paid on a quarterly basis. There was an increase in professional development claims which numbered 8,155. The section also processed new entries, mostly pertaining to new teachers and supply teachers.

TAS and ESTS students were also paid by this section.

Two employees commenced teleworking in August and October.

The staff monitored incoming requests for information and complaints, and provided the public with the best service possible. Staff dealt effectively and efficiently with a large volume of incoming queries and requests which were forwarded by the Ministry and other departments.

EXAMINATIONS CENTRE

The Examinations Centre in Gozo is responsible for the running of all local and external examinations held in Gozo. During 2008, the Centre handled the following work:

- *Applications (Local, Matriculation and External Examinations)*: 1,675 local examinations and 324 foreign were received (679 Matsec May; 228 Matsec September; 22 London January; 247 Ordinary May; 310 Matric May; 127 Matric September; 20 LCCI Series 2; 26 LCCI Series 3; 12 English as a Foreign Language; 160 ECDL applications; 21 Wireman Licence A & B; 59 Regular Soldiers in AFM; 9 Foreign University degrees; 63 Principals and 16 Senior Principals). On average, 24,000 examination sittings were held.

Both local and external examination applications were vetted and acknowledged. As this office is connected to the Examinations Department network in Floriana, all Gozo candidates are invoiced through this office and the waiting period from application to payment date is two days.

- *Examination sessions:* There were 450 examination sessions (External, Matriculation and Local Examinations). When the number of candidates was more than 40, outside help was sought by engaging invigilators from other departments to ensure the smooth running of the examinations in session.
- *Certificates:* Over 1,350 certificates were received for distribution to successful students who had sat for the London, ECDL, Degrees and London Chamber of Commerce examinations.
- *Information:* Information is provided regarding the various local, Matsec and external examinations to the hundreds of students who call at the Centre. Examination timetables, syllabuses, results, applications and other related data are also available for ease of reference. In October, various lectures were held in the secondary schools to familiarise students with examination procedures.
- *ECDL examinations:* For the 6th year running this section has been nominated to co-ordinate the European Computer Driving Licence examinations. These examinations are now being held in Gozo.
- *English as a Foreign Language:* Two sessions of this examination were held at the centre. Around 27 sat for these papers.

CULTURE SECTION

Administration

During 2008, the principal efforts of the Culture Section included the following:

- restructuring the administrative set-up at the Gozo Culture Office to assure maximum output of each of the Section's employees;
- initial framework and draft document to establish a Cultural Policy for Gozo and a change in role of the Gozo Cultural Council from an event organiser to a policy co-ordinator;
- close collaboration with Gozitan local councils and other cultural entities on the island to consolidate an Annual Cultural Calendar for Gozo; and
- launching the Cittadella Centre for Culture & Arts as a centre for innovation and creativity as well as a cultural space for artistic expressions of all genres.

During 2008, the Gozo Cultural Council held five committee meetings to discuss and plan the various cultural initiatives held throughout the year.

Organisation of Activities

During 2008, the Culture Section was responsible for the organisation of the following activities:

- The commemoration of five annual National Days, together with the 30 October 1948 tragedy anniversary and the commemoration of victims in the two world wars in November (better known as Poppy Day). This year the *Jum Ghawdex* was celebrated on 24 October in collaboration and with full participation of the Gozo College.
- Two evenings as part of the initiatives called *Bajjiet* were held in Xlendi and Marsalforn Bay during the summer months and were very well received by those present.
- Three days of jam packed activities, co-ordinated by WE together with the Ministry for Gozo and the Ministry of Tourism were held in Gozo between 1 and 4 May 2008. *Gozo 1234* combined together the Malta International Fireworks Festival and *Notte Gozitana*.
- Around 36 art exhibitions were held in collaboration with Gozitan, Maltese or foreign artists at the exhibition venues at the Ministry for Gozo, the Banca Giuratale foyer and the Cittadella Centre for Culture and Crafts.

- The Christmas season was marked with a concert held at the Ministry Hall. The concert presided by HE the President was conducted by Mro John Galea with the participation of the Chorus Urbanus choir. The Subsidy Scheme for Static and Mechanical cribs attracted 37 participants.
- The first edition of *Gastro Gozo* was organised in collaboration with Associazione Tipico of the Abruzzo Region. This gastronomic festival brought together the culinary and artistic culture of the Mediterranean during a series of popular manifestations and informative seminars.

Carnival 2008

Six triumphal floats, King Carnival and three tractors, four musical bands, two sets of grotesque masks, three dance groups, 14 school companies, seven hilarious companies, nine individual costumes, and three individual costumes with grotesque masks took part in the Gozo 2008 Regional Carnival which was celebrated between 25 January and 5 February. For the first time, the regional programme was also organised and included all local carnivals organised in Gozitan villages by their respective local councils.

Grants

Besides thousands of euros being distributed as grants by the Gozo Cultural Council to local artists, musicians, actors, crib builders, the Ministry for Gozo kept its annual commitment with the two Gozo opera theatres. A grant of €17,470 was given to each theatre as a subsidy towards the expenses involved in organising the annual opera performances. Part of the grant was given through the Gozo Attractions Incentive Scheme.

GOZO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Gozo Public Library network consists of the Gozo Public Library, the Gozo Lending Library and 12 local branch libraries, including one library at the Gozo General Hospital. The Gozo Public Library acquires and preserves for prosperity the national collection of printed material and provides academic books and other related material in printed and electronic form for research. The Gozo Lending Library and the local branch libraries provide educational information and recreational books for home reading.

Equipment

Avantech Ltd donated a Canon photocopier NP1550 to cope with the research work at the Gozo Public Library.

Collections

- *Legal Deposits:* The Melitensia collection incorporates books, journals, newspapers and magazines published in the Maltese Islands, acquired by means of the Legal Deposit Act of 1925. In 2008, a total of 763 books were deposited at the Gozo Public Library.
- *New acquisitions:* The sum of €8,639 was spent on the acquisition of 1,224 new books (721 for the Gozo Public Library and the Gozo Lending Library, 503 for the Local Branch Libraries). The sum of €500 was spent on subscriptions of foreign magazines.
- *Donations:* 2,935 books were donated by various persons and entities: 442 to the Gozo Public Library, 467 books to the Gozo Lending Library, and 2,026 to the Local Branch Libraries.

Readers' Service

- *Internet service:* 8,374 persons availed themselves of the Internet Service (Gozo Public Library – 2,710 persons; Gozo Lending Library – 5,664 persons).

- *Photocopying services*: 2,312 persons requested a total number of 42,425 prints at the Gozo Public Library. This yielded an income of €4,967. All prints were made available on the same day of request.
- *New members*: 602 persons requested to borrow books for home reading (Gozo Lending Library – 281; Local Branch Libraries – 321).
- *Book loans*: A total of 117,741 books were issued for home reading (Gozo Lending Library – 62,769; Local Branch Libraries – 54,972).

Publicity and Promotion

- *Community Information*: At the Gozo Public Library, the public can view a notice board which covers such items as job vacancies, courses and other related topics of educational and cultural interests.
- *Library orientation visits*: During the scholastic year, orientation visits to the Gozo Public Library were held in collaboration with the Gozo College. The students' participation during these visits included prose and poetry reading and also the playing of musical instruments. 1,299 students attended for these visits together with their respective teachers. On several occasions, students were accompanied by their parents. Students had the opportunity to express themselves about their reading interests and to browse amongst a wide selection of books that are put on display for each visit.
- *Storytelling*: One-hour storytelling sessions are held every Wednesday afternoons at the Gozo Lending Library. A total of 337 primary school students attended.
- *Publicity Campaign*: The services offered at the Gozo Public Library were further publicised through interviews on TV stations and press coverage.

Exhibitions

- *World Book Day 2008*: World Book Day was commemorated by an exhibition of new books which covered a range of topics addressed towards the recreational, educational and academic needs of the students, from primary to tertiary levels and also the general public. A range of Melitensia books and publications used in the promotional campaign for the introduction of the euro currency were also put on display. This event included also a seminar and storytelling sessions.
- *Gozo 1234 Notte Gozitana*: For the second consecutive year, the Gozo Public Library was opened on 3 May for the general public during this annual cultural event. The main reading hall was the venue of an exhibition of new books ranging from academic to Melitensia books.

Other Activities

Refurbishment works were carried out at the Gozo Public Library by the CMU Section of the Ministry. This included the painting of all external doors and windows, the railings of staircases, the whitewashing of the kitchenette and the book-bindery and the upgrading of the staff and public toilets.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Introduction

The National Archives (Gozo Section) (NAG) is the public record office for the documentation produced and received by past and present government departments and establishments of the islands of Gozo and Comino.

Act V (2005) *The National Archives Act* enacted by the Parliament of Malta on 10 May 2005 laid out the constitution, composition, and functions of the National Archives establishing it as an entity or agency in its own right. It also made provisions for the appointment of a National Archivist and an Assistant National Archivist for Gozo together with other dispositions ancillary thereto.

The NAG is a sub-agency within this government entity. As such, the National Archives, as the Agency, is the *regulator*; the Ministry of Gozo is the *administrator*. The NAG, up to 31 December 2007, held deposits from 25 different entities, each of which is subdivided to reflect the diverse activity carried out by those entities. No new entity was added during the year.

Tasks

The Assistant National Archivist and his assistants carry out a four-fold task.

- The management of the archives – a most important task for the preservation of the national memory of the Maltese nation.
- Visits by the Assistant National Archivist to government establishments to make an appraisal of the documents preserved therein. During the year, these on-the-spot checks were carried out at the Law Courts-Gozo and the Gozo General Hospital. A number of registers were identified for transfer from the entities to the NAG, but could not be transferred due to lack of space at the NAG premises.
- Cataloguing of documents transferred to the Archives. This task takes up most of the time as the majority of documents are transferred to the NAG without any pre-established order. The analysis of the oldest section of the Archives, the records of the old Universitas, the administrative body of Gozo during the rule of the Knights continues.
- Making the general public conscious of this written memory of the Maltese nation. In this regard, the Assistant National Archivist proceeded with the publication of a document every month from the registers of the Universitas, the oldest section of the NAG. Serialised in the monthly magazine *Il-Ħajja f'Għawdex*, a Gozo magazine for local consumption, under the designation *Għawdex tliet mitt sena ilu* – Gozo three hundred years ago, the series has proved very popular and will be retained for the seventeenth consecutive year. Up to end year, 169 documents had been transcribed, translated, and published with an explanation. Besides, two exhibitions were held during 2008 to make the general public aware to this heritage.

International Fora

The Assistant National Archivist represented the National Archives in two international fora in 2008.

On 8-9 May, he took part in a meeting of a project codenamed *Aristot/Internum - Sciences of the Mediterranean* held at Moncada, Valencia. This was the fifth reunion conference and the last of the project. The aim of the project was the better organisation of the scientific heritage common to both sides of the Mediterranean littoral. It is hoped that this aim will be achieved by easing the access to the Mediterranean common heritage through the use of IT, that is, the digitisation of science-related texts. The Archivist provided a general overview of the work carried out vis-à-vis the project by the National Archives of Malta and its input in the project. This input was provided by three different deposits, namely, the National Archives of Malta, the National Archives of Gozo, and the Wignacourt Museum.

On 7-8 October, the Archivist attended the bureau meeting of CITRA, the *Conférence Internationale de la Table Ronde des Archives*, in Vienna. The Bureau discussed the international conference of the round table of archives that will take place in Malta from 17 to 21 November 2009 with the theme *Imagining Archiving in the twenty first century: New strategies for education and training*. The Archivist gave a detailed description of the preparatory work being done in preparation for the Conference.

Teamwork

The NAG is a three-person department. The Assistant National Archivist decides on the registers that are to be tackled, draws a preliminary report, and proceeds to their cataloguing. The functions of the NAG staff include preparing the catalogue labelling of the documents; filling the cataloguing sheets; helping in

the classification of records; renewing the binding of worn out volumes; and binding bundles of previously unbound documents. Processing the thousands of photos brought over from the Ministry of Gozo is nearing completion. This photo collection now spans 80 albums. Members of staff also deal with requests from researchers.

New Deposits

During 2008, the NAG was enriched with deposits of new items in the following entities:

- *AG Archives Gozo (National Archives – Gozo section)*: Items were added in the following sections: AG/01 - Correspondence (1 vol); AG/04 - Exhibition Catalogues (7 vols); AG/05- Miscellanea (20 vols).
- *CC Civic Council*: Items were added in section CC/06 - Miscellanea (2 vols).
- *CG Curia Gubernatoriali (Courts of Law)*: One new section was added: CG/27 – Commissioner for Justice – Lawsuits.
- *CI Charitable Institutions*: Items were added in the following sections: CI/02 – Accounts and Expenditure (1 vol); CI/04 – Gozo Prisons (39 vols).
- *CP Circulars and Posters*: Items were added in section CP/03 - Posters (1 vol).
- *HI Hospitals and other Institutions*: Items were added in section HI/20 - Miscellanea (2 vols).
- *LC Local Councils*: Items were added in the following sections: LC/02 – Fontana (1 vol); LC/03 – Ghajnsielem (1 vol); LC/05 Ghasri (1 vol); LC/08 - Nadur (1 vol); LC/13 - Xewkija (1 vol).
- *PA Photographs. Albums*: Items were added in the following sections: PA/01 - Historic Places and Events (2 vols); PA/04 - Ministry of Gozo - Miscellaneous (4 vols).
- *PM Plans and maps*: Two new sections were added: PM/09 – Reproductions; PM/10 – Historical Buildings – restoration (Dept of Projects and Development).
- *SS State Schools*: Items were added in the following sections: SS/29 – Xaghra/Admission – Attendance - Log-Books (14 vols); SS/30 – Xaghra/Miscellanea (9 vols).
- *ZM Miscellanea*: Items were added in the following sections: ZM/01 - Misc volumes (70 items); ZM/02 – Misc Papers/French occupation (4 items).

During the year, a total of 402 volumes/items were transferred to the NAG and catalogued. It must be noted that each single item of the Miscellanea section had to be examined and newly bound.

Researchers and Accessions

The number of researchers at the NAG during 2008 decreased to 288 from 401 in the previous year. The number of items consulted was 1,145 and the number of research hours decreased to 283 from the previous year. This decrease was expected due to the exceptional increase during 2007. The volumes handled throughout the year amounts to about 11% of the NAG holdings. The following table shows the total number of accessions from each section.

AG	CC	CG	CI	HI	LC	MH	MP	
15	22	3	63	14	2	62	4	
PA	PD	PM	PW	SS	ST	UG	ZM	Total
270	38	119	1	90	117	205	120	1,145

Exhibitions

During 2008, the NAG-Gozo mounted two exhibitions. The first was held between six in the evening and midnight of 3 May 2008 to coincide with *Gozo 1234 - Notte Gozitana* – the Gozitan version of *Notte Bianca*. The exhibition, mounted within the premises of the National Archives, was designated *Images of*

Gozo Past II – an exhibition of old photographs. Forty large photographs from the 1,500 plus collection that the Gozo section of the National Archives has amassed over the years were put on display. Each photo carried a short description in large print and an approximate dating.

The second exhibition was held on the occasion of the Archive Awareness Week, by now an established annual event. This year the exhibition featured *The Coastal Defences of Gozo* and it was open from 30 October to 15 November. The exhibition highlighted the former and present defences of the island. It was divided into two main sections. The *first* consisted of twenty documents – all conserved at the NAG – related to coastal defences ranging from 1595 to 1804. The earliest, over four hundred years old, refers to two lookout posts; the last is a British report on the requirements of the coastal fortifications. The *second* section of the exhibition consisted of a set of photographs of the major coastal fortifications of Gozo: the towers, the batteries, the redoubts, the underwater obstruction, and the fougasses. A segment of this section was dedicated to philately. All exhibits were selected from several of the 25 entities whose records are deposited at the Archives.

An exhibition catalogue with detailed information on the NAG and all the exhibits, published for the occasion, was sponsored by HSBC (Gozo). This catalogue in English was also made available online on the NAG webpage hosted on the Ministry for Gozo website. A souvenir postcard (No 2), depicting the former Garzes Tower in Mġarr, was issued for the occasion.

A number of local and foreigner visitors as well as a number of secondary and senior primary school children from both the government and the church sector visited the exhibition.

Webpage

The webpage of the National Archives Gozo Section is hosted on the Ministry for Gozo website at <http://www.gozo.gov.mt>. A new section – State of the Archives Report – was added on 22 October 2008.

GOZO SPORTS COMPLEX

The Gozo Sports Complex's main objectives for 2008 were reached successfully.

Sport Activities

During 2008, sport activities at the Gozo Sports Complex took place on a regular basis. Sport disciplines such as basketball, volleyball, table and lawn tennis, squash, karate, kick-boxing, spirit combat, kendo and akido were practised mainly through Gozitan sport associations.

Tournaments

The five-a-side football (Futsal) increased in popularity, and in August, the National Futsal Association (Malta) organised a tournament spread over three consecutive days in a twelve-team competition. During 2008, the Complex was also used as the home venue for the Football Tournament organised by the SK Victoria Wanderers and for the organisation of a three-day training camp organised by the Malta National Handball Association. During the year, the Gozo Sports Complex was the show case for the organisation of several Martial Arts tournaments. The Gozo Sports Complex sponsored the second edition of the Martial Arts Festival featuring the participation of several promising local athletes. International athletes participated in the Akido Tournament held in September, while in November and December a Karate and a Kendo competition were held in the main hall of the Gozo Sports Complex. For the first time, the Gozo Sports Complex organised a one-day Racket Tournament featuring competitions in squash, table and lawn tennis. The event was a success and it is the intention of the Gozo Sports Complex to make this tournament a yearly event.

Classes

In 2008, the Gozo Sports Complex started organising fitness classes in yoga, aerobics, body tonification and pilates. On a general request, the eight-week course was repeated for three times and attendance was very satisfactory. Dancing, hip-hop, break dance, gymnastics and ballet classes were organised by private tuition. Physical Education teachers of secondary schools used the Complex for their PE lessons. Annual sports day activities and Christmas concerts by several private and state schools were held. The OASI Foundation and the Eden Foundation kept their annual appointment to organise their annual fund-raising event at the Gozo Sports Complex. The Gozo College made use of the Complex to hold the annual graduation ceremony for Year 6 (Primary) students. For this occasion Gozo's primary school students population attended besides their parents and distinguished guests.

Cultural Activities

The Sports Complex is the centre for community activities, besides its primary sport functions. During 2008, the venue hosted various cultural activities like the Gozo Bird Breeders bird show and the Children's Carnival. In May the Gozo Sports Complex participated in the 1234 *Notte Magica* celebrations by hosting a Kendo performance.

Skolasport

Skola Sport entered into its tenth consecutive season, offering 15 different sports disciplines to school children every Saturday from November to May. Attendance was satisfactory and encouraging. To mark the tenth anniversary of Skolasport, a special programme spread over the scholastic year was organised. Several visits to sport facilities in Gozo and a day inclusion with Skolasport (Malta) at the Marsa Sport Complex were held. Besides, during 2008, the Gozo Sport Complex invested considerably in new equipment and instructors were sent for training sessions in Malta. It is intended to develop Skolasport into a school of sport where particular sport disciplines are taught and from where athletes can step-up in developing and intensifying their sport abilities professionally in sport associations.

Initiatives

During 2008, the human resource capacity at the Gozo Sports Complex was utilised to continue in the refurbishment process. An isolated area next to the main hall was refurbished and transformed into a gym and weight lifting area, with new changing rooms, showers, and sanitary facilities. All plastering works, whitewashing, electrical and water installation and tile laying were carried out by staff employed at the Gozo Sports Complex. As in previous years the Complex continued to invest in new gym machinery to replace old and outdated equipment.

LAND SECTION

One of the main functions of this section is associated with information regarding Gozo Rents of the Government Property Division. Reference is also made due to site plans, reference of records and communicating with the Department of Lands in Malta. Accounting matters are also performed such as filing, returns, payrolls, leave and postage records, typing, among others.

SOCIAL HOUSING OFFICE

The objectives of the Social Housing Office are:

- to assist financially owner-occupiers to upgrade their housing standards;
- to provide social accommodation to needy families;
- to encourage married and engaged couples to become owners of their own place of abode.

The number of new applications received and the subsidies paid in 2008 were:

Scheme	Details	Applications	Amount Paid €
-	Alternative Accommodation	25	-
K,P,Q	Ground Rent Redemption	2	-
R	Rent Subsidisation	11	7,185
W	Adaptation Works – Government Dwellings	4	2,967
Z	Cash Grants/Loan Subsidy/Owner Occupied Private Dwellings	6	2,151
5	Adaptation Works – Leased Dwellings	1	-
7	Adaptation Works – Handicapped Persons	5	2,143
GFR	Grants First Residence (VAT Subsidy) *	58	170,276
RTB	Right to Buy	3	-
ESS	Equity Sharing Scheme	24	395,924
ISS	Interest Subsidy Scheme	5	-
-	Adaptation Works on Allocation of Government Premises	2	5,318
-	To Open a Shop on ex-Housing Property	1	-
Total		147	585,964

*Paid by VAT Department

During the year, 62 requests were received from tenants at Taç-Ċawla Housing Estate, for repairs and maintenance works. Most of these works were approved and carried out during the same period, by workers from the Gozo Works Division and the Housing Construction and Maintenance Department.

The Gozo Section in 2008 carried out an exercise to de-requisition premises that were listed as requisitioned on the Housing books. A total of 474 de-requisition orders was issued while 30 premises are still in the process of being de-requisitioned.

INFORMATION OFFICE

The year proved to be another eventful year for the Gozo Information Office. The office continued to fulfil its basis role of serving as an effective link between the public administration and the general public. During the year, the Information Office issued 50 press releases, the majority accompanied by photographs or video clips.

The Office is also responsible for the sale of all government publications, the major publication being the Government Gazette. Although the latter remained the major publication in demand, the number of copies sold continued to dwindle.

The Office has continued to receive applications for E111, E121 and scholarships for their eventual transmission to the competent ministries for processing.

PASSPORT OFFICE

The aim of the Passport Office is to provide the necessary services relative to the issue of passports. During the year, 2,198 new passports for adults and children were issued.

Other services provided to the general public included issuing of collective passports; issuing of identity documents not otherwise provided for in lieu of a passport; administering of oaths for lost passports; Arabic translation on a Maltese passport; applications for electronic identity cards, and providing information to persons enquiring about dual citizenship.

Notification of births and deaths was also dealt with by this office. During the year, notifications for 311 births and 240 deaths were received. Such notifications were then referred to the Public Registry for registration purposes.

As from March, the e-ID (electronic identity card) was introduced, enabling the public to have access to many government services offered online.

In 2008, the necessary refurbishment was carried at the office, to allow for the installation of the new Passport System (Biometric Capture Passports). For added security, a CCTV system and an intruder alarm were also installed. The new system started functioning from 1 October.

LICENSING AND TESTING OFFICE

During the past year, the Licensing and Testing Section in Gozo has continued to improve the services offered to visiting customers. Although, since 1 July 2008, the annual circulation licence for various vehicle categories has ceased to be renewed at the Section and has been transferred to sub-insurance agencies, frequent daily queries have been referred to the Section by insurance agencies. Thus, all queries concerning renewal licences are still being handled by the Section. Other numerous transactions have been effected through both the new Vera System and the Driving Licence System.

The Driving Licence System introduced towards the end of 2007 gathered momentum during 2008. Exchange of Driving Licence applications for EU citizens residing in Gozo have ceased to be sent over to Malta for processing. In 2008 arrangements were made for direct faxes to be sent to all EU countries to verify any restrictions held on such driving licences due for exchange. This has both enhanced the service that was usually being offered and provided the minimal possible delay for applicants. The following transactions were processed by the Section during the year:

Exchange of Driving Licence for foreign residents in Gozo	60
Renewal of Driving Licences	2,710
Driving Licence Inclusions	73
New Driving Licences	402

Other numerous manual applications were introduced and effected through the system until final process. As in past years, new driving licence applications submitted were booked with their respective Gozo motoring schools to sit for their driving practical test. This involves both time and patience and provides a help desk advice for motoring schools especially when negotiating Gozo weekly requirements with the ADT Driving Section in Malta. Presently three driving examiners are being sent over to Gozo to carry out practical driving tests once a week.

TRADE OFFICE

This office offers the same services normally offered at the Commerce Department in Malta, which include issuing of import/export licences, processing of trading licences for manufacture activities, wholesale and retail activities, construction services, professional and business services, social and personal services as well as street hawker licences. These licences are received at this office and referred to the Commerce Department in Malta, while trademark applications are referred to the Industrial Property Office. The Malta Financial Services Authority registry of companies is another service offered by the office. This includes registration of new companies, receiving fees and documents that may be required for the running of a registered company.

During the year the following activities were undertaken:

Import Licences	8
Export Licences	2
Trading Licence Applications	123
Trade Marks	15
MFSA	
New companies	8
Annual General Meeting (AGM)	395
Companies update	436

GOZO CRAFTS CENTRE AND TA' DBIEGI CRAFTS VILLAGE

Gozo Crafts Centre

The aim of the Crafts Centre is to revamp the lost interest in the local handicrafts sector which forms part of the national heritage. To carry out this task, a permanent exhibition of locally handmade products is on show at the Crafts Centre in Victoria, Gozo.

As at end November 2008, local handmade crafts exhibited totalled over 1,300 items, while the number of firms and craftsmen was 55, of which 33 firms are Gozitan while the rest are Maltese-owned. 42% of the total exhibited items belong to Gozitan firms.

During the year, a large number of visitors visited the Crafts Centre. These included foreign visitors, local people and students from various schools who were on cultural and educational visits to the Centre. Moreover, during November and December, the Gozo Culture Section used the centre for cultural activities and exhibitions.

In 2008, several firms and craftsmen changed or added new handmade crafts while action was taken to encourage more firms and craftsmen to make use of the Gozo Crafts Centre by holding individual exhibitions. Direct information about the crafts, firms, and the place was passed to all those interested, while a leaflet about the history of the place and the aim of the Centre was distributed both to local and foreign visitors.

Ta' Dbiegi Crafts Village

Work on the construction of new workshops continued at Ta' Dbiegi Crafts Village, with a new workshop opening for business in 2008. The majority of the workshops opened to the public. To keep this place attractive to visitors, trees and shrubs were regularly trimmed and flower plants were planted all year round.

GOZO GENERAL HOSPITAL

Gozo General Hospital has a total bed complement of 291 distributed as follows: Acute Wards - 104 beds; Geriatric Wards - 121 beds; Psychiatric Wards - 54 beds; Nursery Cots - 12. The total staff complement at the end of the year consisted of 686 full-time workers, 14 part-time workers and one casual substitute.

Major Works Carried Out

Projects waiting in the pipeline have been put on hold pending availability of funds. Only two minor refurbishment projects were undertaken in 2008:

- *Physiotherapy Department.* Works involved new plumbing works, new chinaware and redecoration of the section.
- *Outpatients Department.* Works involved new plumbing works, new chinaware and redecoration of the section.

General Statistical Information

- The average number of beds occupied was 196.81 or 64.95%.
- The average length of stay in hospital (excluding the chronic ward) was 3.23 days per person.
- The average turnover (the mean number of patients occupying any one bed) in 2008 was 21.33 patients.
- The average turnover interval (the mean time, in days, that a hospital bed was left empty between successive patients) was 3.77 days (chronic wards excluded).

	Admissions	Population
Male Ward	2,148	7,482
Female Ward	2,039	7,460
Male Geriatric Ward	39	11,648
Female Geriatric Ward	44	26,602
Paediatric Ward	372	799
Maternity Ward	341	1,089
Coronary Care Unit	599	1,787
Gynae Ward	455	619
Nursing	111	340
Long Stay Ward	68	11,429
Short Stay Ward	254	2,776
Total	6,470	72,031

Attendance of patients

Out-patients		41,985
New Cases	12,050	
Follow-ups	29,935	
Emergency and Admitting Department		15,709
Admitted to wards	4,631	
Transferred to SLH	46	
Discharged to home or Out-Patients	11,032	
Fresh Trauma Clinic Patients		1,275
New cases	974	
Follow-ups	217	
Failed to attend	84	
Physiotherapy (treatment sessions)		23,041
Out-Patients	8,032	
In-Patients	15,009	
Occupational Therapy (patients)		6,064
Speech Therapy (treatment sessions)		3,042
Obstetrics (registered deliveries) (309 infants)		305
Renal Unit (treatment sessions)		1,020
Podology (patients) (new cases - 361)		5,178
Blood donation (donors)		1,679
Male	1,089	
Female	590	
Acupuncture Clinic		660
New cases	41	

Operations Performed

	Intermediate	Minor	Major	Major Plus	Major Complex	Total
Surgical	201	432	90	7	8	738
Orthopaedic	87	29	35	73	-	224
ENT	47	16	-	-	-	63
Ophthalmic	-	100	147	-	-	247
Gynaecology	69	215	174	1	-	459
Dental	13	-	-	-	-	13
Pace-maker	-	-	18	-	-	18
Endoscopies	441	168	8	1	-	618
Total	858	960	472	82	8	2,380

Investigations carried out

X-Rays	12,662
Ultrasounds general	1,975
Ultrasounds gynae	291
Electrocardiograms	7,181
Echocardiograms	140
Holter Monitoring	157
Laboratory Tests	479,662
Lab Samples sent to Malta	23,780
Stress ECG	262
Lung Functions Tests	17

GOZO HEALTH CENTRE

Primary Health Care Centre

Attendance at Primary Health Care - Gozo	
General Practitioner	45,345
Treatment	22,080
Home Visits	38
Foreigners	507
Immunisation	3,903
<i>Bereġ</i> (GP)	14,850
Medicine	1,396
Total	88,119

Attendance at <i>Bereġ</i> – Gozo		
	<i>GP</i>	<i>Medicine</i>
Xewkija	1,515	246
Ghasri	607	43
Gharb	927	60
St Lawrence	798	76
Nadur	3,854	224
Qala	1,465	98
Ghajnsielem	1,461	112
Munxar	368	-
Kerċem	641	39
Żebbuġ	455	24
Sannat	682	48
Xaghra	2,077	111
Total	14,850	1,081

Immunisation Service	
<i>Type of Cases</i>	<i>No</i>
Di Te Per	180
Polio	295
Hib	183
MMR	202
Yellow Fever	6
Thypoid	6
Meningitis	6
Hepatitis B	228
Hepatitis A	2
Adult Dip	272
Di Tetanus (Paed)	2
Tetanus	32
Rabies	1
Flu Inj	2,401
Pentaxim	6
Tetract Hib	81

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICE

The Gozo Regional Office provides the services that are normally offered by various units in Malta such as the Drug Control Unit, Environmental Health Unit, Food Safety Unit, Burials Administration Unit and Diving Cards (Licences) section. In liaison with the Administrative Unit of the Department for Environmental Health in Malta, this office is responsible for maintaining strict surveillance on the priority communicable diseases, food safety, non-communicable disease, risk factors and environmental hazards and to take the necessary measures to remove or reduce these threats to the health of the population of the islands.

The services provided by this office are: Health Inspectorate Services, Burials (St Mary's Cemetery), Pest Control, and Diving Permits.

This region deploys six Health Inspectors who are assigned to two sections namely: Food Control and Environmental Health Control. These sections fall under the charge of the Principal Health Inspector.

Food Control Section

This includes maintaining constant supervision over food premises (catering establishments, food manufacturers, food retail outlets), and exercising control on the preparation of food, thus ascertaining that food reaches the consumer in a safe and wholesome condition. Inspections are carried out in premises engaged in the preparation, processing, storage and sale of food and drink by using a Risk Assessment Monitoring system in order to ensure compliance with the Food Safety Act 2002 and the standing regulations.

Complaints with regard to the Food Safety Act 2002 are investigated in order to ascertain that food and drink are of the nature, substance and quality demanded by the purchaser and are safe and fit for human

consumption and that the premises are kept in a high standard of hygiene and in compliance with the standing Public Health laws and regulations.

Environmental Health Control Section

The role of this section is to investigate complaints in connection with public health issues and to ensure the abatement of nuisances by preventive and remedial action.

Stoppages in drains and accumulations of litter in open spaces were the foremost amongst the complaints submitted. Other complaints received include alleged infringements of certain provisions of the Code of Police Laws such as keeping of animals in inhabited areas, state of cleanliness of refuse skips and pest control as well as others that constitute a health hazard or nuisance in breach of the Public Health Act 2003.

This section is also responsible for monitoring the quality of the public water supply from boreholes, reservoirs, reverse osmosis plants and various points through regular sampling. In collaboration with the Environmental Health Unit, this section monitors the popular bathing areas in Gozo and Comino by sampling and analysis of seawater.

Inspections performed at food premises by category and grading by Risk Assessment Monitoring Programme

Nature of Food Premises	No of Inspections	Grade %					
		A	B	C	D	E	F
Retail Outlets	215	59.1	32.0	8.4	0.5	-	-
Food Manufacturers	141	37.6	54.0	8.4	-	-	-
Catering outlets	191	73.3	23.0	3.7	-	-	-
Hotels	9	89.0	11.0	-	-	-	-

Inspections and samples taken in connection with investigations/follow-up cases of Food Poisoning

Inspections	9
Samples Taken	19

Miscellaneous

Inspections of premises icw MEPA applications for development permission	70
Inspections of pharmacies, clinics, private hospitals, old people's homes	46
Fumigation of premises	1

Other inspections of Food Premises

Routine Inspections:	343
Follow-up inspections re deficiencies/contraventions	74
Product recall	77
Labelling of foodstuffs	19
Inspection re refrigeration of dairy products	108
Other inspections in connection with:	
a) Sampling programme	167
b) Undertakings	8
c) Emergency Control Orders	-
d) Emergency Prohibition Orders	-
Inspection of premises in connection with licensing	
a) Department of Health	34
b) Department of Trade	42
c) Malta Tourism Authority	26
d) Department of Customs	2
Total	900

Contraventions

Food related	2
Environment related	1

Samples taken by category

Food	535
Beverages	1
Drinking Water	2
Other Samples	-

Environmental Issues

Service Water – Direct Mains	11
Service Water – Other Sources	-
Infiltration Water	45
Bathing Water	560
Swimming Pools	-
Other Samples	16

Investigation of Complaints

	No of Complaints	No of Inspections
<i>In connection with Food:</i>		
Unhygienic premises & unhygienic practices	8	15
Food unfit or past durability date	4	7
Labelling	14	27
Other food complaints	13	21
Total	39	70
<i>In connection with Environment:</i>		
Defective drains	12	20
Blockages in drains	11	19
Premises or sites dirty or containing accumulations	28	56
Infiltrations	54	115
Other complaints (rat sightings)	413	457
Re Tobacco (Sanitary Control Act)	2	4
Total	520	671

Nuisance reports issued

Defective drains	16
Blockages in drains	4
Premises or sites dirty or containing accumulations	26
Total	46

Undertakings

Total no. of undertakings	8
Number concluded	4
Still pending	4

Destruction of Food Items

2.4 kilos of food items were destroyed by this office.

Pest Control

The Pest Control Section has adopted a programme of preventive baiting and attends to complaints of rat sightings by the general public. The section carries out regular routine rat baiting of sewers and public open spaces throughout the island so as to keep the rats and mice population on our island under control.

Operatives in the Section attended to complaints regarding insect infestations in public areas. Various disinfestations by spraying with effective insecticide were carried out in many localities during the year.

	No. of Areas	No. of Baits
Localities	717	15,387
Complaints	374	6,737
Sewers	156 (947 manholes)	2,020
Insect disinfection by spraying	20	-
Cases of Murine Typhus	-	-
Packets delivered to the Public	10,591 packets	

Control Cards for Narcotic/Psychotropic Drugs

1,686 applications for the issuing and renewal of control cards for narcotic/psychotropic drugs were processed and issued by this office.

Burials Section

This section is responsible for the administration and management of St Mary's Cemetery, Xewkija and Tal-Għonq Cemetery in Victoria, and the application of various laws and regulations related to internments. This involves the administration and management of personnel, the general upkeep of cemeteries, proposed extension of cemetery and construction of new additional graves and research work to establish burial and grave ownership rights.

The number of burials effected at St Mary's Cemetery, Xewkija during 2008 was 46 in private graves and 18 in state-owned (common) graves. 11 transfers of remains were carried out from one grave to another or from St Mary's Cemetery to other cemeteries in Malta and Gozo. There were also 32 cases of cleaning of graves. During the year restoration works were undertaken on the façade and boundary walls of St Mary's Cemetery. Pruning of trees and other maintenance works were also carried out in the cemetery.

Conclusion

During the past year, the adoption of the Food Control System and that involving the Environment have again contributed in no small way to an improvement in both areas. Those involved in the manufacture of food, both operators and food handlers, have become more conscious of good hygienic practices and of all the necessary measures to prevent problems in the food safety. In this regard food establishments have been refurbished and thus upgraded.

As to the environment, complaints are handled in the shortest possible time to the satisfaction of the general public always thanks to the current system adopted. To keep abreast with the latest policies and strategies in both these sectors, constant liaison is maintained with the Head Office in Malta.

Moreover, it is to be pointed out that the services rendered by the Health Inspectorate in Gozo are governed by new Service Standards and this to the benefit of the public.

SECTION FOR THE CARE OF THE ELDERLY

This Section is responsible for a number of support services aimed at enhancing the quality of life of elderly persons and those with special needs and to support independent living in the community.

- *Home Help Care Service:* This is the main service offered by this Section, which at the end of the year had 825 beneficiaries in 649 households. The service is delivered by 83 part-time social assistants. Home Help Care Service (Gozo) is allocated by a Board, which in 2008 held 12 sittings, during which all adjustments in hours were decided, together with the policy governing this service. As stipulated in the Quality Service Charter, the Board is meeting regularly every two weeks.
- *Handyman Service:* This service provides maintenance works and sundry jobs in the homes of the elderly and special needs clients in collaboration with the Construction and Maintenance Unit. During 2008, a total of 43 applications were received while 23 jobs were carried out. Twelve applications were cancelled. Although the time frames for delivering this service according to our Quality Service Charter are meant to be same day service for urgent works and all others within 24 hours, eight applications are still pending since the Handyman is not always available to cater for the needs of the section.
- *Telecare Service:* A Care Worker is assigned responsibility for this service. During the year, 74 applications were received and 70 were installed. Regular home visits are carried out on a weekly basis following installation, to ensure the correct use of the service.
- *Incontinence Service:* The incontinence service is also the responsibility of this office, although it is administered by a clerk from the Family Welfare Section. During 2008, eight new applications were received under Scheme A while 67 new applications were received under Scheme B. There are 76 clients who benefit regularly from this service under Scheme A while 327 clients benefit under Scheme B.
- *Meals on Wheels:* This service operates as a joint venture between the Ministry for Gozo, the *Moviment Azzjoni Soċjali* and the Society of the Friends of the Sick and the Elderly in Gozo. This service provides a daily mid-day hot meal delivered to the clients' homes. A total number of 4,193 meals were delivered in 2008.
- *Social Activities:* Mother's Day Mass and Christmas Party.
- *U3E Gozo:* This section runs the U3E in Gozo in collaboration with the University Gozo Centre and the Division of Gerontology. Transport is provided and to date 44 persons are attending these courses.
- *Day Centre:* This Centre has been running as a joint venture between the Ministry for Gozo, Caritas and 12 local councils since 1999. In February 2008, the Day Centre moved to the *Moviment Azzjoni Soċjali* (MAS) Complex in Ghajnsielem, as per new agreement signed by the Ministry for Gozo, the MAS and the local councils. The Day Centre is at present operating on a four-day weekly basis. Overall attendance in 2008 was 7,146 elderly persons. Transport is provided by contributions from the local councils. Older persons who attend benefit from the services of a doctor, nurse and hairdresser on request, as well as from social and cultural outings both in Malta and Gozo and recreational activities. During Easter, the Day Centre organised mass at Marsalforn, a competition for the best decorated *figolla* and an Easter Dinner. In September, a seven-day tour to the Italian Alps was organised by the Day Centre. The attendance of this tour was 44 elderly persons and helpers. The Day Centre organised a Christmas activity for the elderly which consisted of a Mass, a competition for the best decorated Christmas cake and a Christmas dinner.

ADULT TRAINING CENTRE

- *Structure:* The Elderly and Special Needs Office manages the administrative section in close co-ordination with the Adult Training Centre Head. 40 persons with various disabilities attend the centre regularly. Members are organised in seven units with the aim of giving more individual attention to those most in need. Lunch is provided from Gozo General Hospital daily for all members. Through a structured life skills programme, members are trained for better independent living. The centre caters for intellectual, physical and emotional disabilities.
- *Liaison with other agencies:* A healthy co-ordination exists with most agencies for people with special needs in particular some ATCs in Malta, *Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Diżabilita`* (KNPD), Support

Living Division, National Parents Society of Persons with Disability (NPSPD), Eden Foundation Gozo, Educationally Sub-Normal (ESN) Sannat and Association for the Deaf Gozo while first-hand support is being given to GAVI, Enabled Housing Association Derbyshire, UK, Gozo Federation Persons with Disabilities. The Centre also has ongoing contacts with agencies in America, Poland, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Austria.

- *Referrals:* Normally referrals are made through the Head. For 2008, one person was referred from Arka Foundation.
- *Services:* Services of Personal Aids were given to 20 individuals – these included physiotherapy (32 sessions); communication therapy at the ATC (40 sessions); art and lace at School of Art Ghajnsielem (40 and 32 sessions respectively); lace and weaving at ATC (60 sessions); ophthalmic at GGH (8 sessions) and podology at GGH (10 sessions); a weekly mass service; and dentistry services to all members.
- *Placements:* the following students had placements during the year - 10 from MCAST; three student-facilitators from University (40-hour); 21 students from Holy Cross University in Manchester (15-day); two students from the University of Derbyshire through the Enabled Living Foundation (ELF) (EDGE Programme) (7 weeks). For the latter placement, the ELF in conjunction with the Centre won First Place Accolades Award for Best Provider in Teaching and Providing Training Programmes for Social Work Students out of 400 entities that were nominated throughout England.
- *Cordial Visits at the Centre:* One of the highlights for the Centre this year was the official visit to the delegations from Derbyshire and Sheffield and six groups from Malta, nine visits from different European countries, one visit by an American group, 10 visits from different Gozitan organisations. In addition, the Centre was visited by a number of persons during the year - 4 persons from Poland in conjunction with the KNPD organisation from Malta; 6 persons from EDGE programme; 15 persons with disabilities from different European countries; 20 persons from ARKA; and visits by the KNPD Chairman and Executive Director.
- *Support Group:* A support group consisting of parents and volunteers was organised. Through the group and with the help of JCR Ltd, a Bazaar is run in Victoria. Members from the centre, train, help and participate in the running of the outlet. Social help to people in need is provided from this point. Dancing, horse riding therapy, weaving, lace and craft sessions were organised.
- *Gozo Federation Office.* On 4 March 2008, an office for the Gozo Federation for Persons with Disabilities was established and started operating from the Centre.
- *Outwork:* Work was done for Ta' Ċenċ Hotel, San Lawrenz Resort, NGO, Enable Living Foundation flat in Gozo, ETC, Eden Foundation in Gozo. Support in the transportation of rehabilitation equipment and maintenance on accessories was done at primary schools, members' residences and other entities. The courier service was continued in liaison with Commercial Couriers Company Ltd. Work was done for Magro Brothers. Five persons did some work at MAS apartments.
- *Gardening:* A gardening workshop at the Centre is in progress all year round. Gardening is also held on a regular basis next to NGO Xewkija.
- *Cultural Activities:* Members took part in cultural activities in Malta and Gozo such as Carnival, Fun Games, Crafts Exhibition and Crib Exhibition. Members went on day outings to various places of interest in Malta. Two morning outings are organised on a weekly basis in Gozo. A visit to the Malta Police Headquarters was also organised. Methode plc hosted a party at the Centre for all the ATC's service users.
- *Transport:* Service was given by two mini buses on contractual basis, and two tail lift vans provided by the Support Group Friends of ATC.
- *In-service Training Courses:* A one-week course about self-esteem was held at the Centre. A health and safety course and management course was also organised. Through EDGE, two staff members attended a 4-day course in Derbyshire. All expenses were paid by Enabled Living Foundation.

- *Public Information:* On the Programme *Ghawdex Illum* on PBS, coverage was given of the functions of the ATC and other activities and various talk shows on the local community radio were held. This participation was given in liaison with other agencies.
- *Achievements:* Together with Enable Housing Association of Derbyshire England, the Centre strengthened the twinning project EDGE (Enabled Derbyshire Gozo Exchange).
- *Activities:* The Centre continued the pool therapy programme at Arka Foundation. Numerous social events were also organised especially during summer, Christmas and Easter time such as parents outing, day camp in Comino, swimming at various bays, etc.

FAMILY WELFARE (GOZO SOCIAL WORK UNIT)

The Gozo Social Work Unit offers social work intervention with a generalist approach. As from 2007, social work in Gozo is being delivered on a decentralised basis, with two support social workers and one casual welfare officer being assigned residential work at the Psychiatric Hospital, Ta' l-Ibraġġ GGH. Otherwise, social work is delivered from the main SW Unit at St Francis Square, Victoria. There were 164 new cases during the year - 118 new cases were dealt with by the Generic SW Unit while 46 new cases were dealt with by the support social workers at the Psychiatric Gozo Hospital.

Generic Social Work Unit

- *Follow-up cases:* By the end of 2008 the Generic SW Unit had dealt with 316 cases that required follow-up interventions. These follow-up cases were classified as follows: 112 cases that required weekly intervention and 106 cases that required intervention on a fortnightly basis whilst 35 cases were terminated. 63 cases required other periodical intervention.
- *One-time intervention:* 65 cases which required one-time intervention were dealt with by the Intake section. Such cases are not considered as part of the Unit's caseload and therefore not recorded therein.
- *Telephone interventions:* Such service is delivered daily, and thus it is difficult to record and quantify such interventions.
- *On-call Service:* This service entails the service of a social worker after office hours. 95 calls needed outside intervention. There were also a considerable number of telephone interventions that is difficult to quantify.
- *Case conferences:* 35 case conferences were attended by staff members.
- *Supervision:* Supervision was carried out on a monthly basis with all staff members at the Unit.
- *Staff meetings:* Daily briefing is held each morning to maintain monitoring of the cases, while bi-monthly staff meetings are held for all staff.
- *University placements:* three university students and four MCAST students had their social work practical placements with the Unit during spring/autumn and summer respectively.
- *Detox:* SW service was delivered at the Detox Centre, and GGH.
- *Juvenile Court:* five sessions were held.
- *Court appearances:* 54 court appearances by the social work staff were carried out. These included giving evidence, writing up social reports and seeking legal advice.
- *Supervised access visits:* 11 cases of supervised access visits ordered by Court were carried out. Such cases involve weekly visits at the Ċentru Ħidma Soċjali/community.
- *Carer's pension:* two applications were processed by the Unit. These applications require home and personal assessment followed by written reports.
- *Social administrators:* two persons benefited from this service every month.
- *Social reports:* 63 written social reports were done by the Unit to various departments, agencies, courts and places of work.

- *In-service training*: during 2008, the staff of the Unit attended several training sessions to enhance their performance as social workers.
- *Psychiatric/Gozo General Hospital*: Social work was delivered to the psychiatric wards at Ta' I-Ibraġġ Hospital by the two support social workers who are assigned on a full-time basis there.
- *Community Chest Fund*: 26 applications were submitted to the CCF by the Unit.
- *National Commission of Disabled Persons*: 31 persons benefited from services given by the Commission after the Unit's intervention.
- *Elderly*: Social work interventions were carried out with the elderly and upon request from the 'agencies' concerned or by relatives in the community.
- *Talks*: 55 talks related to social work were delivered by SW staff in various localities and on various community radio stations.
- *Sub-committee domestic violence*: The senior social worker sits on the national sub-committee on domestic violence. Six meetings were held on a bi-monthly basis.

Hospital Social Work Services

New cases were referred to the section as follows:

Psychiatric	36
Child Guidance Clinic	6
Social Support	4
Follow ups	43
Reactivated	8
Put away cases	24
Deceased	2

The following activities were also carried out:

- Staff formed part of the multi-disciplinary team during ward rounds on a regular basis at short stay ward.
- Participated regularly in Psychiatric Out-Patients and Child Guidance Clinic.
- Staff also participated in several case conferences, case reviews and IEPs.
- Regular home visits were carried out to psychiatric patients who live in the community.
- Home visits were carried out with the occupational therapist for the benefit of those patients who desired to return to the community.
- School visits were also made since referrals from Child Guidance Clinic request such visits to liaise with head of school teachers and facilitators for the benefit of our clients.
- Liaised with other hospital personnel in organising social activities at Gozo General Hospital and Ta' I-Ibraġġ Hospital.
- Supervision was given to four student care workers placed at the hospital.
- Case conference and case reviews at Villa Chelsea.
- Regular contact was kept with Social Services, ETC, Housing, Public Registry, ID Office and other agencies. The aim of these contacts was to keep up-to-date on certain benefits, opportunities and schemes, which data was passed over to clients seeking assistance from these departments.
- Took part in local community radio programmes to promote the service.
- Liaised with the Malta Community Chest Fund, Caritas, Friends of the Sick and the Elderly, Sovereign Military Order of Malta. SMOM was involved in taking a group of residents from St Anne Residence to Lourdes, France in May 2008.
- Delivered Easter eggs to children at the Paediatric Ward (GGH), psychiatric patients and clients attending Child Guidance Clinic, Caritas, and: supported clients in their requirements.
- Supervision was carried out regularly in connection with social work delivery. Such supervision has been effective and provided the possibility of exploring different ways to be applied in practice.

SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE

Victoria District Office

This Office deals directly with the general public in connection with National Insurance Pensions and other contributory and non-contributory Social Security benefits and assistance. Work carried out at this office mainly comprises financial investigations; the raising of applications for contributory and non-contributory pensions, benefits and assistance; dealing with customers' queries, and registration under the Social Security Act of newly-employed workers.

The following are the main activities:

- *Non-Contributory Pensions/Assistance/Benefits*: responsible for applications and monitoring of non-contributory assistance, review for current benefits and financial investigations for free medical aid (Pink Form).
- *Contributory/Foreign Pension*: deals with applications in connection with pensions for which NI contributions have been paid or credited. It is also responsible for raising of Foreign Pension applications from Australia, the UK, Canada and all EU countries.
- *Children's & Supplementary Allowance/Marriage Grant/Maternity Benefit*: processes applications, declarations and queries in connection with these benefits; also responsible for filling of marriage grants and maternity benefit applications.
- *New Registrants/Medical Certificates*: registration under the Social Security Act of newly employed workers (NI 3). Medical certificates (SB) referred to this Section are entered daily on the computer system.
- *Medical Boards*: medical boards in connection with Medical Assistance, Social Assistance, Disability Pension, Sickness Benefit, Injury Benefit and Australian Pension were held on alternate Thursdays at the Gozo General Hospital.
- *Statistics*: During 2008, the number of claimants who made use of the above services at Victoria District Office was 21,659. The following table gives a breakdown of claimants visiting and calling at the office, and new applications raised as well as queries lodged during the year:

	Total	Query	Application	In Person	By Telephone
Non-Contributory Pension					
Age Pension (AP)	650	586	64	533	117
Blind Pension (BLD)	7	5	2	7	-
Carer's Pension (CP)	33	32	1	32	1
Disability Pension (HP)	103	91	12	87	16
Contributory & Foreign Pension					
Retirement Pension (RP)	2,860	2,619	241	2,417	443
Widows' Pension (WP)	510	463	47	409	101
Invalidity Pension (IP)	1,689	1,615	74	1,432	257
Foreign Pensions (FP)	988	902	86	892	96
Social Assistance					
Social Assistance (SA)	990	944	46	783	207
Social Assistance Carers (SAC)	104	95	9	86	18
Drug Addicts (DAD)	85	65	20	49	36
Single Unmarried Parent (SUP)	149	130	19	128	21
Unemployment Assistance (UA)	2,771	2,589	182	2,435	336
Social Assistance Board (SAB)	8	7	1	2	6
Short-term Benefits					
Marriage Grant (MRG)	93	19	74	92	1
Injury Benefit (IB)	33	31	2	27	6
Special/Unemployment Benefit (SUB/UB)	809	806	3	771	38
Milk Grant (MG)	5	4	1	5	-
Sickness Benefit (SB)	998	998	-	855	143
Child Benefits					
Disabled Child Allowance (DCA)	12	8	4	11	1
Children's Allowance (CA)	1,972	1,606	366	1,729	243

Maternity Benefit (MB)	135	28	107	132	3
Foster Care (FC)	-	-	-	-	-
Medical Assistance/Aid					
Tuberculosis Assistance (TA)	-	-	-	-	-
Leprosy Assistance (LA)	6	5	1	6	-
Sickness Allowance (SKA)	559	477	82	468	91
Pink Form/Card (PF)	1,685	941	744	1,649	36
Supplementary Allowance (SPA)	1,500	1,192	308	1,351	149
Admission to Elderly Homes	-	-	-	-	-
Insurability (NI3)	1,031	623	408	891	140
Energy Benefit (ENRG)	501	392	109	435	66
SVB	2	1	1	2	-
NI Contributions	954	954	-	742	212
Foreign Bonus	401	124	277	373	28
Exemptions	3	3	-	3	-
Waiving of Examination Fees	13	-	13	13	-
Total	21,659	18,355	3,304	18,847	2,812
Total SB Certificates	20,826				

- *Training:* During the year, training was organised for all personnel at Victoria District Office, in Pensions and other benefits, and IT. In addition, personnel attended other training courses on various topics organised by the Staff Development Organisation.

Nadur District Office

The Area Office had no problems with the euro conversion - the changeover was smooth and apart from beneficiaries checking about their actual amount in euros from Maltese lira, there were no other problems.

During the year, NDO personnel attended various training courses organised by both the Department of Social Security and the Ministry for Gozo.

As the office caters for the villages of Nadur, Qala and Ghajnsielem every effort is made to provide clients a one-stop-shop service. In addition to providing information about Social Security benefits, clients who called at the office and were in need of other particular services, were referred to those agencies, non-governmental organisations and other government departments within the Ministry for Social Policy and the Ministry for Gozo responsible for the provision of specific services. Booklets and leaflets about specific benefits and other services are kept on display in the waiting area of our office to help inform the public about existing benefits applications and services offered by different departments and organisation.

INDUSTRIAL AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

During the year this Section carried out 74 routine inspections, during which employees were interviewed and 14 irregularities were detected. Action was taken to have these irregularities rectified; 119 follow-up/special visits were undertaken.

51 claims amounting to €82,450 were issued in respect of arrears in wages, wages below the Wage Regulation Order/National Standing Order, vacation leave, bonuses, overtime remuneration, and weekly allowance not granted. Two officers from this Section attended 22 court sittings/*perizias*.

CENTRE FOR NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

During the year, the number of non-government organisations and voluntary groups making use of the service offered once again increased. The number of registered members with the NGO Association surpassed 162 and these organisations held 475 meetings. All registered organisations benefited from almost 21,703 photocopies at a heavily subsidised rate. The tribunals for Wardens and for underage children's rights as well as the ADT (for the driving test) made use of the NGO Centre. Apart from this,

the Centre - in collaboration with the Ministry for Gozo - was responsible for the co-ordination of the Annual Subsidy Scheme for all Gozitan NGOs.

UNIVERSITY GOZO OFFICE

During 2008, the following courses were organised:

- *Completed:*
 - Course leading to the Post-graduate Diploma in Education (Administration and Management) (ended June 2008) - 27 students successfully completed the course and were conferred with the diploma in November/December at the University of Malta;
 - Course leading to the Bachelor of Commerce (ended June 2008) - four students successfully completed the course and were conferred with the degree in November/December at the University of Malta;
 - Diploma in Commerce course (ended June 2008) - 13 students successfully completed the course and were conferred with the diploma in November/December at the University of Malta;
 - MA in Islands and Small States Studies – 3 students successfully completed the course and were conferred with a degree in November/December at the University of Malta.
- *New Degree/Diploma/Certificate Courses:*
 - A two-year course leading to a Diploma in Commerce (commenced October) - 13 students;
 - A two-year course leading to an MA in Islands and Small States Studies (commenced October) - three students;
- *Short courses:* the following short courses were offered at the University Gozo Centre during 2008 – Introduction to Criminology; Inclusive Education – Transforming Schools into Communities; Understanding Young People in Today’s Society.
- *Courses part-financed by the European Union:* 167 participants completed a set of courses offered by the Ministry for Gozo and co-financed under the European Social Fund. Other five courses in agriculture were offered during November and December.

Extra Curricular Activities

- On 6 April, the Lace-Making Programme at the University Gozo Centre organised the annual event *Gozo Lace Day* for the twelfth consecutive year. Ms Kate Gonzi, wife of the Prime Minister, attended this event where she distributed certificates to students who completed the advanced lace-making course. When addressing those present, Ms Gonzi said that she was impressed by the work carried out at the University Gozo Centre stating that the centre has been instrumental in reviving the craft and giving it an academic dimension. Present for the occasion were Hon Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo, Prof Lino Briguglio Director of the University Gozo Centre and Hon Anton Tabone, former Speaker of the House of Representatives and Ms Consiglia Azzopardi, co-ordinator of the Lace-Making Programme.
- On 5 April the Italian Ambassador for Malta paid a second visit to the University Gozo Centre where he met with Gozitan artists, Members of Parliament, mayors and others persons who are involved in the cultural scene. The aim of this visit was the launching of a competition for Gozitan artists, *L’Italiano in Piazza*, organised by the Embassy of Italy in Malta in order to commemorate the 8th edition of the week of the Italian Language in the World that took place in October.
- In July Professor Juanito Camilleri, Rector of the University of Malta, accompanied by the Minister for Gozo, visited the University Gozo Centre, where they met the Director of the Centre. Prof Briguglio explained the importance of the presence of this Centre in Gozo and how this has had a positive effect on higher education in Gozo. The Minister stressed the importance of maintaining and increasing the services offered by the University in Gozo, which should result in the strengthening of human resources through lifelong learning in Gozo. The Rector spoke favourably about the Centre and the facilities it offers. He acknowledged the importance of the Centre to the Gozitan community and stated that Gozo will need more trained people in order to help it achieve the eco-island status.
- On 5 September the Centre organised its annual summer activity entitled *An Evening with Island Brass*. The event was attended by an audience of about 200 persons.

Publications

- The 18th and 19th edition of the *Gozo Observer* were published in June and December 2008 respectively.

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT (GOZO)

The Inland Revenue Department is responsible for the administration of the Income Tax and Capital Transfer Duty Acts and the enforcement of Social Security contributions. The Gozo Branch deals specifically with Gozitan individual taxpayers as well as bodies of persons and it offers assistance and information to the general public in complying with their fiscal obligations. Moreover, in January the Call Centre started processing all telephone calls, e-mails and other correspondence received by the whole Department.

FSS and Provisional Tax

FSS deductions, as well as Provisional Tax paid are as a rule first set off against tax assessed for the previous year of assessment, any balance remaining is then credited against outstanding tax for earlier years, if any, or else refunded. During 2008, the number of employers who submitted the FSS annual reconciliation documents for 2007 was 764. The FSS Division captured and reconciled data covering 3,124 employees for 2007. FSS collected by the Gozo Cash Office amounted to €1,430,592 as against the €1,483,431 collected in 2007. Provisional Tax collected during 2008 amounted to €2,966,823 as against the amount of €2,997,233 in 2007. Provisional capital gains tax withheld on deeds of sales decreased from €8,066,750 in 2007 to €5,158,114 in 2008.

Revenue

Revenue from Income Tax collected during the year ending 31 December 2008 amounted to €11,833,937. The following schedule is a breakdown of revenue by system of collection as received through the Gozo Office.

	2008 €	2007 € equivalent
PAYE/FSS (Private Employees only)	1,430,592	1,483,431
Provisional Tax	2,966,823	2,997,223
Provisional Tax (Capital Gains Tax)	5,158,114	8,066,750
Provisional Tax (Self-Assessment)	1,496,801	1,965,509
Part-Time Self-Employed	137,453	132,150
Penalties	70,239	153,967
Agricultural Scheme	39,524	56,343
Miscellaneous	343	1,237
Settlement Tax	534,048	675,607
Total Income Tax Receipts	11,833,937	15,532,217
Social Security Contributions	7,113,790	7,068,397
Total Income Tax & Social Security Contributions	18,947,727	22,600,614
Duty on Documents Acts	5,277,975	7,724,468
Death and Donation Duty	8,956	40,191
Miscellaneous	541	485
Total Capital transfer Duty	5,287,472	7,765,144
Grand Total	24,235,199	30,365,758

Social Security Contributions are received at the Gozo Cash Office on behalf of the Social Security Department in respect of Gozitan self-employed persons and Gozitan private employees. Receipts performed by the Cash Office in respect of Income Tax and Social Security Contributions were as follows:

	2008	2007
Income Tax	9,486	10,631
Social Security	<u>13,083</u>	<u>13,014</u>
Total Receipts	22,569	23,645

Collection of Tax

As part of the Department's drive to collect outstanding tax balances, a 1% per month additional tax is being imposed on any outstanding balances. Settlement tax receipts amounted to €534,048 however tax withheld by means of the FSS system vis-à-vis Gozitan government and parastatal employees is paid in Malta and is not included with receipts recorded by the Gozo Branch.

Tax and Other Clearances

During 2008, the Branch processed 155 authorisations for tax clearances in connection with the repatriation of funds from Malta. It also issued 15 approvals for the exemption or reduction of the 7% Capital Gains Tax rate on deeds of sale. These approvals are requested prior to deeds of sale in those cases where a rate lesser than the statutory 7% tax will be enough to cover any ensuing capital gains tax. 111 pension scheme applications were issued to the Department of Social Security.

Self-Assessments and Declarations

The Branch acknowledged electronically 5,063 Self-assessment returns during 2008 (420 of which were for previous years) and 11,827 automatic assessments were raised vis-à-vis Gozitan taxpayers under the Free-Filers system. 300 Correction Forms were raised against Self-Assessments.

Agriculture Scheme

This scheme which was introduced during 2005 enables farmers to opt to be charged at source a Final Withholding Tax of 3% when selling their products to registered payers. During 2008, the Branch acknowledged electronically 384 Part-timer and 144 Full-timer Agricultural Scheme returns.

IRD Call Centre

The Call Centre's main objective is to answer all incoming telephone and e-mail queries relating to income tax and social security contributions. Queries are made by all categories of taxpayers - individuals, companies, employers and expatriates. The IRD Call Centre also receives general correspondence regarding changes to be made to Taxpayers Personal Index. The IRD Call Centre started receiving its first live telephone queries on 4 January 2008. During the year, the Centre replied to 90,561 telephone calls and 6,744 e-mails and processed 3,168 letters of correspondence.

Duty on Documents – Transfers *Inter Vivos*

During the year this Branch examined 1,268 deeds of sales and other transfers of immovable property, of which 1,244 were inspected by the Department's engineers. As a result, 612 original claims were raised. Stamp duty on such transfers amounted to €3,107,941. During the year, 119 new objections were registered and 77 cases were concluded. Besides duty on transfer of immovable property, €10,465 was collected in respect of share transfers. Duty collected from additional claims issued amounted to €153,174. Additional duty on such claims amounted to €43,368. Outstanding balance of assessed duty, including disputed duty amounted to €1,652,020. During the period under review, 672 promises of sale were registered with the Department. Provisional stamp duty paid on these promises of sale amounted to €667,742 (€189,620 in 2007).

Duty on Documents – Transfers *Causa Mortis*

The number of returns *causa mortis* filed during 2008 was 344, of which 26 cases were inspected by the Department's engineers. 229 original claims were raised during the year. Stamp duty on such declarations amounted to €1,250,396. Six new objections were registered and 11 cases were concluded during 2008. Revenue collected from additional claims issued amounted to €32,315. Additional duty on such claims amounted to €540. Outstanding balance of assessed duty, including disputed duty, amounted to €236,626.

Death and Donation Duty

31 additional returns were filed during 2007/8. 15 assessments were raised, whilst 16 transmissions were found to be exempt from tax. Duty claimed during the period was €4,477, and revenue collected totalled €8,955 (including €4,478 interest). Outstanding balance of assessed duty, including disputed duty up to and including 31 December 2008 amounted to €196,851.

VAT OFFICE

- *New Applications:* This Office received and processed 415 applications for a new VAT registration number.
- *Returns:* VAT returns from Gozo taxpayers were received regularly throughout the year. These returns numbered 9,514.
- *Fiscal Receipt Books:* 7,251 personalised fiscal receipts books were distributed to VAT registration holders. 6,210 personalised and 321 non-personalised fiscal receipts books were collected from taxpayers.
- *Cancellations:* 193 taxpayers applied for de-registration of their VAT number.
- *Appeals:* Eight appeals were received at this office from Gozitan taxpayers. These appeals were acknowledged and relative papers were forwarded to Secretary Appeals Board.
- *Courts:* During the year, several court sittings in connection with VAT returns were attended.
- The officers of this section helped taxpayers in filling the returns; authorised 75 fiscal cash register transfers; received 260 applications for grants on funerals, 65 on weddings, 30 on musical instruments and 35 on bicycles; and dealt with numerous queries from the general public.

ELECTORAL OFFICE (GOZO)

The Electoral Office (Gozo Section) receives applications for the registration of voters, transfer of residence, change of status, or other required corrections to be included in the revised electoral register.

In conjunction with the Commissioner of Police, the office deals with the issue, renewal and distribution of identity cards.

The staff of the Electoral Office in Gozo regularly carries out street inspections in connection with naming/renaming of streets to ensure that the names of voters listed under old street names are correctly registered under the new street names in the electoral register and to change ID cards. The Office also provides a service to housebound and bed-ridden patients in hospitals and institutions for the aged and in many private residences where the sick and aged persons residing there request new identity cards and voting registrations.

The general election as well as elections for the Local Councils of Munxar, Kerċem, Qala, San Lawrenz, Xagħra and Żebbuġ were held on 8 March 2008. This Office was involved in the preparations for such elections, which included the setting up and inspection of polling places, distribution of undelivered voting documents, issuing of special voting documents, receiving applications regarding AECs, counting staff and other related matters.

Before the elections were held, the Electoral Commission assigned one of its members at the Gozo Electoral Office to receive nominations from interested candidates for the elections. During polling day the Commission sent its representatives in Gozo to supervise and to settle matters that arose and to ensure, by its presence, the smooth running of the elections.

The number of transactions carried out in connection with the Electoral Register and ID cards were as follows:

New Registrations:	
(Electoral Register April 2008)	275
(Electoral Register October 2008)	243
Change of address	730
Change of status (due to marriage)	172
Corrections	155
Replacement of lost and damaged ID cards	559
Issuing of ID cards for foreigners (Aliens)	364

JOYCE DIMECH

Director (Customer Services)

Department for Projects & Development

The Department for Projects and Development incorporates the Works Branch, the Construction and Maintenance Unit, the Public Cleansing Section, the MRRA Salaries Section and the Agriculture and Fisheries Branch.

The main objectives of the Department for Projects and Development are:

- to ensure that Gozo has the proper infrastructure required for the island's development;
- to protect, manage and enhance the natural heritage of Gozo;
- to provide the proper environment and extend the necessary services in the agricultural and fisheries sectors so that progress and growth can be achieved in these industries;
- to support investment; and
- to ensure that progress in Gozo follows the principles of sustainable development.

WORKS BRANCH

Finance and Administration

The main functions of the Finance and Administration Section are the management of human resources, contracts, stores and registry and the provision of administrative support to all the other sections within the branch.

Districts Section

This Section is primarily concerned with the provision of services to local councils on a contractual basis. In addition, however, it is also involved in carrying out work which falls within the responsibility of central government.

During the year under review, the works carried out by this Section consisted in the maintenance and embellishment of playing fields, construction and maintenance of pavements, concrete works on farm access roads, patching of streets in different localities, building and maintenance of retaining rubble and *franka* stone walls and the building and cleaning of water culverts.

Roads Section

The Roads Section is responsible for the general upkeep and maintenance of roads in Gozo. The Section was engaged in the construction of retaining walls and pavements, construction of water culverts, repair of rubble walls, maintenance on roundabouts and central strips, patching with hot and cold asphalt in all arterial and distributary roads, the fixing and maintenance of traffic signs and applying of road marking paint.

This Section is responsible for the issuing of tenders for new roads and for the supervision of works carried out by the various contractors. During 2008, a number of new roads were completed: Triq ix-Xemmiex and Triq Caraffa in Nadur; Triq Qighan, Triq Imrejbiet and Triq Merkanti in Ghajnsielem; and Triq Santa Marta in Victoria.

Building and Engineering Section

This section is responsible for the provision of services which include the preparation of specifications for tenders, expropriations, draughtsmanship, quantity surveying and the issuing of trenching permits. It is also responsible for the various works carried out by direct labour.

Direct labour mainly consisted of undertaking new projects and general maintenance works. During 2008, this unit continued with its programme of carrying out alterations, maintenance and improvement works at the Administration Centre in Victoria. Refurbishment works were carried out at the Government Cold Stores and along Marsalforn Road Victoria. This Section was also involved in the building of premises at Gozo General Hospital to house the CT Scan Unit. Employees from this Section were deployed to fix chain-link fencing works at various sites, clean water culverts and carry out embellishment and maintenance work in various localities and on government-owned property.

Building, Maintenance and Restoration Section

This section, stationed at the Ċittadella, is mainly responsible for the carrying out of restoration, maintenance, and construction works.

During 2008, this section carried out the following work:

- structural stabilisation works at Sta Cecilia Chapel, l/o Ghajnsielem: works involved the uprooting of damaging vegetation and the erection of temporary internal and external buttress walls to prevent further collapse;
- restoration works at Mġarr ix-Xini tower: works involved partial reconstruction of the internal spiral staircase, replacement of fractured stone slabs, general consolidation and pointing works;
- laying of flagstones (*ċangatura*) along a number of pathways located within the Ċittadella precincts;
- restoration of parish cross located within St Francis Square, Victoria: works involved the temporary dismantling of the highly deteriorated cross, consolidation of those individual column drums that could be retained, cleaning of the same drums and other stone elements from biological soiling, manufacture/working of new column drums to replace the original ones which exhibited extensive deterioration, re-erection works and the installation of protective bollards; and
- various works carried out by the marbler, relating to the manufacture and/or restoration of marble inscriptions at various sites.

CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE UNIT

The Construction and Maintenance Unit renders services to government departments, NGOs, local councils and to the general public.

During 2008 the Unit undertook embellishment projects on belvederes, playing fields, football grounds and other public areas. Construction works were carried out at public areas such as parking sites, at the Institute of Tourism Studies at Xewkija and Qala, on various government tenements and on NGOs' premises. Maintenance works, including plastering and painting of rooms and painting of wooden and iron apertures was carried out in various schools, at the Gozo General Hospital and in other government departments. CMU employees were also deployed in schools and government departments to carry out installations of new water and drainage systems and the laying of new tiles in public conveniences. A water reservoir at the Horse Racing Track in Xewkija was also constructed by CMU employees.

CMU masons carried out construction works on retaining and boundary *franka* stone walls in fields and non-urban areas, at times requiring excavation works and building of solid foundations. During the year under review, an average of 850.50 x 8 courses of retaining walls and around 60m x 4 courses of boundary walls were constructed.

Due to damages caused to rubble walls primarily as a result of heavy rainfall, the Unit continued with its programme of maintaining and rebuilding rubble walls around the island. Rubble wall builders attached to the Unit reconstructed approximately 983.70m x 2m of rubble walls during 2008.

Other works carried out in rural areas included the levelling and surfacing of passages, ramps and farm roads in order to provide easier access to farmers to their fields. An average of 615m x 3.50m of farm access roads and passages and around 356.60 x 5m of ramps were surfaced by this Unit.

The Unit constructed some 578 metres in length of pavements and ramps in various localities. In certain arterial roads, protective pipes were fixed around pavements and footpaths to provide safety to pedestrians. CMU operatives carried out repair works on water culverts which at times required the replacement of damaged iron grates. The Unit also constructed new culverts. Iron grates and other iron railings and gates were manufactured at the CMU blacksmiths' workshop.

Other general maintenance was carried out by CMU employees who are currently on loan with Qala and Xewkija local councils or other departments such as the Adult Training Centre. The running of the Handyman Service scheme and installation of cabling and trunking in connection with IT in various government offices continued to be carried out by the Unit as in previous years. Other sundry work such as weed cutting and road cleaning was also undertaken by CMU workers where and when requested.

CLEANSING SERVICES BRANCH

Public Cleansing

This section's main responsibility is the upkeep and maintenance of cleanliness in public areas.

During 2008, scavenging was provided on a daily basis, except Sundays, in the urban localities of Żebbuġ, Għarb, Kerċem, Munxar and Sannat. The other urban localities opted to be serviced by private contractors. Additionally, this service was even provided on Sundays in the core area of Victoria, in Mgarr, Marsalforn and Xlendi and in localities celebrating the parish feasts.

The Public Cleansing Section is responsible for the removal and disposal of cumbersome refuse. During 2008, the Department attended to around 671 requests to remove and dispose of bulky material.

Furthermore, the Section was responsible for the running of 13 public conveniences in Gozo and one in Comino. Maintenance and repair works were carried out regularly by the section's maintenance team. During the summer months, the public conveniences at Marsalforn, Xlendi, Dwejra, Ramla and Hondoq ir-Rummien were kept open for longer periods in order to cater for residents and tourists alike who frequent those resorts.

Other operations carried out by the section included the cutting of weeds and clearing of debris from valleys, urban areas and arterial roads which fall under the direct responsibility of the central government and where the section has a contractual obligation with local councils. The Section liaised with MTA on initiatives to clean the island and reinstate country lanes and footpaths, beaches and other areas of scenic beauty, thus enhancing the image of the island.

Beach Cleaning

The Beach Cleaning Section is responsible for the maintenance, upkeep and cleaning of beaches in Gozo and Comino. These services are delivered to local councils free of charge on the basis of a contractual agreement which covers 12 beaches and bays in Gozo and three beaches in Comino. During the summer season these services are even provided on Sundays and public holidays, and additional rounds of collection were carried out in the afternoons in Ramla, Xlendi and Marsalforn bays.

Employees from this Section were deployed to carry out general cleaning and embellishment works particularly at popular summer resorts like Xlendi, Marsalforn, Dwejra, Mgarr ix-Xini, Ramla and Hondoq ir-Rummien. Other duties included the carrying out of maintenance works on street and beach furniture.

The Section was also responsible for the cleaning of beaches from seaweed and litter and the removal of tar. A thorough clean-up and reinstatement of Marsalforn Valley was taken up by the Section in order to facilitate the flow of runoff rainwater and prevent flooding. All waste generated on Comino was transported over to Gozo, thus eliminating the need for a waste dump on the island.

SEWERAGE MASTER PLAN

The Sewage Treatment Plant project at Ras il-Hobz was officially inaugurated in 2008. Calls for tenders for the construction of the Wied il-Mielah (Gharb) Pumping Station were published during the year and work is planned to start in 2009.

MRRA SALARIES SECTION

The main function of this Section is to process the salaries including allowances and overtime of all the employees of the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs.

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES BRANCH

Veterinary Services

This section is responsible for the regulation of animal husbandry and slaughter in Gozo, and incorporates the Civil Abattoir, field work, Imgarr inspectorate, and prevention of diseases.

Civil Abattoir

As the refurbishment process at the Gozo Civil Abattoir was still not concluded, the slaughter of live stock had to be carried out at the Civil Abattoir in Malta. The number of livestock slaughtered in Malta amounted to 1,501 cattle (713 cows and 788 bulls) and 5,401 swine. All fallen animals, condemned meat and offal were disposed of by means of incineration.

Dead animals are incinerated at the Civil Abattoir facilities. During the year, 886 bovines, 566 ovines, 14 equines and 492 pigs were incinerated. Another 44,575kgs of material were also disposed of by the same method. During 2008 various maintenance works were carried out on the incinerator.

Field Work

During 2008, all farms supplying milk to Malta Dairy Products (MDP) were tested for TB and brucellosis. Testing was carried out on 92 cattle herds as follows:

TB Tests	6,310
Brucella Tests	6,310
Leukosis	5,464

Additionally, TB/brucella testing was also carried out on other farms which do not supply milk to the MDP. In all, 523 units were checked as follows:

Brucella tests on sheep	4,213
Brucella tests on goats	1,057

All blood tests in connection with the preceding testing were carried out at the Malta Diagnostic Laboratory as no adequate facilities exist at the Civil Abattoir laboratory in Gozo.

Blood Tests			
	<i>Bovines</i>	<i>Sheep</i>	<i>Goats</i>
MDP	6,310	-	-
Non-MDP	-	4,213	1,057

Pig Tattooing	
No. of tattoos	5,719
Registration of Deaths	905
Registration of slaughtered animals	5,401

All pig units were inspected and a technical report and census made.

During 2008, inspections were carried out on all poultry cutting establishments on a frequent basis. Emphasis was made with the owners of these establishments on the need to abide by the respective regulations governing their trade. Poultry farms too were subjected to routine inspections. Prior to the slaughter of broilers, an inspector carried out an exhaustive ante-mortem inspection to ensure that broilers were fit for consumption. Laboratory analyses were conducted on a regular basis on random samples of faeces and eggs collected from various units in order to detect any diseases, should they manifest themselves, at an early stage.

Mgarr Inspectorate

One of the functions of the Mgarr Inspectorate is to prevent contagious diseases from reaching Gozo. In this regard inspections were carried out on a shift basis during the entire week on vehicles crossing over to and from Malta. As in previous years, extra care was taken by the inspectorate in not allowing certain palm trees to be brought over to Gozo in order to keep in check the red palm weevil outbreak. Additionally, strict control and monitoring of the movement of animals between the islands was maintained.

Extensive Service Division

During the year, dairy farmers sought advice from the Division on various matters concerning their industry. Farmers were given advice on methods how to upgrade their farms to be in line with existing regulations. At times, employees from the Division conducted on-site inspections to be in a better position to assess farmers' needs. The Division liaised with MEPA on farm permits and plans on behalf of farmers, and employees attended MEPA meetings to keep abreast of developments.

Prevention of Diseases

The Veterinary Services in Gozo take the necessary measures to monitor and control contagious diseases.

- *Salmonella and avian influenza.* All layer farms were inspected. Faeces and blood samples were taken and sent to laboratory for analyses.
- *Blue tongue disease.* In order to better control this disease, all farms on Gozo were divided into four quadrants. Blood samples were periodically taken from four to six randomly chosen cattle farms and sent for laboratory analyses.
- *Rigid control of animal movement.* With the inter trace in place all animal movements were recorded and cross checked to see that all farms were disease free.

Gozo Marketing Centre

The total value of produce sold through the Gozo Marketing Centre during 2008 amounted to €1,118,214, representing an increase in value of €12,414 and a decrease in weight of 38,892 kg, when compared with the previous year.

Sale of Agricultural Produce through the Gozo Pitkali Centre				
	2007		2008	
	Kgs	€	Kgs	€
Pitkali	64,415	41,840	110,184	84,576
Co-operative	1,819,817	1,063,960	1,735,156	1,033,638
Totals	1,884,232	1,105,800	1,845,340	1,118,214

Gozitan farmers, apart from selling their produce in Gozo, also make use of the Marketing Centre in Malta. The total value of produce sold by Gozitan farmers through both Marketing Centres during 2008 was of €2,621,853, a decrease of €103,807 over the previous year.

The Gozo Marketing Centre is directly linked to the Pitkali Markets Management System (PMMS) in Malta. This enables instant inputting of data on deliveries by farmers, sales from each Pitkali store and issuing of invoices to farmers and greengrocers. Through this system, queries about deliveries and farmers' sales can be traced and checked from the Gozo Centre.

During 2008, a new and more flexible timetable was introduced which provided additional options when farmers can bring in their produce. Additionally, some minor works were carried out on the galvanized tents in order to afford better protection to the fruits and vegetables on offer, especially during the summer months.

Afforestation, Parks and Public Gardens

Afforestation

This section is responsible for the maintenance of various public gardens in Gozo, namely Villa Rundle in Victoria, Ulysses Grove in Xewkija and Papa Ġwanni XXIII in Mgarr. It is also responsible for the landscaping and upkeep of central strips, roundabouts, street verges and other soft areas.

During the past year, a total of 38,612 ornamental trees and shrubs and seasonal flowering plants propagated at the Department's own nurseries, were planted all over Gozo. These consisted of 36,763 seasonal plants, 1,087 decorative, 16 medicinal and 746 standard trees.

The Afforestation Section was involved in carrying out other work such as weeding, soil cultivation and watering. Another function of the Unit is the pruning of trees which is carried out throughout the year. The section had some contractual obligations with four local councils namely, Munxar, Żebbuġ, Qala and Ġħajsielem to maintain their soft areas, as per contracts signed between the local councils and the Department for Projects and Development. Income derived from these contracts amounted to €2,498. Some 43 bags of logs and some palm fronds and olive leaves were sold to the general public netting €340 in revenue.

As in previous years, the Gozo Agricultural, Industrial and Cultural Show and the Flower Show were held at the Villa Rundle Gardens in August and May respectively.

Nurseries

The Agriculture Branch runs two ornamental nurseries - Tad-Dawwara and Tal-Hlewwa - where thousands of decorative trees, shrubs and seasonal flowering bedding plants, as well as some indigenous species such as carob and olive trees, were propagated in 2008. Production is principally intended for use at the

Department's afforestation sites, public gardens as well as central strips and roundabouts. The following table shows the number of plants supplied to the Afforestation Unit in the last three years:

Plants Supplied to the Afforestation Unit					
<i>Year</i>	<i>Standard</i>	<i>Decorative</i>	<i>Seasonal</i>	<i>Medicinal</i>	<i>Total</i>
2006	500	665	24,360	14	25,539
2007	549	1,251	20,787	26	22,613
2008	746	1,087	36,763	16	38,612

The nurseries supplied plants and shrubs to the "Greening of Gozo" trial project which was launched by the Ministry for Gozo some years ago. This project involves the reclaiming of idle land, prevents soil erosion and embellishes the environment with a greener landscape. Additionally, 2,352 plants were donated to various local councils, schools and NGOs.

These nurseries supplied hundreds of potted plants on return basis to various entities in order to embellish their premises when holding cultural and similar activities. The number of seasonal plants and cuttings of decorative shrubs propagated in the greenhouses increased considerably in the past year.

The number of trees sold, and consequently revenue, decreased during 2008. Revenue from sales of ornamental trees and shrubs (231 plants, 222 standard trees, 2 decorative and 7 medicinal) to the general public amounted to €3,443.

Gozo General Hospital Gardens

The responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of these gardens was handed over to this Section in July 2008. The Section undertook as an initial task the pruning of trees, hedges and shrubs and the clearing of debris and weeds which were growing in the gardens. Other works carried out included the planting of bedding plants, which were propagated at the Dawwara nursery, watering and the cultivation of soil.

Government Experimental Farm

The Government Experimental Farm is mainly concerned with the cultivation of crops and trees using the latest techniques. Crops are cultivated both in the open and in glasshouses.

Protected Cropping

Protected cropping at the Government Experimental Farm was carried out in three metal glasshouses and two poly-tunnels, none of which are heated. In 2008, the following trials were made: green peppers (Maccabi); cucumbers (Marumba); melons (DRT F1, Brigante, Rotary); vegetable marrow (Jamila); watermelon (Madera); tomatoes (Chenoa). These crops were mainly planted in autumn 2007, with the exception of melons and watermelons, which were grown as a second crop after cucumbers and peppers. Harvesting was completed in 2008 with the exception of cucumbers and vegetable marrows.

In 2008, 1,346kgs of vegetable marrows, 932kgs of peppers, 879kgs of tomatoes, 399kgs of cucumbers, 177kgs of melons and 537kgs of watermelons were harvested for a total value of €2,020. Additionally, some 346kgs of watermelons were donated to charity homes due to the saturated market and a very poor selling price.

Soil solarisation was practised in all greenhouses during the summer months.

Sale of vegetable seedlings, fruits and fruit trees

In 2008, more than 32,000 onion and cabbage seedlings were sold to local farmers and amateurs. It is also to be noted that during the year under review, artichoke seedlings were propagated for the first time in the Government Farm in order to be sold to interested individuals. A small quantity of soft fruit, mainly

nectarines, apricots and plums as well as 371kgs of citrus fruit comprising lemons, oranges, and tangerines were sold. Additionally, 284 fruit trees, mainly olive trees, nectarines, peaches, plums and apricots as well as 526 rootstocks, were purchased from the farm. The total revenue generated from these sales amounted to €1,860.

Livestock and Birds Section

The Government Experimental Farm houses some animals, notably sheep, goats, ducks, and hens, for the purpose of educating school children in connection with the Hands-on Farming Programme. During 2008, some 43 school classes from Gozo attended the premises to gain first-hand experience on farming methods. The Government Farm is also responsible implementing the Captive Breeding Programme which consists of rearing finches in captivity. During the last year, 27 greenfinch offspring were sold for €370.

Fields

In 2008, an artichoke trial was carried out with the scope of producing early artichokes for export. However, due to the limitation of water supplies at the farm, harvesting did not start as early as expected. There was a very good response from local consumers for this type of artichoke. This variety produces large artichokes which are green/violet in colour. In 2008, some 2,000 artichoke heads were sold at the local market for a total value of €474.

During the year under review, 20 tumoli of land were propagated with wheat which was sold for €1,258. In autumn, three new forage varieties were sown at the Farm for trials.

Visits

During 2008, various visits were conducted at the Government Experimental Farm. The Minister for Gozo, the University of Malta Rector, the Director of the Institute for Agriculture and a delegation from the Ministry for Gozo visited the premises on 4 July.

An official from St Vincent de Paule visited the premises and gave a demonstration on grafting citrus trees. Students from the Gozo Centre of the University, accompanied by a lecturer, visited the premises to gain some practical experience while several farmers visited the premises to seek advice on various matters related to their trade.

Seminars

A number of seminars were organised at the Guzè Micallèf Hall. One of these, about the Citrus Tristeza Virus, was organised with the collaboration of the Plant Health Department. A course on *Pesticides Use* for farmers was organised with the collaboration of the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs and the Plant Health Department. The course was well attended and a certificate was issued to the successful participants.

Other work/activities

A compound Citrus Tristeza Virus (CTV) survey was carried out on all citrus trees at the Farm by Plant Health Department officials. Two citrus trees which were suspected to be infected by CTV were immediately destroyed. Fruit-fly traps were placed in the citrus orchards to attract and kill fruit flies and as a result fewer insecticide sprays were applied. Bumble bees were introduced in greenhouses to enhance pollination.

An open day was organised at the Government Experimental Farm between 1 and 3 May as part of the *Gozo 1234* event. A powerpoint presentation on the operations of the farm was held in the main hall and

interested persons were taken around for a tour around the premises. Some light maintenance works were carried out around the premises whilst the main hall was totally refurbished.

Land and Water Use Section

One of the functions of this section is the monitoring and preservation of soil resources in accordance with the Fertile Soil Preservation Act of 1973. When there is a demand for the removal of soil from a site, normally prior to the commencement of construction works, officers from this section call on site to ascertain that all fertile soil is removed and kept in storage or is used in gardens, fields and reclamation of poor land. During the year, this section processed 30 applications for the removal of approximately 14,470 cubic metres of soil.

This Section is also responsible for the issuing of transportation permits to farmers, fishermen, couriers, egg and poultry and pig breeders to carry their produce free of charge to Malta and carried on-site assessments in connection with the compensation for damages to crops and land. Additionally, land inspections were carried out in connection with applications for development permits and repair of rubble walls.

During 2008, this section received 62 applications for the purchase of fruit trees and vine and issued licences to four commercial vintners. During the year, two vintners pressed some 48,219 kgs of grapes. A meeting was held at the Government Farm for persons interested in Apiculture.

Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS)

The main function of the Integrated Administrative and Control System (IACS) is to register and keep records of land under cultivation and to support farmers in their bid to access the various schemes that may be available.

Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS)

The LPIS is a computerised system in which data pertaining to all land under cultivation is inputted. The LPIS is continuously updated through adjustments of land ownership transfers and the registration of new land. Site plans of all parcels of land being cultivated are kept in order to facilitate identification. This Unit dealt with and solved a number of problems regarding the overlapping and incorrect location of land. Some problems which could not be solved by the Unit were forwarded to the Board of Disputes.

Farmer's Aid Applications

During 2008, the following aid schemes were made available to farmers: Arable Aid; Fruit and Vegetables for Production; Fruit and Tomatoes for Processing; Autochthonous; Vines; Less Favoured Area; and *Ad Hoc* measure for full-time farmers.

148 full-time farmers and 1,119 part-time farmers filed 1,344 applications in connection with the above-mentioned schemes. It is to be borne in mind that a single application can be made out for more than one aid scheme. During 2008, payments made to farmers were effected under the Single Payment System. This scheme establishes the financial aid payable to farmers and is divided into two sections, namely, authorised entitlements and normal entitlements. Authorised entitlements are intended for the horticulture sector which includes all vegetables and tomatoes for processing. Normal entitlements cover arable land, set-aside fields and olive tree fields. Fruit and vine trees were not included in this scheme.

The Control Unit

This Unit is responsible for carrying out on-the-spot checks in order to verify that declarations made by farmers actually agree with what is found on the spot. During the year under review, employees from the Unit selected in a random method a number of parcels of land for inspection. Some parcels were inspected

on the spot whereas other parcels, used mainly for arable crop, were inspected by remote sensing. The information gathered from inspections was inputted into a computerised system and resulting anomalies were addressed.

Other office work carried out during 2008 included the registration of new farmers and the updating of farmers' registration cards (FRCs) which are inputted in a computerised database. The unit also processed 30 applications for agricultural land development permits referred to it by MEPA.

Fisheries Section

- *Fishing population:* During 2008 the number of registered fishermen stood at 403. Though there was an increase of 39 registrations overall, there was a significant decrease in the number of full-time and part-time fishermen.

<i>Fishermen</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>
Full-time	107	93
Part-time	177	154
Recreational	80	156
Total	364	403

- *Licences:* 31 fishermen were given a licence to lay *kannizzati* in four districts as follows - Xlendi (17); Marsalforn (9); Mgarr-Grigal (3); Mgarr-Lbiç (2). In addition six full-time fishermen were issued with tuna fishing licences and set surface long line licences (*irmiġġi*) were issued to six part-time fishermen.
- *Crafts:* The bulk of the fishing vessels are located at Mgarr Harbour whereas Marsalforn and Xlendi and Dwejra Bays hold smaller numbers. A very small percentage of vessels are distributed in other small bays.
- *Maintenance works:* During 2008, maintenance and repair works were carried out on the electric winches at Mgarr, Marsalforn and Xlendi Bays while sundry maintenance work was carried out on all other winches located in various bays. Other works included the changing of berthing rings and the cleaning of sand in front of the slipway at Mgarr Harbour, replacement of fenders on Xlendi Bay quay and the replacement of sleepers at Marsalforn main slipway. Additionally, regular inspections were carried out in all fishing centres.

JOSEPH A PORTELLI

Director (Projects & Development)

EU Affairs, Policy Development & Programme Implementation Directorate

The EU Affairs, Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate incorporates the management of aspects relating to EU affairs, domestic and EU related policy development and programme implementation.

The overall objectives of the Directorate are:

- managing the Ministry's participation in EU structures and processes, as well as, ensuring effective co-ordination of EU-related matters at a domestic level and with other EU stakeholders;
- co-ordinating the formulation of the Ministry's position on domestic policies and those proposed by the EU;
- facilitating the implementation of the Ministry's policies and strategies;
- carrying out SPO functions for EU co-funded projects and initiatives; and
- monitoring the implementation of programmes and projects including Customer Care.

EU AFFAIRS

EU Policy Co-ordination

During 2008, the Directorate continued to manage the Ministry's participation in EU structures and processes as well as, ensuring effective coordination of EU-related matters at a domestic level and with other EU stakeholders. It provided input to various EU proposals and European Commission communications that were of relevance to the Ministry's portfolio. It also provided input to the consultation process that the Commission for the Peripheral and Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) carries out on EU communications and proposals that are of relevance to island regions like Gozo.

Management of EU Funds

The Directorate also manages the EU funds allocated to the Ministry, in particular, managing the implementation of EU financed/co-financed projects to successful completion. Throughout the past year the Directorate continued to work closely with the project leaders who are leading the implementation of EU funded/co-financed projects, providing guidance and support on an ongoing basis and ensuring that funds are utilised in an effective manner and disbursed in accordance with regulations and established procedures. The Directorate continued to fulfil the role of Senior Programming Officer for the projects led by the Ministry for Gozo.

Under the Structural Funds Programme for Malta 2004-2006, the Directorate continued to manage the projects that were still underway during 2008. These included one project co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) aimed to improve the employability of the labour force, one co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) aimed to upgrade the basic infrastructure in the tourism sector and one under the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG) intended to upgrade the basic infrastructure in the fisheries sector.

By the end of 2008, all three projects were completed. These include:

- Training Courses to Enhance the Employability of the Workforce in Gozo;
- A Training Institute for the Tourism Industry in Gozo; and
- Provision of Cold Storage Facilities.

The project entitled *Master Plan for the Cittadella - the Old Fortified City of the Island of Gozo*, co-financed under the EEA Financial mechanism, is still under way.

The Directorate has also sourced opportunities for the co-financing of projects that contribute to Gozo's socio-economic development. It has secured co-financing for five projects, three under ERDF and two under ESF. It has provided guidance and assistance to line departments and interested parties including local councils, NGOs, private sector organisations and individuals on the application for funds under different funding instruments.

Dissemination of Information

An important function of this Directorate is the provision of assistance, advice and the dissemination of information on EU-related matters to line departments and interested parties, including NGOs, private sector organisations and the general public. This Directorate receives a significant number of queries as well as requests for information. Queries arise from both internal and external stakeholders for which the Directorate responds expeditiously. Besides the extensive use of e-mail to inform identified internal/external stakeholders, the Directorate holds meetings with these stakeholders as may be required. It also maintains contact with a number of officials from regions of other EU Member States through CPMR. This has created a two-way information exchange channel with this Directorate.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

During the past year the Directorate continued to monitor on a continuous basis EU developments, in particular, Commission and Council proposals in the areas of relevance to the Ministry's portfolio including regional policy, state aids, tourism, human resources, and business support, in order to co-ordinate the formulation of domestic policies in these areas. The Directorate has been instrumental in initiating internal debate and consultations with the relevant stakeholders on these areas, particularly, human resource development, state aids and tourism which are of crucial importance to Gozo.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

The Directorate continued to co-ordinate the implementation of the Ministry's programmes and projects. It has held meetings with the relevant officials and stakeholders to ensure effective implementation. To manage the EU co-financed projects effectively, it has worked in close co-operation with the project leaders who are leading the implementation of the projects for which the Ministry is final beneficiary.

Under the 2007-2013 programming period the Directorate is managing the following projects:

- Upgrading of Villa Rundle Gardens;
- Reconstruction of part of Xlendi and Ta' Pinu roads;
- Upgrading of the Operating Theatre and Setting up of a Radiology Unit at the Gozo General Hospital;
- Training Courses to Enhance the Employability and Adaptability of the Workforce;
- Higher Education Courses to Address Skill Mismatches in Gozo.

Besides the projects listed above, this Directorate is working on the project for the Upgrading of Żewwieqa Waterfront and on the preparation of other projects for Gozo which will be submitted for potential EU co-financing.

The Directorate also monitors the preparation/implementation of projects that other ministries and public entities will be implementing in Gozo. In particular, the Directorate monitors the implementation of these projects through its participation in committee meetings and by maintaining close contacts with the ministries/entities concerned.

National Reform Programme

Under the National Reform Programme for 2008-2010, this Directorate has submitted ten measures/initiatives under the different priority areas, namely, Education and Training, Employment, Environment and Tourism.

Green Initiatives

The Directorate, in collaboration with the Ministry Green Leader, has continued to pursue a number of green initiatives for the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste generated within the Ministry, including waste separation and alternative energy generation within the Ministry's administrative block. During the year, other initiatives aimed to reduce consumption of resources, in particular energy and water, were introduced and are actively being followed.

Customer Care Co-ordination

Quality Service Standards

The Directorate is co-ordinating the audit of the 12 quality service charters currently in place in different sections within this Ministry. During the past year, meetings were held with the Charter Support Unit on the matter. The audits are planned to start in April 2009.

This office monitors the implementation of the new service standards introduced in 2006. In those sections where there is no quality service charter in place, a list of the service standards that each section has committed itself to meet has been displayed prominently in each section. This Directorate maintains ongoing contact with the officials responsible for service standards in each department to ensure their effective implementation.

Queries/Complaints Handling

During 2008, the Directorate handled 760 queries, complaints and requests for assistance of a generic, as well as, of a specific nature, received through the electronic system, via e-mail, telephones and walk-ins. Most of these queries/complaints were dealt with expeditiously with responses provided either through the Customer Care System (CCS) or through e-mail. In most cases responses were supplemented by direct telephone contact. The majority of the walk-ins were provided with immediate response.

The Directorate continued to carry out an in-depth analysis of the queries, complaints and requests forwarded to it and subsequently took the following initiatives to improve upon the existing system:

- Continued to maintain ongoing co-ordination with local councils in Gozo. This has led to improved efficiency and effectiveness of the complaints forwarded to the Ministry.
- Held meetings with officials from OPM and MITTS to provide user input in connection with the redevelopment of the CCS system, to help reduce bottlenecks and improve its functionality, as well as to improve upon the system's effectiveness in the delivery of customer complaints to the appropriate ministry/entity.
- The Directorate co-ordinated two training sessions held by OPM for CCS users in Gozo. 27 participants from local councils and officials from this Ministry attended the training related to the redevelopment of the CCS system. Hands-on training of the CCS system is envisaged to be carried out during 2009

RITA CUTAJAR

Director (EU Affairs, Policy Development & Programme Implementation)