



THE PROFESSIONAL CENTRE
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K A M R A T A L - P E R I T I

To support members of the profession in achieving excellence in their practice of architecture and engineering in the interest of the community

Cottonera Strategy

The Council of the *Kamra tal-Periti* welcomes the proposed Cottonera Strategy Document, which appears to have been prepared through a bottom-up approach which involved the residents, the Local Councils and the various entities which operate with the towns in the region. It is clear that this approach has led Government to have a good understanding of the problems faced by these localities, as well as to understand the various solutions which have been proposed by those who inhabit, or regularly visit, the area.

The Council of the *Kamra tal-Periti* wishes to put forward the following proposals for consideration:

- **Restoration grants:** It is proposed that a scheme similar to the Marsamxett Balcony Grant Scheme launched recently by the Planning Authority is rolled out for properties located in the area. It is recommended that the scheme covers all façade restoration works, not just balconies.
- **Design Competitions:** The Strategy Document includes a number of proposed projects which are of a small-scale, yet public nature. The *Kamra* reiterates its position that such projects should be the subject of Design Competitions. The National Environment Policy (2012) states: “It is increasingly recognised that poor design has social implications: beauty as an element of quality creates psychological benefits that contribute to a balanced society, and to overall quality of life. Well-designed buildings and spaces should complement the character of the places where they are found, providing a sense of place and identity. We will address quality in design in the following manner... we will also take the lead by launching design competitions for our own projects (see measure 3.2.1).” The projects proposed in the Cottonera Strategy are an excellent opportunity to utilise Design Competitions, with an aim towards ensuring the best quality design projects which this area surely deserves. The *Kamra tal-Periti* offers its assistance in organising such competitions, in line with internationally accepted standards.
- **Centre for Architecture and the Built Environment:** The *Kamra tal-Periti* has been presenting its desire to establish a Centre for Architecture and the Built Environment since 2007. Malta is one of the few European countries that does not have such a Centre. The National Cultural Policy (2011) had acknowledged the need to have such a Centre, stating that “*The proposal for the creation of a Centre of Architecture and the Built Environment in Malta by Kamra tal-Periti is an important measure to be encouraged as recommended by the Kamra tal-Periti. The main objective of such a centre, which would be similar to others existing in most EU Member*



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States, would be to bring architecture and urban planning issues closer to the general public and at the same time advance the profession and contribute to an improved design process. The creation of architecture centres across Europe came about as a result of a Resolution by the Council of the European Union in February 2000 on architectural quality in urban and rural environments. This called on the European Commission to ensure that architectural quality and the specific nature of architectural service are taken into consideration in all its policies, measures and programmes. In accordance with these objectives, the Centre's main remit shall be to foster better appreciation of our built heritage and to promote more sustainable development in future years. It should assist in raising the awareness of the importance of good design and quality in our built environment from both an economic and environmental point of view." We believe that Cottonera is an ideal place to house such a Centre, which can also serve as a catalyst for further regeneration of the area. We would like to propose that Government commits to identifying a suitable building (such as the Armeria or other suitable site), and to commence discussions with the Kamra in order to bring this dream to fruition.

- **Projects:** The following projects are being put forward for consideration in addition to the ones outlined in the Document:
 - Conclusion of the Birgu waterfront project including the hotel;
 - Implementation of Santa Margherita Gardens project;
 - Proper funding for the Naval Museum;
 - Better synergy between the Smart City project and the Cottonera region;
 - Restoration of Fort Ricasoli and its rehabilitation to a new use;
 - Transport to and from the three cities and Valletta should be more frequent;
 - More frequent and better use of the sea ferry to provide better connectivity to Valletta, Floriana, Sliema, Gzira/Ta' Xbiex and Marsa;
 - Exploit the concentration of educational establishments within the Cottonera Lines to promote Cottonera as a centre of excellence for education for all of Malta;
 - Total protection of the open space outside the walls from further urban sprawl to retain distinctiveness of the built up areas.