

Annual Report 2018
PA Users Committee
Presented by Perit Simone Vella Lenicker
29.12.2018

The current Users' Committee was appointed on 23rd April 2018 for a period of three years. This report summarises the topics discussed during the meetings held between the 23rd May 2018 and 21st November 2018, and their outcome.

1. **Availability of application documents** – Following submissions made by the Kamra tal-Periti and Flimkien Ghal Ambjent Ahjar, the Committee recommended that any report or document which is pertinent to the assessment of an application and/or referred to in the DPAR should be made available to the public through Eapps.
2. **Submission of fresh plans/documentation after finalisation of the DPAR** – The Committee recommended that, in order to endure fair hearing for all the parties concerned, in the case where fresh plans or documents are submitted by the applicant less than 2 days before the date of the hearing, then the registered representees may request a deferral of the sitting by a maximum of 5 days.
3. **Revision of site notice** – Various amendments to the wording of the site notice were proposed in order to render it easier for members of the public to understand the application proposal and to understand their rights and the respective timelines regarding the submission of objections or representations.
4. **Irrestawra Darek Application Process** – This item was put forward by the Kamra tal-Periti in view of the “rush to submit” that ensued when the funds were about to be taken up, with the Authority issuing a notice that the scheme would be closed, giving only 2 hours' notice to periti to submit, on a Friday afternoon. This led to many periti not being able to submit applications in time, and in many cases resulted in their clients refusing to reimburse them for the services provided. The Kamra tal-Periti put forward a proposal for a three stage process, which was endorsed by the Committee, as follows:

Stage 1: The Scheme is launched and prospective applicants are given say two months to contact their *perit* to assess if they are eligible and to give them a broadbrush estimate of the works. A basic form containing the applicant's details, the description of the works, a site plan, photos and a preliminary estimate, will be prepared during this two-month period. The opening date for submissions should be made available at launch stage, so that if a prospective client contacts the *perit* close to the opening date, the *perit* can better gauge whether they can finish the submissions in time or not. All the

submission requirements, including the forms that need to be filled in, must be made available at launch date.

Stage 2: Applications will then be submitted during a one-week period via email or by hand by the applicants themselves, and each submission given a “*tracking number*”. All submissions during that week should be accepted, and acknowledgements issued.

Stage 3: Following vetting of the applications, the Planning Authority can then write to applicants who are eligible for the funds to submit additional info as required. It will also write to those applicants who are not eligible, and also to those whose application cannot be accepted due to full take-up of funds.

5. **Irrestawra Darek allocation of funds** – Another matter raised by the Kamra tal-Periti concerned cases where the Planning Authority requested changes to the proposed work which resulted in lower project costs. Applicants were however not allowed to shift the savings onto other items. A proposal was therefore made for a mechanism to be established for the reallocation of funds, within the amount applied for by the applicant. Conditions should ensure that any site should not be eligible for further funding under the scheme before the lapse of 5 years.
6. **Restoration Method Statements** – This matter was also raised by the Kamra tal-Periti following various reports by members of the profession who were being asked by the Planning Authority to submit one-page Statements in lieu of a properly presented RMS in line with the Authority’s TORs. The Committee agreed that while the contents of the RMS should be to the point, these should follow the format indicated in PA Circular 4/16. It was also suggested that standards for restoration should be prepared by the competent authority.
7. **Delays by Superintendent of Cultural Heritage** – The Committee expressed its concerns on the delays caused by the SCH in the planning application process. Timeframes for response should be clearly established and adhered to.
8. **Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Assessment** - The FAR policy necessitates the computation of certain parameters for a site and proposal being applied for through the FAR mechanism. Due to lack of a clear set template for how information is to be provided, the information submitted differs from one application to the other making it more strenuous to assess the application of this policy. The Committee will be proposing a template for the presentation of such information.

These proposals will be submitted to the Executive Council of the Planning Authority and the Minister responsible for Planning, for their consideration and further action in the coming weeks.