

DESTINATION GOZO

Gozo Tourism Association Newsletter
November - December 2025

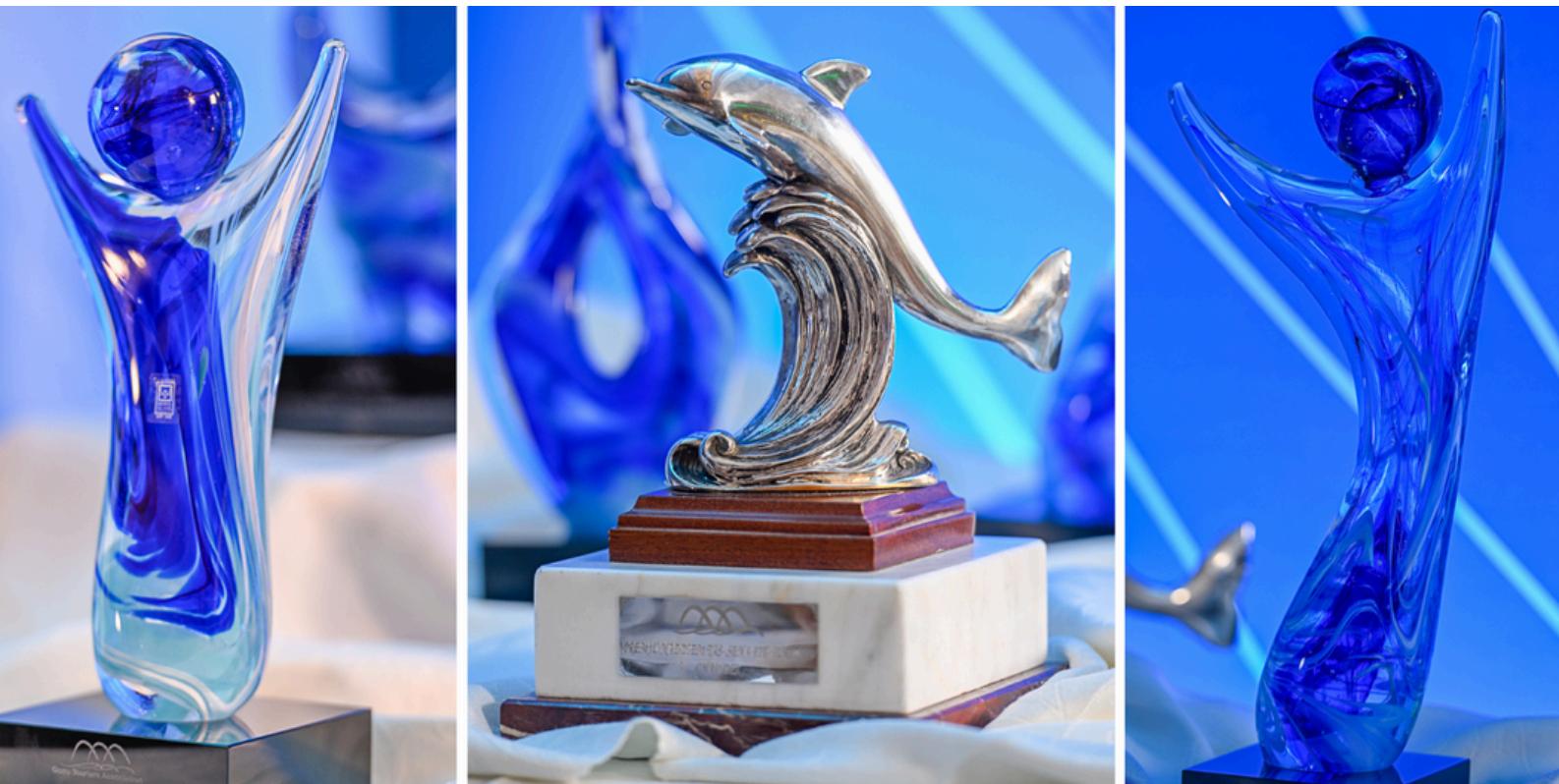


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Save The Date

26th February 2026

Gozo Tourism Association Annual General Meeting

Gozo Tourism Awards 2025 Launch



For the sixteenth consecutive year, the Gozo Tourism Association (GTA) is proud to present the Gozo Tourism Awards – 2025. These annual awards honour outstanding individuals in Gozo's tourism sector, including:

- The Gozo Tourism Worker of the Year Award, presented to a dedicated professional who has excelled in their role.
- The Gozo Young Tourism Worker of the Year Award, recognising a young individual who has distinguished himself/ herself through exceptional performance.

In addition, for the eleventh year, the Entrepreneurship in Gozo Tourism Award will be conferred upon an entrepreneur whose achievements have made a significant impact on Gozo's tourism industry.

This year's edition also includes the Gozo Business Niche Tourism Achievement Award, aimed at acknowledging individuals or businesses that have demonstrated innovative approaches in developing creative initiatives to enhance niche tourism products in Gozo.

Furthermore, the Gozo Cultural Niche Tourism Achievement Award will celebrate any large- or small-scale event, festival, or similar initiative organised in Gozo that has contributed to increasing visitor numbers to the island.

The awards will be presented during a special ceremony on Friday, 6th February 2026.

Gozo Tourism: Achievements of 2025 and Prospects for 2026

Malta is on track to reach a record 4 million tourists to its islands during 2025. Gozo, too, has benefitted from this surge, registering notable growth in both overnight stays and day visits.

According to the latest NSO statistics, overnight stays in Gozo rose by 6% between January and October 2025 compared to the same period in 2024. Day tourism also reached unprecedented levels, with 1.9 million visitors crossing over to Gozo for a few hours during this period, a 13% increase over 2024. This means that nearly 54% of tourists staying on mainland Malta chose to make a day trip to Gozo.

An especially encouraging development is the shift in seasonality. While the summer months (June–September) remained stable, significant growth was recorded in the winter and shoulder seasons, with double-digit increases during these months. This trend suggests that Gozo is gradually overcoming the long-standing challenge of seasonality, strengthening its position as a year-round destination.

Challenges Facing the Sector

Despite these positive developments, Gozitan tourism operators continue to face pressing challenges. A recent survey by the Gozo Tourism Association highlights two main concerns: The rising food costs, which force operators to balance absorbing expenses with adjusting their selling prices, a delicate trade-off that directly affects competitiveness, and the Labour shortages, a persistent issue for over two decades, now reaching critical levels. Many establishments rely heavily on foreign workers, particularly third-country nationals (TCNs). This reliance brings complications such as visa processing delays and skills pass assessments, while also raising concerns that Gozo's tourism product may risk losing some of its authenticity, a key element of the visitor experience.



CHALLENGE

Gozo Tourism: Achievements of 2025 and Prospects for 2026

Resilience and Investment

Notwithstanding these challenges, Gozo's tourism sector remains vibrant and resilient. Continuous investment and upgrading in accommodation and catering demonstrate the entrepreneurial spirit of Gozitan operators, who have consistently turned obstacles into opportunities.

Recent and ongoing infrastructural projects spearheaded by the Ministry for Gozo and Planning further strengthen the island's tourism offering. The Gozo Indoor Sports and Aquatic Pavilion in Victoria, inaugurated in September, opens new avenues for sports tourism. While the Victoria–Marsalforn road project, the Gozo Museum, and the planned rural airfield will enhance connectivity, accessibility, and attractions for both tourists and locals.

Looking Ahead to 2026

The Envision 2050 strategy emphasises that tourism on the Maltese islands should evolve from a focus on quantity to one centered on quality, aiming to generate higher expenditure per capita while maintaining current arrival levels. In this context, the distinctiveness of Gozo, rooted in its cultural heritage, natural resources, and diverse range of quality products, provides a strong foundation for positioning the island as a premium destination. Safeguarding and enhancing these inherent strengths is essential to ensure their lasting appeal.

Looking ahead to 2026, the tourism sector approaches the future with optimism, as Gozo prepares to proudly hold the title of the European Region of Gastronomy, a prestigious recognition that offers immense potential to showcase its rich culinary heritage.

Feedback from International tourism fairs already reflects strong interest in Gozo, with travel operators eager to collaborate on new and enticing destinations. Gozo's combination of resilience, innovation, and authenticity ensures that it remains a compelling destination, well-positioned to build on the successes of 2025 and embrace the opportunities of the year ahead.

Transport Sector Meeting

On 13th November 2025, the Gozo Tourism Association (GTA) convened a sectoral meeting with members representing the transport segment on Gozo. The session proved highly productive, with participants offering valuable contributions on improving traffic management at the Mgarr terminal and along its access road. Several key challenges were identified mainly:

- Lack of Coordination: Traffic management outside the marshalling area is currently overseen by Transport Malta, the Gozo Police, and LESA officials. However, insufficient coordination among these entities has led to inefficiencies.
- Inadequate Staffing: The number of personnel deployed is not sufficient to handle the high traffic volumes, particularly during peak periods.
- Parking Challenges: Illegal and poorly regulated parking in and around the terminal, especially at drop-off points and along access roads, is contributing to congestion.
- Selective Enforcement: Parking regulations are enforced inconsistently, with enforcement at times appearing selective.

Following these discussions, members present agreed on a set of proposals, which the GTA has begun presenting to officials at the Ministry for Gozo and Planning. The measures put forward include:

- Dedicated Traffic Management Team: Establish a permanent unit at Mgarr Harbour, staffed with trained personnel and clear responsibilities.
- Removal of Shore Street Parking: Eliminate parking spaces on the left side of Shore Street (adjacent to Gleneagles Bar) to improve traffic flow. This adjustment is expected to be offset by the park-and-ride service from Ta' Xhajma to Mgarr Harbour.
- Preserve Loading/Unloading Bays: Ensure designated bays near the terminal are used exclusively for their intended purpose, with strict enforcement against misuse.
- Improved Markings: Repaint loading/unloading bays to ensure vehicles park parallel to the kerb, facilitating smoother traffic movement.
- Ride-Hailing Pick-Up Zones: Designate specific pick-up points for Bolt and Uber services near the “Welcome to Gozo” sign, just beyond the police station.
- Priority System for Gozitan Garage Vehicles: Introduce a guaranteed priority system for Y-plated garage vehicles, issued by Transport Malta and administered by Gozo Channel.

As a result of this meeting and subsequent discussions with the Ministry, the GTA is now represented on the newly announced Task Force for the management of Mgarr Harbour.

While fully acknowledging the spatial limitations of the harbour area, the Gozo Tourism Association remains confident that, with goodwill and the necessary political support, transport operation, particularly those serving tourist, can be managed more efficiently.

GTA's Participation in International Tourism Fairs - WTM London

Staged annually at the ExCeL Conference and Exhibition Centre in London, the World Travel Market (WTM) is by far the leading global event for the travel industry. The 2025 WTM marked the 45th edition of the world's most influential travel and tourism event.

The three-day event took place from Tuesday, 4th November to Thursday, 6th November 2025, with total attendance rising to 46,500 participants, marking an increase compared to the 43,727 attendees recorded in 2024. A total of 182 countries were represented, with exhibitor numbers increasing by 5% year-on-year



The event hosted 5,500 qualified buyers, representing an 8% increase compared to 2024, and facilitated over 40,000 pre-scheduled meetings, enabling the industry to plan, network, and secure deals for 2026 and beyond. As seen from the above, this remains a vibrant and must-attend three-day business-to-business event for destinations such as Gozo, providing a unique opportunity for destination representatives to meet, network, negotiate, and conduct business at a global level.

This year, for the 26th year, Gozo was once again well-exposed and promoted as a distinct destination, yet complementary to Malta. This promotional approach provides Gozo with an opportunity to position itself within the Maltese archipelago as a destination offering a diverse holiday experience. The presence of competing holiday destinations to Gozo and Malta was notably strong and evident during this year's event.

At the World Travel Market, the presence of tour operators has always been significant, and this year was no exception. Several operators visited the Gozo stand, with discussions primarily focusing on Gozo's tourism offerings and available services - particularly new accommodations - and the potential inclusion of Gozo in their respective outbound markets. The contacts made during the WTM are circulated to all GTA members to follow up individually.

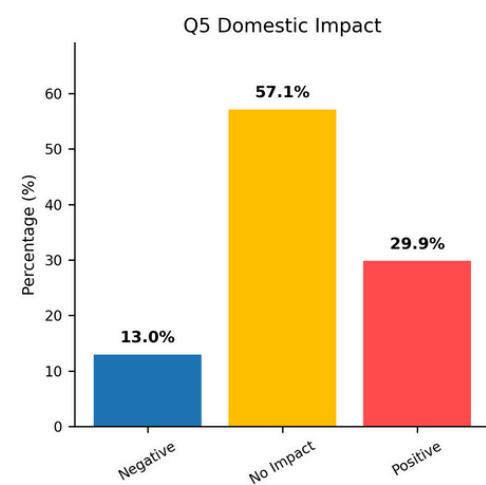
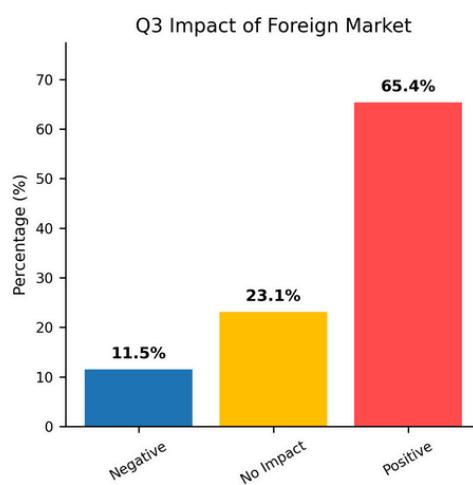
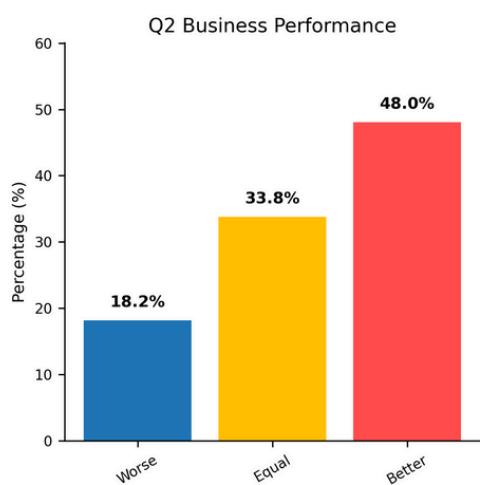
It is highly important for the trade to maintain a presence at travel fairs such as the World Travel Market to strengthen the ongoing promotion of Gozo, attract potential new tour operators, and sustain vital connections between tourism service providers and actual holiday buyers. The presence of the GTA is crucial, especially in the absence of participation from local trade due to the associated costs.

Comparative Performance of Gozo Tourism Establishments during the summer period of July to September 2025

The Gozo Tourism Association carried out an online survey among its members to assess the performance of their establishments during the summer period of 2025, compared to the same months in 2024. Responses were gathered from a broad cross-section of the tourism sector, including accommodation providers, restaurants, diving centres, tourist attractions, transport operators, travel agencies, consultancy firms and other tourism-related businesses.

The survey revealed a generally positive outcome for the summer season. When asked to classify their overall business performance for July to September 2025, 48% reported an improvement over 2024, 33.80% stated that performance was on the same level, while 18.20% experienced a decline.

This positive trend was further supported by the impact of the foreign market. 65.40% of respondents reported a positive effect from foreign tourists, with only 11.50% reporting a negative impact. When comparing this year's foreign market performance with 2024, 48.70% stated it was better, 35.90% said it was equal, and 15.40% experienced a downturn. These findings confirm a strengthening dependence on international visitor flows, which continued to support the sector during peak months.

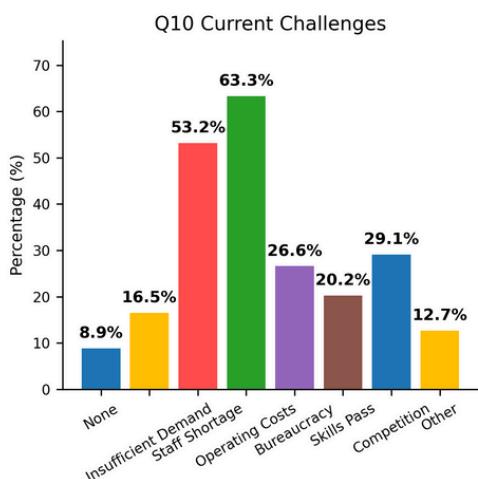
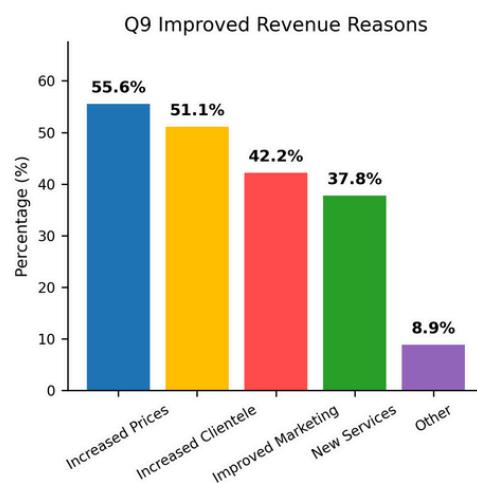
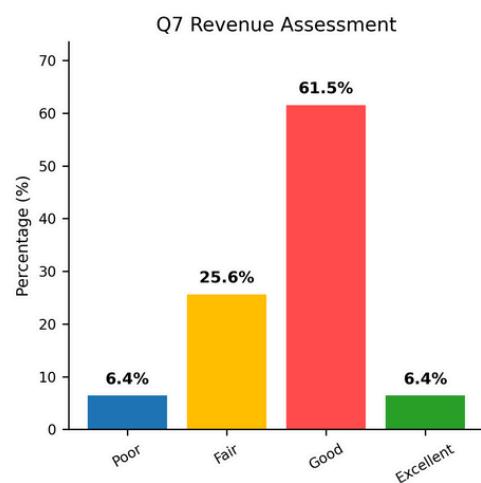


Regarding the domestic market, the results were more stable. A majority, 57%, reported that Maltese tourists had no significant impact on their performance, while 30% experienced a positive effect and 13% a negative one. When compared to 2024, the domestic market remained largely unchanged, with 64% reporting equal performance, 17.30% noting a decrease, and 18.70% observing an improvement.

Comparative Performance of Gozo Tourism Establishments during the summer period of July to September 2025

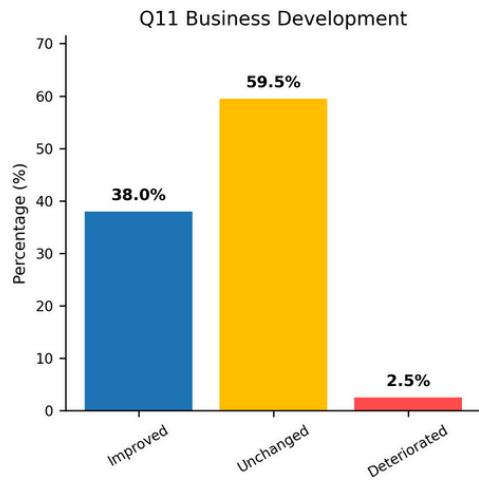
Revenue levels during summer 2025 were described as strong by most respondents. 61.50% rated their summer revenue as “Good”, while 6.40% classified it as excellent, with only a small minority rating it as poor. When directly compared to summer 2024, the picture remained consistent: 48.70% of operators reported higher revenue, 30.80% stated revenue remained equal, and 20.50% experienced lower figures.

Among those who reported improved revenue, the most frequently cited reasons were increases in their prices (55.60%), an increase in clientele (51%), and more effective marketing strategies (42%). A notable proportion also attributed the improvement to new services or offers (38%), indicating ongoing efforts across the sector to diversify and enhance competitiveness.



When asked about the challenges faced during the summer months, most respondents highlighted familiar obstacles. Rising operating costs remained the most pressing issue, cited by 63.30% of operators, followed by staff shortages (53%). Administrative bureaucracy was highlighted by 26.60%, while 20.30% pointed to the Skills Pass, and 29% noted growing competition. Only 9% reported facing no challenges at all, underscoring a season that continued to test operational resilience.

Comparative Performance of Gozo Tourism Establishments during the summer period of July to September 2025

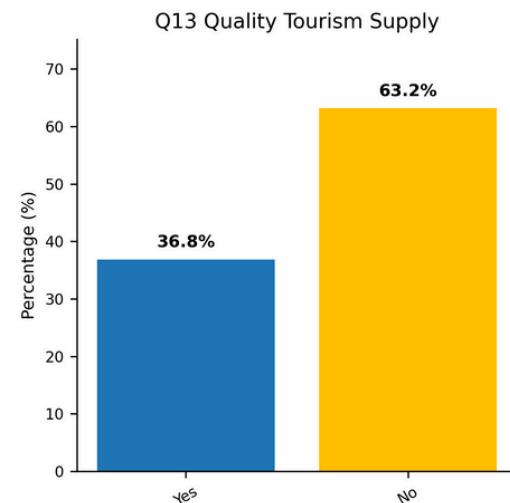
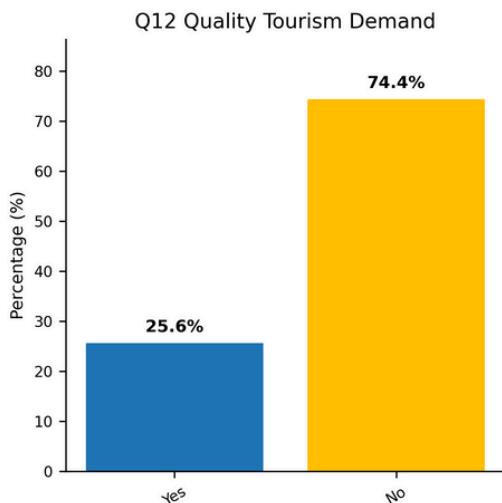


In terms of business operations, the majority of respondents, 59.50% reported that their operations remained unchanged compared to 2024.

Meanwhile, 38% observed an improvement, and only 2.50% reported a deterioration, signalling a largely steady operational environment with pockets of progress.

Finally, participants were asked to provide their views on “quality tourism.” When considering the demand side, the type of tourists Gozo is attracting, 74% believed that Gozo is not currently attracting high-quality tourists, with only 26% responding positively.

On the supply side, when evaluating whether Gozo offers a quality tourism product in return, 63% felt that the island is not yet providing a sufficiently strong or high-value product, while 37% believed it does. These responses point to a perceived gap between the tourism product offered on the island and the expectations of higher-spending, quality-driven travellers.



GTA's Calendar of Events

Saturday 1st November

GTA Chairman Paul Scicluna attended a GAGF Event marking the foundation achievements during the past year

Monday 3rd November

GTA CEO attended a working dinner hosted by HE Dr. Stephen Montford the Maltese High Commissioner in London

Tuesday 4th November - Thursday 6th November

GTA CEO represented GTA during the World Travel Market in London

Saturday 8th November

GTA CEO participated during an RTK 103 Radio programme on the Budget

Tuesday 11th November

- GTA CEO attended a meeting with EWA officials regarding the New EU Directive on energy audit
- GTA CEO attended an MCESD meeting

Wednesday 12th November 2025

GTA Council Meeting

Thursday 13th November 2025

- GTA CEO delivers a presentation to university students on Connectivity at the Xewkija Campus
- GTA holds a meeting for the members in the Transport Sector

Friday 14th November 2025

- GTA CEO attends a half day seminar organised by Jobsplus at the Grand Hotel
- GTA Chairman attends a meeting with regards the Victoria Cultural Strategy

Monday 17th November 2025

- GTA CEO attends and MCESD meeting during which AI in Tourism was discussed
- GTA CEO attends a meeting of the Tourism and Culture focus group of GRDA

Thursday 20th November 2025

GTA CEO attends an MTA Board meeting

Friday 21st November 2025

- GTA Chairman and CEO meets Dr. Christian Zammit at GRDA in connection with the signing of an MOU between GRDA and GTA
- GTA Chairman attends the Youth for Enterprise event by GBC

GTA's Calendar of Events

Monday 24th November 2025

GTA Executive council attends a webinar by MTA and GRDA on the proposed Tourism Accommodation Legislation

Tuesday 25th November

GTA Council Meeting

Wednesday 26th November

GTA CEO attends MCESD meeting

Thursday 27th November

GTA CEO participates in a discussion programme on NET TV during the programme Opinjoni

Friday 28th November

GTA CEO attends a working lunch organised by MEP Thomas Bajada

Tuesday 2nd December

GTA Chairman and CEO meets Mr Ronald Sultana Director Tourism and Economic Development

Wednesday 3rd December

- GTA Chairman, GTA CEO, GTA Council members Amand Verranman, Joe Mercieca and Temida Magrin attend an information session organised by IDENTITA at the Innovation Hub.
- GTA CEO , Secretary Mark Busuttil, and Assistant Treasurer Ryan Grech, attends a meeting with the PN Regional Council to discuss tourism on Gozo as proposed by GTA.

Friday 12th December

GTA CEO attends another meeting of GRDA working group on Culture and Tourism

Tuesday 16th December

- GTA Council meeting

Wednesday 17th December 2025

- GTA CEO attends MTA Board meeting

Friday 26th December 2025

GTA Chairman presents donation obo GTA to H.E. Dr Myriam Spiter Debono for Community Chest Fund

Tuesday 30th December 2025

- GTA Council Meeting

Statistics

Inbound Tourists to Gozo – November 2025 vs 2024

According to the National Statistics Office, Gozo recorded positive results in November 2025 when compared to the same month in 2024, with growth recorded in both day and overnight visitors.

Day Visitors: Day visitors increased by 20%, rising from 115,545 in November 2024 to 138,710 in November 2025, confirming the continued strength of same-day travel to Gozo.

Overnight Visitors: Overnight visitors also registered an increase, rising by 592 visitors or 4.7%, from 12,497 in November 2024 to 13,089 in November 2025.

Gozo/ Comino	November			2024/ 2025
	2023	2024	2025	% change
Day Visitors	95,201	115,545	138,710	20%
Overnight Visitors	9,265	12,497	13,089	4.70%

Overall, between January and November 2025, Gozo recorded continued growth in inbound tourism compared to the same period in 2024. Day visitors increased by 13.5%, rising from 1,785,363 in 2024 to 2,027,241 in 2025, underlining Gozo's sustained appeal for short and same-day visits. Overnight visitors also grew, albeit more moderately, increasing by 9,989 visitors or 5.7%, from 174,487 in 2024 to 184,476 in 2025.

Gozo/ Comino	January - November			2024/ 2025
	2023	2024	2025	% change
Day Visitors	1,500,271	1,785,363	2,027,241	13.50%
Overnight Visitors	155,150	174,487	184,476	5.70%