

DESTINATION GOZO

Gozo Tourism Association Newsletter
September - October 2025



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GTA Presents its Budget 2026 Proposals to the Leader of Opposition Dr. Alex Borg



On Friday 24th October, the Gozo Tourism Association had the opportunity to present its Budget 2026 Proposals to the Leader of the Opposition and the Nationalist Party Dr. Alex Borg. This meeting took place at the PN headquarters in Pieta and the GTA delegation was led by its Chairman Mr. Paul Scicluna and included the GTA CEO Joe Muscat, Treasurer Mr. Konrad Scicluna, Vice-Secretary Ms. Pauline Spiteri, Vice-Treasurer Mr. Ryan Grech and Council member from the restaurants section Mr. Joseph Merieca.

The Leader of the Opposition was accompanied by the Opposition Shadow Minister for Tourism Dr. Mario Demarco and his personal Assistant Mr. Damien Spiteri.

During this cordial meeting the Gozo Tourism Association explained to Dr. Alex Borg its Budget 2026 vision based on delivering a distinct, sustainable and value-led tourism destination. The proposals centred five themes namely connectivity, the touristic offer, the environment, the promotion of the destination and the human capital.

The Leader of the Opposition Dr. Alex Borg, explained his party's strategy for Tourism on the Island of Gozo which is very similar to that being proposed by the Gozo Tourism Association. During this meeting both sides had the opportunity to discuss several topics related specifically to Gozo, including the Mgarr port enlargement, the four day week, the ringfencing of the ECO Contribution collected from Gozitan accommodation and the ownership of the tourism sector on Gozo.

At the end of the meeting the GTA Chairman Mr. Paul Scicluna presented copies of the GTA Budget 2026 proposals to Dr. Alex Borg and to Dr. Mario Demarco.

GTA's Budget 2026 Reactions

The Gozo Tourism Association notes that the 2026 Budget addresses the social dimension of the Maltese Islands. It places particular emphasis on families and the elderly through various measures, including increases across various categories of social benefits, enhanced tax deductions, and higher children's allowances. These initiatives aim to tackle the low fertility rate in the Maltese Islands and help mitigate the rising cost of living.

Furthermore, this Budget supports the business sector through the continuation and expansion of the Micro Invest scheme, aimed to address digitalisation and AI adoption. There are also measures specifically intended to enhance Gozo's contribution to national economic growth.

The only tax increase announced in the Budget speech affects the tourism sector, with the eco-contribution rising from €0.50 to €1.50 per bed night, intended to be invested in the tourism product. However, the Gozo Tourism Association notes that its proposal to ringfence the eco-contribution collected from Gozitan accommodation, so it could be reinvested in tourism projects in Gozo, was completely overlooked. On a positive note, the Budget speech includes GTA's proposal to amend and update the Tourism Act to reflect the current tourism realities.



GTA's Budget 2026 Reactions



The Budget outlines several infrastructure projects for the island of Gozo, which are beneficial also to the tourism sector, including the Victoria multi-level parking facility, the Rural Airfield, upgrades to arterial roads, and the installation of a new hyperbaric unit at the Gozo General Hospital.

Additionally, the Minister for Finance announced more sea connectivity to Gozo with the introduction of a new ferry service connecting Sliema, Bugibba, and Mgarr, as well as the upgrading of the Cirkewwa and Mgarr ferry Terminals. However, the Budget speech does not address any of the Association's proposals for a comprehensive plan for the inter-island sea link, such as the replacement of the fourth ferry, the expansion of Mgarr port, and the development of an alternative road.

In conclusion, the Gozo Tourism Association welcomes several measures that support investment in the Gozitan tourism product, as well as measures to entice employee retention.

To Thrive in Conflict

Editorial

Tourism is one of Gozo's main economic drivers, if not the most significant. Forty five years ago, visitor activity on the sister island was largely concentrated in the seaside resorts of Marsalforn and Xlendi. Over time—and especially with the introduction of the farmhouse concept—accommodation options emerged across other localities. Today, nearly 10,000 beds registered with the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) are scattered throughout Gozo, effectively making the entire island a tourism zone.

This vibrant sector, however, continuously clashes with other social and economic activities on the island, common to tourism destinations worldwide. A particularly heated conflict in Gozo exists between tourism and the construction industry. Year-round excavation and demolition work associated with building projects is taking its toll on visitors' experiences. While the tourism sector acknowledges the necessity of ongoing development, it insists that construction must not occur at the expense of tourists.

The authorities regulating both tourism, planning and construction, the MTA, the Planning Authority (PA), and the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) are fully aware of this tension. Every early June, MTA and BCA issue a summer break time directive prohibiting excavation and demolition between June 15 and September 15 in designated streets of key tourism localities in Malta and Gozo.

However, the streets listed in the various Gozitan localities are concentrated primarily in the resorts of Marsalforn, Xlendi and some other villages, leaving most Gozitan accommodation outside these areas unprotected by the summer break-time directive.

As a result, during the summer season, operators of accommodation units located beyond the designated streets, covered by the summer break-time directive, frequently contend with adjacent demolition and excavation works. This construction activity, which often involves heavy machinery, can last several days or even weeks, disrupting the holiday experience of tourists staying on these properties.

Distressed guests may seek compensation from accommodation operators, yet many leave Gozo with a bitter impression and a vow never to return. The tourism sector is rightly concerned: how can Gozo's tourism thrive under such conflicting circumstances? How can the island deliver the high-quality experience envisioned in EnvisionMalta 2050, when visitors' holidays can be tarnished and ruined?

To Thrive in Conflict

Editorial



In order to pursue its vision of quality, Gozo must safeguard its tourism offerings. A compromise must be reached to align the island's two key economic sectors. To this end, the Gozo Tourism Association believes the summer break-time directive should be adjourned and amended to reflect Gozo's current tourism realities.

It is time to recognise Gozo as a single, unified tourism zone and to protect local accommodation, so that visitors continue to enjoy positive, high-quality experiences. Everyone agrees that both sectors need to thrive together without jeopardising each other's well-being. In such situations, common-sense solutions must prevail over short-term interests.

The EnvisionMalta 2050 tourism strategy places particular emphasis on Gozo, introducing a macro-initiative aimed at expanding premium accommodations and high-quality holiday premises on the island. To successfully realise this vision, appropriate regulations and legislation must be implemented.

As Gozo stands at this crossroad, safeguarding the holiday experience demands that our summer break-time directive evolves in tandem with the island's tourism reality. Recognising Gozo as one cohesive destination—rather than a patchwork of protected streets—offers a clear path toward harmonising construction needs with visitor expectations. By extending and refining the directive to encompass all accommodation zones, we can prevent the jarring disruptions that tarnish guest satisfaction and jeopardise repeat visits that Gozo is known for. This balanced approach not only underpins the ambitions of EnvisionMalta 2050 but also secures the long-term sustainability of Gozo's twin economic pillars of construction and tourism.

Ultimately, a shared commitment to thorough planning and collaborative regulation will ensure that both sectors flourish together, preserving Gozo's reputation as a premium destination for generations to come.

GTA's Participation in International Tourism Fairs - IFTM Top Resa

One of the primary objectives of the Gozo Tourism Association is to promote Gozo as a distinct travel destination. In line with this goal, the Association regularly participates in various tourism fairs as part of its continuous efforts to showcase Gozo in key markets, such as Italy and France, as well as in countries with excellent accessibility to and from the island.



In this regard, the French market remains a priority for the Gozo Tourism Association. Consequently, participation in the IFTM Top Resa fair in Paris continues to be an important annual commitment.

The 2025 edition of IFTM Top Resa was held between the 23rd and 25th September at the Paris Expo Porte de Versailles. Representing the island of Gozo at this international B2B event was Mr. Ryan Grech, on behalf of the Gozo Tourism Association.

During the three-day event, the GTA representative had the opportunity to meet with various travel agencies, tour operators, and press representatives showing interest in Gozo's authentic and slower-paced appeal. Gozo was promoted through dedicated printed material, such as maps, service directory, and themed publications.

The fair also revealed increasing interest from the student travel and MICE segments, while press and marketing agencies expressed enthusiasm to collaborate on campaigns featuring Gozo's culture, nature, and tranquility. Such interactions are expected to further strengthen awareness of Gozo within the French market and encourage more visitors to experience the island's unique character.

The participation of the Gozo Tourism Association in IFTM Top Resa 2025 was made possible through the support of the Ministry for Gozo (Directorate for Tourism and Economic Development) and the Malta Tourism Authority, who provided the necessary space for the Gozo desk within the Malta stand. Special thanks go to Mr. Claude Zammit Trevisan, MTA director in France, and his team at the MTA Paris office for their collaboration and assistance throughout the fair.

GTA's Participation in International Tourism Fairs - TTG Rimini

The TTG Incontri Rimini is Italy's leading international B2B tourism exhibition. It serves as a key marketplace for negotiations, networking, and business between Italian and international companies, as well as intermediaries for tourism products. TTG Incontri is an essential event for industry professionals, offering valuable insights into market performance, showcasing new developments, forecasting trends, and exploring the future direction of the sector.

On this occasion, as in previous years, the Gozo Tourism Association, in collaboration with the Directorate for Tourism and Economic Development within the Ministry for Gozo and the Malta Tourism Authority, represented the island destination of Gozo at this prestigious tourism fair.



Every year, TTG Travel Experience features a main theme to guide the show's events programme, inspired by the current market environment, condensing in a concept the urgent issues affecting the sector. **“Awake to a New Era”** was the theme that guided the events of the 2025 edition, a concept chosen to encourage the travel industry to reawaken with a renewed vision and awareness of the evolving dynamics shaping global tourism.

Although the TTG Incontri Rimini is primarily a Trade Fair, during the course of this exhibition several individual visitors visited the Malta/Gozo stand, specifically to collect more information and promotional materials, especially those who have already booked a holiday to the Maltese islands.

The Gozo Tourism Association through its representative, Ms. Temida Magrin, distributed promotional material provided by MTA, and the Directorate for Tourism within the Ministry for Gozo, and including the GTA's publication 'Isola di Miti e Miracoli', an 80 pager in Italian highlighting Gozo's History, Culture, folklore, bays and beaches, feasts, diving, country walks etc. as well as other useful information for the visiting tourists to plan their holidays. Apart from the above promotional material the GTA representative also distributed the other Association's publication Directory of Services on Gozo.

Calendar of Events

Tuesday 2nd September

GTA Executive council meeting

Thursday 4th September

GTA CEO participates on the Radju Malta Programme Il-Polz tac-Cittadin

Wednesday 10th September

GTA Chairman, CEO and Treasurer Konrad Scicluna attends a GRC meeting held at the Innovation hub with the Prime Minister Dr. Robert Abela on the Budget Proposals

Thursday 11th September

GTA Chairman and CEO meets Dr. Mons Joseph Bezzina on the GTA Publication

Friday 12th September

GTA CEO attends the Pre Budget 2026 presentation by Minister for Finance Clyde Caruana

Monday 15th September

GTA Council members had an online meeting with Perit Jonathan Mizzi from Mizzi Studio regarding the Comino rehabilitation project

Tuesday 16th September

- GTA CEO attends the launch of the Comino rehabilitation project by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism Dr. Ian Borg
- GTA Council Meeting

Wednesday 17th September

GTA CEO attends the monthly MTA Board Meeting

Friday 19th September

GTA Chairman CEO and Treasurer Konrad Scicluna attends a meeting for members of the Civil Society and the Gozo Regional Committee at Palazzo Depiro Mdina. GTA CEO was also a panel member during the discussion slot.



Calendar of Events

Monday 22nd September

GTA Executive Council meeting

Tuesday 23rd September

GTA Council member Ryan Grech represents Gozo at Paris Top Resa 2025

Wednesday 24th September

GTA Council member Ryan Grech represents Gozo at Paris Top Resa 2025

Thursday 25th September

GTA Council member Ryan Grech represents Gozo at Paris Top Resa 2025

Monday 29th September

Gozo Tourism Awards working group meeting

Wednesday 1st October

- GTA Chairman and CEO attends a Gozo Regional Committee meeting
- GTA CEO participates on Net Tv, during the NET Live programme on GTA budget proposals

Friday 3rd October

GTA CEO had an online meeting with representatives of KPMG international who are gathering information from representatives of SMEs how to facilitate EU funding

Wednesday 8th October

GTA Representative Temida Magrin represents Gozo during TTG Rimini fair in Italy

Thursday 9th October

GTA Representative Temida Magrin represents Gozo during TTG Rimini fair in Italy

Friday 10th October

- GTA CEO and Vice Chairman together with ECO Gozo Officials visit different sites in the west of Gozo to identify the best place for the installation of underground waste bins
- GTA Representative Temida Magrin represents Gozo during TTG Rimini fair in Italy

Monday 13th October

GTA Chairman and CEO attends a reception by H.E. the President of the Republic to MCESD members at the Palace San Anton.

Calendar of Events

Wednesday 15th October

GTA Council Meeting

Thursday 16th October

GTA CEO attends MTA Board Meeting

Saturday 18th October

GTA Council Delegation met with Dr. Frank Anthony Tabone PN Candidate for the General Elections at GTA offices. GTA Delegation was led by Paul Scicluna and included Vice-chairman Mario Loporto GTA CEO, Pauline Spiteri

Monday 20th October

GTA CEO attends 1st Meeting of the GRDA Tourism and Culture Board

Thursday 23rd October

GTA Chairman and CEO meets with Ivan Falzon CEO GRDA

Friday 24th October

GTA Delegation presented GTA's Budget 2026 Proposals to Dr. Alex Borg leader of the Opposition. Delegation led by GTA Chairman included GTA CEO, GTA Vice Secretary Pauline Spiteri, GTA Treasurer Konrad Scicluna, Vice Treasurer Ryan Grech and GTA Council member Joseph Mercieca

Monday 27th October

GTA CEO gives several interviews to various local media outlets, regarding GTA's reaction on the Budget 2026

Tuesday 28th October

GTA Council Meeting



Statistics

Inbound Tourists to Gozo – September 2025 vs 2024

According to the National Statistics Office, Gozo recorded mixed results in September 2025 compared to the same month in 2024.

Day Visitors: Numbers increased by 12.2%, rising from 199,419 in September 2024 to 223,815 in September 2025, indicating a continued rise in same-day travel to the island.

Overnight Visitors: In contrast, overnight stays registered a slight decrease of 659 or 2.7%, falling from 24,199 in September 2024 to 23,540 in September 2025.

Gozo/ Comino	September			2024/ 2025
	2023	2024	2025	% change
Day Visitors	169,305	199,419	223,815	12.2%
Overnight Visitors	21,770	24,199	23,540	-2.7%

Overall, between January and September 2025, Gozo recorded continued growth in inbound tourism compared to the same period in 2024. Day visitors rose by 13%, increasing from 1,488,536 in 2024 to 1,681,879 in 2025, highlighting the island’s strong appeal for single-day trips. Overnight visitors also grew, albeit more modestly by 3365, or 2.4%, from 139,322 in 2024 to 142,687 in 2025.

Gozo/ Comino	January - September			2024/ 2025
	2023	2024	2025	% change
Day Visitors	1,236,938	1,488,536	1,681,879	13%
Overnight Visitors	128,337	139,322	142,687	2.4%