

DESTINATION GOZO

Gozo Tourism Association Newsletter
May - June 2026



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Gozo Tourism Association's New Premises: A Milestone Achievement



When the Gozo Tourism Association (GTA) celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2024, the GTA Council resolved to commemorate this important milestone through a number of initiatives. Among the most ambitious was the decision to secure new premises in the heart of Victoria, reflecting the Association's vision for the future.

From the outset, it was considered essential that the new offices would not only meet the Association's current operational requirements but also provide the necessary space and facilities to support future growth and development. After almost 23 years operating from its offices in George Borg Olivier Street, Victoria, the GTA Council took the strategic decision to relocate to a new and more suitable location.

Throughout March and April 2026, several Council members, together with their staff and vehicles, assisted in the transfer of a substantial amount of promotional material, furniture, and equipment to the new premises. Their commitment and support were instrumental in ensuring a smooth transition.

As from May 2026, the Gozo Tourism Association officially commenced its daily operations from its new offices in Santa Marta Street, situated in the heart of the commercial district of Gozo's capital city, Victoria.

The new premises, located at ground-floor level, have been thoughtfully designed to provide tailored office and meeting spaces. In addition to a kitchenette and modern sanitary facilities, the premises include a versatile meeting area capable of accommodating up to 50 persons, making it an ideal venue for training sessions, meetings, and industry events.

Work is continuing steadily to furnish and equip the premises, with preparations underway for the official inauguration scheduled for September. As each stage of the project reaches completion, it becomes increasingly evident that a long-held aspiration has finally become a reality.

Today, the Gozo Tourism Association can proudly say that this dream has come true. Through foresight, determination, and collective effort, the current GTA Council has laid strong foundations upon which the Association can continue to grow, strengthen its role within the tourism sector, and serve its members well into the future.

Introduction of fast ferry Sliema-Bugibba-Mgarr



Photo: James Bianchi, MaltaToday

On the 5th of May, the Gozo Tourism Association welcomed the inauguration of the Fast Ferry Service connecting Gozo with Bugibba and Sliema.

The introduction of this service provides an additional mode of sea transport that will significantly enhance inter-island connectivity. While this improvement benefits the general public, the tourism sector in Gozo stands to gain even more from this new link.

The Gozo Tourism Association has long supported the development of diverse inter-island transport options. This new service offers a direct and faster sea connection between Gozo and two of Malta's most popular tourist areas, Sliema and Bugibba. It is expected to appeal not only to tourists staying in these localities but also to domestic travellers and Gozitan residents seeking a quicker crossing.

However, the increased activity generated by this service will place additional pressure on the already busy Mgarr Harbour. It is therefore essential to consider how to create additional berthing space and develop a suitable terminal to accommodate fast ferry commuters. At this stage, it is also necessary to explore seriously viable plans for shifting the fast ferry operations to the port of Marsalforn.

While the Gozo Tourism Association commends the Government's ongoing efforts to improve sea connectivity, the time has come to prioritise infrastructural upgrades at Gozo's ports. These improvements are crucial to ensure that facilities keep pace with the growing number of commuters travelling between the two islands.

Direct Flight New York-Malta

On June 9th, the Gozo Tourism Association welcomed the arrival of the first direct flight from New York to Malta, a development that marks a significant milestone in strengthening and diversifying air connectivity to the Maltese Islands. This new transatlantic route enhances Malta's global accessibility and opens fresh opportunities for sustainable tourism growth.

The Association believes that this moment presents an ideal opportunity to consolidate the positive momentum of recent years and continue building tourism arrivals with a strong emphasis on quality, authenticity, and value-driven experiences.

Gozo is particularly well positioned to benefit from this direct link with the United States. The island already attracts a visitor profile that aligns closely with the preferences of the American market, travellers who appreciate culture, heritage, nature, wellness, and boutique hospitality. This makes the new route especially relevant for Gozo's long-term tourism strategy.

Beyond improving connectivity, this landmark connection bridges a small island nation with one of the world's largest economies. It supports both national and regional efforts to attract a more diverse and higher-value segment of travellers, while reinforcing Gozo's reputation as a distinctive, premium destination within the Mediterranean.



Photo: TVM News

Electric Buses on the Public Transport Network on Gozo

On 2nd June, the GTA Chairman and CEO attended a ceremony during which public transport electric buses were introduced in Gozo. This important investment marks a significant step forward in enhancing sustainable mobility across the island. The rollout of the electric fleet has been accompanied by improvements on several routes around Gozo, further strengthening an already reliable and consistent public transport system for residents, workers, and visitors alike.

The Gozo Tourism Association notes that this transition to electric buses aligns perfectly with Gozo's long-term vision of becoming an eco-island. Cleaner transport options not only reduce emissions and noise pollution but also contribute to a more enjoyable and environmentally responsible visitor experience. Such initiatives reinforce Gozo's commitment to safeguarding its natural landscape, improving air quality, and promoting greener forms of travel.

The Association believes that continued investment in sustainable transport infrastructure is essential for supporting Gozo's tourism sector, particularly as travellers increasingly seek destinations that prioritise environmental stewardship. The introduction of electric buses is a positive milestone, and the Gozo Tourism Association looks forward to further collaboration with stakeholders to ensure that Gozo remains a leading example of sustainable island tourism.



Photos: Transport Malta

GTA Welcomes the Newly Appointed Minister for Tourism



Following the announcement of the new Cabinet, the Gozo Tourism Association (GTA) extended its congratulations to the newly appointed Minister for Tourism, Dr Jo Etienne Abela. While reaffirming its commitment to continue working closely with the Ministry for tourism and MTA, the Association also expressed its eagerness to meet with the Minister and discuss matters relating to the tourism sector in Gozo.

The opportunity arose just a few days later. On Friday, 12 June 2026, Minister Abela, accompanied by Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) CEO Mr Carlo Micallef, paid his first official visit to the Gozo Tourism Association's new premises in Santa Marta Street, Victoria.

Upon arrival, Minister Abela was welcomed by GTA Chairman Mr Paul Scicluna, who introduced him to the Council members present. The visit was followed by an extensive meeting during which the Minister was briefed on the Association's role, its ongoing work, and its strategic initiatives aimed at promoting Gozo as a distinct and high-quality tourism destination.

During the discussion, GTA representatives also provided an overview of the current state of the tourism sector in Gozo, highlighting recent performance trends, emerging opportunities, and the challenges facing the industry.

GTA Welcomes the Newly Appointed Minister for Tourism

There was broad agreement that Gozo possesses significant potential for further growth and development, particularly through a continued focus on quality tourism and the achievement of a sustainable flow of visitors throughout the year.

The meeting provided a valuable opportunity for an open and constructive exchange of views on the future of tourism in Gozo. Minister Abela reaffirmed his commitment to supporting the sector and acknowledged the important role played by the GTA in representing and strengthening Gozo's tourism industry.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Minister Abela signed the Association's Visitors' Book. The visit then continued in a more informal setting as those present gathered for refreshments, including tea, coffee, and light snacks. This provided a further opportunity for discussions, with Minister Abela sharing his views and vision for the tourism sector with GTA Council members. The visit marked an important first meeting between the new Minister for Tourism and the Gozo Tourism Association and reinforced the strong spirit of collaboration that continues to underpin efforts to enhance and promote Gozo's tourism offering.



Gozo Tourism Operators Performance Survey 2025

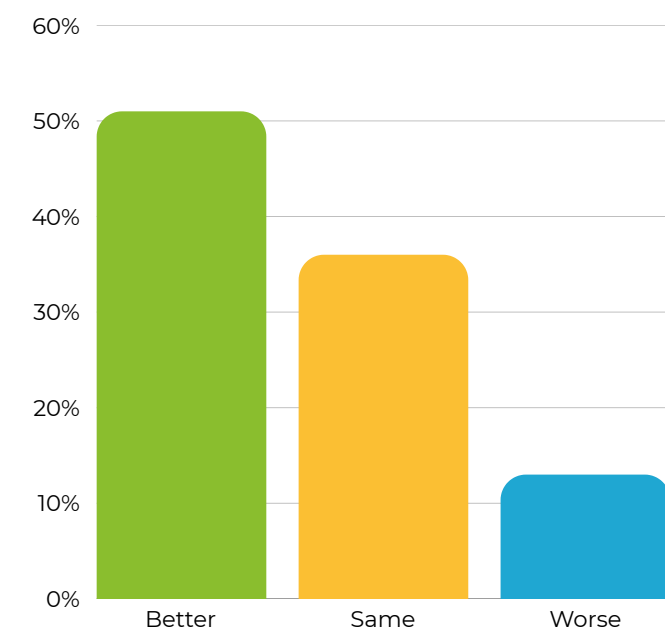
The Gozo Tourism Association conducted an online survey among its members, focusing on the performance of Gozitan tourism establishments during the year 2025 compared to 2024.

The strong participation from Gozitan tourism operators covered a broad spectrum of the island's tourism sector. Respondents included operators from the Accommodation sector, Restaurants and Bars, Tourist Attractions and Activities, Transport and Mobility Services, Tourism and Travel Services, as well as other tourism-related businesses, providing a comprehensive overview of the sector's performance.

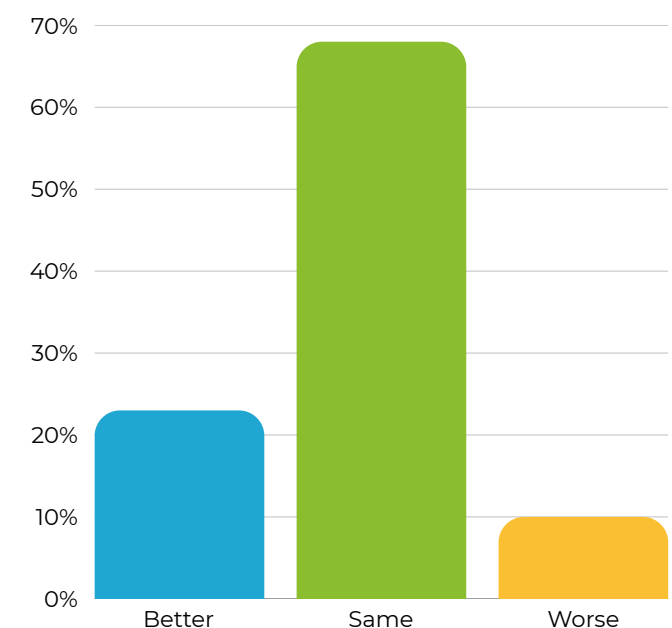
The survey results indicate another encouraging year for Gozo's tourism industry. More than half of respondents (56%) reported better business performance in 2025 compared to 2024, while 30% stated that performance remained unchanged and only 14% reported a decline.

The positive trend was once again driven by the foreign market. When asked about the effect of international visitors on their business during 2025, 77% of respondents classified the foreign market's impact as either 'Good' or 'Excellent'. Furthermore, 51% confirmed that the foreign market performed better than in 2024, while 36% said it remained the same and only 13% reported a weaker performance.

The domestic market continued to provide an important contribution to tourism businesses, although to a lesser extent than the foreign market. Around 56% of respondents described the domestic market's impact as either 'Good' or 'Excellent', while 44% rated it as 'Average'. Compared to the previous year, 68% stated that the domestic market remained unchanged, 23% reported an improvement, while only 10% experienced a decline.



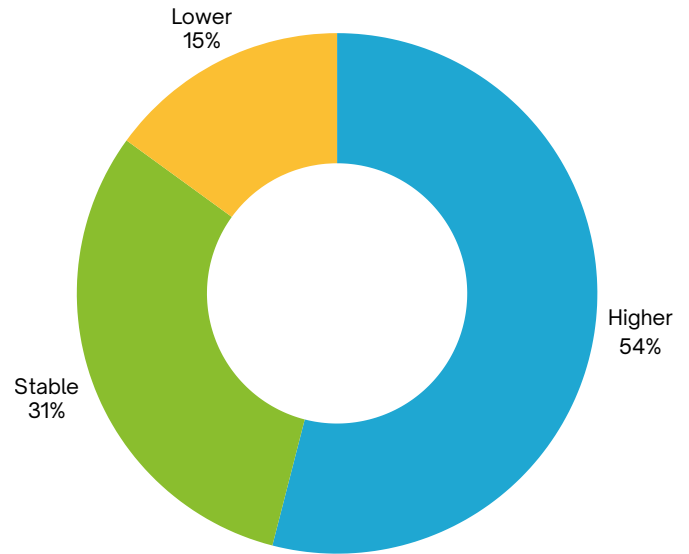
Foreign market performance



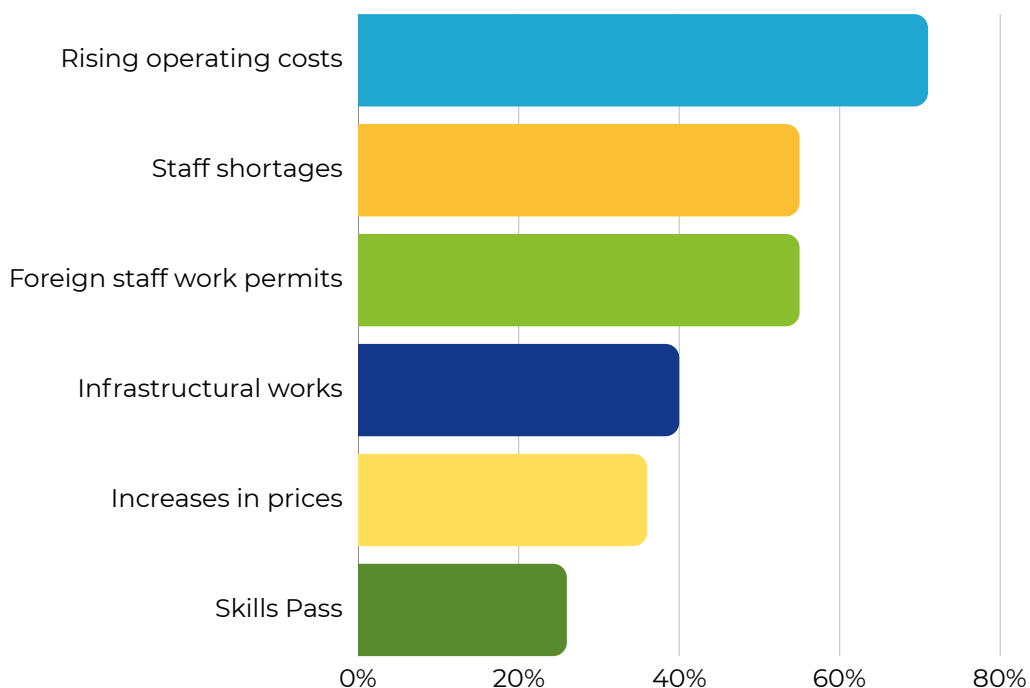
Domestic market performance

Gozo Tourism Operators Performance Survey 2025

Revenue generated during 2025 also reflected the positive performance of the sector. Three-quarters of respondents (75%) classified their revenue as either 'Good' or 'Excellent'. Comparing revenue with 2024, 54% stated that their revenue had increased, 31% said it remained stable, while 15% reported lower revenue. Among those who experienced increased revenue, the majority (71%) attributed this growth primarily to an increase in clientele rather than higher prices.



Despite these encouraging results, several challenges continue to affect Gozitan tourism operators. Rising operating costs remain the most significant concern, identified by around 71% of respondents. Other major challenges include staff shortages (55%), issues related to foreign staff work permits (55%), infrastructural works (40%), increases in prices (36%), and Skills Pass procedures (26%). Several respondents also highlighted concerns regarding unfair competition from unlicensed operators, excessive supply and market saturation, infrastructure deficiencies, long transport times and ferry delays, and ongoing difficulties in attracting and retaining employees.



Gozo Tourism Operators Performance Survey 2025

When asked about the evolution of their business operations over the past year, 54% of respondents reported improvements, 39% stated that operations remained unchanged, while only 7% indicated a deterioration.

The survey also examined the impact of the 2026 Budget measures on tourism businesses. The majority of respondents (52%) stated that the Budget had no significant impact on their business, while 35% believed it was still too early to determine its effects. A further 8% reported a negative impact, while only 4% considered the measures to have had a positive effect. Comments received in this section mainly referred to concerns regarding the increase in the eco-contribution, continued operating cost pressures, and the limited tangible benefits experienced by operators.

Finally, respondents were invited to suggest measures for future Budgets to better support the tourism industry. The most frequently raised proposals included increased investment in low-season tourism and events, stronger international promotion of Gozo, improved connectivity and transport efficiency, reductions in VAT and taxation, faster processing of work permits and Skills Pass applications, improvements to roads, parking facilities and Mgarr Harbour, stricter enforcement against unlicensed operators, greater support for sustainability initiatives, and stronger promotion of local gastronomy and authentic Gozitan experiences. Several respondents also expressed concerns regarding overdevelopment, cleanliness, lack of enforcement, and the need to safeguard Gozo's unique character while ensuring the island remains a high-quality tourism destination.

Members' Priorities for Future Budgets



Stronger international promotion of Gozo



Increased investment in low-season tourism and events



Improved connectivity and transport efficiency



Reductions in VAT and taxation



Faster processing of work permits and Skills Pass applications



Improvements to roads, parking facilities and Mgarr Harbour



Stricter enforcement against unlicensed operators



Greater support for sustainability initiatives



Stronger promotion of local gastronomy and authentic Gozitan experiences

Summer Break Time

Once again at the beginning of June, the Government announced that demolition and excavation works will be banned from tourist areas between 15 June and 30 September 2026. This annual initiative which is being co-ordinated between the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) and the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) takes into account the inconvenience that construction sites have on the surrounding neighbourhood.

The enforcement of Subsidiary Legislation 623.08 (Third Schedule 1c) is one way of mitigating the nuisance that construction sites have on both the tourism industry and the number of Maltese families who move to their summer residences.

Any illegal demolition and excavation work carried out between 15 June and 30 September 2026, in the identified localities and streets, may be reported to the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) on number 138 for both Malta and Gozo, during and after office hours.



**DEMOLITION AND
EXCAVATION WORKS
TO STOP FOR SUMMER
IN TOURIST AREAS**

15 JUNE – 30 SEPTEMBER

The Malta Tourism Authority is the competent Authority to identify the localities and streets where demolition or excavation works cannot be carried out. The full list of localities and streets where demolition or excavation works are prohibited during the summer months may be viewed on the following link:

<https://mta.com.mt/news/cessation-demolition-and-excavation-works-summer-tourist-zones-2026>

Statistics Inbound Tourists

Inbound Tourists to Gozo – May 2026 vs 2025

According to the NSO, Gozo recorded continued growth in inbound tourism during May 2026 when compared to the same month in 2025, with significant increases registered in both same-day and overnight visitors.

Same-day visitors increased by 19.8%, rising from 202,861 in May 2025 to 242,929 in May 2026, confirming the continued strengthening of Gozo's appeal as a day-trip destination. Overnight visitors also registered a substantial increase of 32.2%, rising from 19,141 in May 2025 to 25,300 in May 2026, reflecting strong growth in the island's overnight tourism sector.

Gozo/ Comino	May			2025/ 2026
	2024	2025	2026	% change
Day Visitors	184,244	202,861	242,929	19.8%
Overnight Visitors	18,622	19,141	25,300	32.2%

Overall, between January and May 2026, Gozo recorded continued growth in inbound tourism when compared to the same period in 2025, with increases registered in both same-day and overnight visitors. Same-day visitors increased by 12.5%, rising from 695,575 in 2025 to 782,368 in 2026. Overnight visitors also recorded an increase of 18.9%, rising from 53,180 in 2025 to 63,219 in 2026. This growth highlights Gozo's continued appeal as a destination for both short visits and longer stays, while confirming the positive trend in the island's tourism performance.

Gozo/ Comino	January - May			2025/ 2026
	2024	2025	2026	% change
Day Visitors	587,219	695,575	782,368	12.5%
Overnight Visitors	47,750	53,180	63,219	18.9%