DESTINATION GOZO

Gozo Tourism Association Newsletter
September - October 2026



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GOZO TOURISM ASSOCIATION

GTA Presents Tourism Priorities during Consultation with the Prime Minister

Gozo Tourism Association Chairman Paul Scicluna and CEO Joe Muscat represented GTA during a budget consultation meeting of the Gozo Regional Committee with Prime Minister Dr Robert Abela. Also attending were Minister for Gozo Clint Camilleri, Minister for Tourism Jo Etienne Abela, Minister for Finance Clyde Caruana, Minister for Agriculture Dr Anton Refalo, and Minister for Economy Silvio Schembri.

During the meeting, the GTA outlined a number of priorities aimed at strengthening Gozo's economy and tourism sector. These included continued investment in connectivity infrastructure, particularly the expansion of Mġarr Harbour and the development of the island's rural airfield, as well as the need to reinforce Gozo's electricity supply and distribution network. The Association also highlighted the importance of maintaining and enhancing the tourism product while supporting the growth of emerging niche markets, notably sports tourism and screen tourism.

In addition, the GTA called for a budget measure to assist businesses affected by the electricity outage that disrupted operations across the island during the last weekend of August, noting the significant operational and financial impact experienced by several enterprises. The consultation formed part of the Government's pre-Budget discussions with key stakeholders and provided the GTA with an opportunity to present proposals aimed at improving connectivity, strengthening economic resilience, and supporting the sustainable growth of tourism in Gozo.









Budget consultation meeting of the Gozo Regional Committee

GTA contributes to regional consultation on Budget 2027

On 26 September, Chairman Paul Scicluna and CEO Joe Muscat represented the Gozo Tourism Association (GTA) at a Budget 2027 consultation between the Gozo Regional Committee (GRC) and the Leader of the Opposition, Dr Alex Borg. Also present were Dr Adrian Delia, Shadow Minister for Finance, Dr Frank Anthony Tabone, Shadow Minister for Gozo, Gozitan MPs Beppe Galea and Norma Camilleri, and Damian Spiteri.

The GTA representatives called for greater investment in Gozo's connectivity, with particular emphasis on the immediate development of the island's rural airfield. They also highlighted the need to strengthen Gozo's electricity supply and distribution network, maintain and improve the island's tourism offering, and support emerging markets such as sports tourism and screen tourism.

The Association reiterated its call for the eco-contribution collected from accommodation establishments in Gozo to be set aside and reinvested directly in improvements to the island's tourism offering.



Meeting with Gozitan Opposition MPs

GTA discusses Budget 2027 proposals with Gozo's Opposition MPs

On 25 September, the Gozo Tourism Association (GTA) met with Gozitan Opposition MPs Norma Camilleri, Beppe Galea and Frank Anthony Tabone to present the Association's proposals for Budget 2027.The GTA delegation was led by Chairman Paul Scicluna and included CEO Joe Muscat together with Council Members Ludgard Gatt, Joseph Farrugia and Joseph Mercieca.

Discussions focused on a number of key issues affecting the sustainable development of Gozo's tourism sector, including workforce challenges, enhancing the tourism product, support for emerging niche markets, investment in infrastructure, environmental protection, and improved connectivity to and from the island. The GTA delegation outlined a series of recommendations aimed at strengthening the long-term competitiveness and resilience of Gozo's tourism industry.

The Opposition MPs welcomed the proposals and noted that many of the recommendations were broadly aligned with the Opposition's vision for the future development of tourism in Gozo. An exchange of views also took place on the opportunities and challenges facing the sector in the years ahead.

The meeting forms part of the Association's ongoing engagement with political stakeholders to ensure that the priorities of Gozo's tourism industry are duly considered in national policy-making and reflected in the forthcoming Budget 2027 measures.





Budget 2027
GTA Reactions & Media Release

The Gozo Tourism Association (GTA) has analysed the tourism-related measures announced in Budget 2027 and notes that the budget is seeking to address some of the challenges arising from the continued growth in tourist arrivals while also taking the first steps towards streamlining the engagement of foreign workers.

The Association acknowledges Government's commitment to continue maintaining stable rates for electricity, gas and fuel despite continued pressures from international energy markets. These measures provide much-needed certainty to households and businesses, including operators within the tourism industry who continue to face increasing operational costs.

The GTA also notes the announced revision to the incentives currently granted to airlines servicing the Maltese Islands. The Association welcomes the intention of directing such incentives towards attracting visitors during the shoulder and winter months, which remains essential in strengthening seasonality management and improving the sustainability of tourism throughout the year.

However, while no additional tax burdens have been placed on families and workers, the Association notes with concern that several increases have been directed towards the tourism sector. These measures risk negatively impacting the industry's competitiveness, particularly in Gozo, where tourism remains one of the main pillars of the economy.

The Gozo Tourism Association acknowledges the Government's objective of strengthening environmental funding through the revised eco-contribution regime. However, the Association expresses serious concern regarding the decision to impose a higher eco-contribution on short-let accommodation than on hotels.

This distinction will have a disproportionate impact on Gozo, where approximately 72% of the island's tourism bed stock consists of short-let accommodation, including holiday apartments, farmhouses and villas, while only 28% is represented by hotels.

Consequently, this measure will affect the majority of visitors who choose to stay in Gozo, creating an uneven playing field between accommodation sectors that compete within the same market. Moreover, average annual occupancy rates in Gozitan accommodation establishments remain below those achieved in Malta, placing operators in Gozo at a further competitive disadvantage. The Association firmly believes that environmental contributions should be applied fairly, consistently, and equitably across all licensed accommodation categories to ensure a level playing field and avoid disproportionately impacting one segment of the tourism industry.

Budget 2027
GTA Reactions & Media Release

Furthermore, the increase may negatively affect Gozo's domestic tourism market, which has remained resilient and continues to play an important role in sustaining tourism businesses throughout the year. Additional costs imposed on short-let accommodation could influence the decision-making process of Maltese residents considering short breaks on the island.

The measure becomes even more difficult to justify given that the eco-contribution collected from accommodation establishments in Gozo is not ring-fenced and reinvested directly into the enhancement of Gozo's tourism product and infrastructure. The Association maintains that if visitors are expected to contribute more towards environmental and tourism sustainability, a fair share of these funds should be directed towards improving the destination from which they are generated.

The GTA also notes the announced increases in ferry fares applicable to tourists travelling to Gozo. While recognising the importance of ensuring the long-term sustainability of transport services, the Association is disappointed that the budget does not include any corresponding investment measures aimed at enhancing inter-island connectivity such as the development of the rural airfield. Improving connectivity infrastructure between Malta and Gozo remains one of the key priorities for the island's tourism sector.

The Gozo Tourism Association remains committed to working constructively with Government and all stakeholders to ensure the sustainable development of the tourism industry. While the Association welcomes a number of measures aimed at maintaining economic stability and strengthening year-round tourism, it believes that certain tourism-related increases announced in the budget place a burden on Gozo and risk undermining the island's competitiveness.

Only through a fair and balanced approach can Gozo continue to thrive as a distinct and competitive destination within the Maltese Islands.



Meeting with new GRDA CEO

GTA Executive Council meets new GRDA Chief Executive Officer

The Executive Council of the Gozo Tourism Association (GTA), led by Chairman Paul Scicluna, met with Mr Juergen Attard, the newly appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Gozo Regional Development Authority (GRDA).

The GTA delegation presented a study commissioned by the Association on how Gozo could strengthen its offer as an eco-cultural destination. The study identifies opportunities to develop and promote sustainable tourism experiences while preserving the island's natural and cultural heritage.

The two organisations also discussed upcoming surveys, research initiatives and potential joint projects to support tourism and regional development in Gozo. The GTA delegation congratulated Mr Attard on his appointment and wished him success in his new role.



Making Eco-Certification Achievable for Small Tourism Accommodation in Malta and Gozo

Gozo Tourism Association (GTA) CEO Joe Muscat participated in a roundtable discussion focused on making eco-certification more accessible and practical for small tourism accommodation establishments in Malta and Gozo.

The session was chaired by Perit Kevin Fsadni, Deputy CEO of the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA). Presentations were delivered by Ivan Cassar, MTA Quality Assurance Manager, and Christos Markopoulos, CEO of Royal Cert. Randy Durband, CEO of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), also contributed to the discussions, providing an international perspective on sustainable tourism standards and certification.

The roundtable examined how certification processes can be streamlined and made more attainable for small accommodation providers, while highlighting the potential benefits of certification in enhancing quality standards, strengthening competitiveness, and encouraging the adoption of more sustainable business practices. The GTA welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the discussion and reaffirmed its commitment to supporting initiatives that assist tourism operators in embracing sustainability, improving their market positioning, and responding to the evolving expectations of today's visitors.

The Association believes that sustainable tourism practices are increasingly important to safeguarding the long-term competitiveness and resilience of Gozo's tourism industry, while ensuring that tourism development continues to benefit both visitors and local communities







Meeting with MTA CEO Mr Carlo Micallef

GTA Executive Council meets the Malta Tourism Authority

The Executive Council of the Gozo Tourism Association (GTA) met with Mr Carlo Micallef, Chief Executive Officer of the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA), at the Authority's offices in SmartCity. GTA Chairman Paul Scicluna led the delegation, which included Vice-Chairman Mario Loporto, Treasurer Konrad Scicluna and GTA CEO Joe Muscat.

The discussion covered incentives to encourage longer stays in Gozo during the winter months, the impact of day visitors on the island, and initiatives to market Gozo as a destination. The two organisations also discussed ways to strengthen their existing collaboration.

The meeting formed part of the regular dialogue between the MTA CEO and the GTA Executive Council, giving both organisations an opportunity to share updates on initiatives supporting tourism in Gozo.



Meeting with officials from the National Statistics Office

GTA and NSO discuss tourism statistics for Gozo

A delegation from the Gozo Tourism Association (GTA) Executive Council met with officials from the National Statistics Office (NSO) to discuss how tourism data could provide a fuller picture of the sector in Gozo. The discussion focused on broadening the range of statistics available to better reflect the island's tourism activity and help businesses and policymakers make informed decisions.

NSO Director General Etienne Caruana led the NSO delegation, which included Manuel Tabone, Director of Business, Sectoral and Regional Statistics, and Matthew Zerafa, Director of Social Statistics. Marice Grech, Head of Regional, Geospatial, Energy and Transport Statistics, and Josianne Galea, Head of Living Conditions and Tourism Statistics, also took part.

GTA Chairman Paul Scicluna led the Association's delegation, which included Vice-Chairman Mario Loporto and CEO Joe Muscat.



Meeting with representatives of the Gozo Sailing Club

GTA and Gozo Sailing Club explore ways to promote Gozo through sailing

Gozo Tourism Association CEO Joe Muscat met with Gozo Sailing Club representatives Mr Noel Grech, Dr Simon Mifsud and Mr Simon Pace to discuss how the two organisations could work together to promote Gozo as a sailing destination.

The discussion focused on how sailing could showcase Gozo's coastline and maritime heritage while broadening the island's sports and adventure tourism offering. Both sides explored how sailing and other activities at sea could attract visitors throughout the year.

Particular attention was given to the sailing yacht Gozo Dream. Its participation in international races was identified as an opportunity to raise Gozo's profile among sailing enthusiasts and promote the island as a destination for outdoor activities. The GTA and the Gozo Sailing Club expressed interest in exploring joint initiatives in this area.



GTA's Participation in International Tourism Fairs
IFTM Top Resa

Promoting Gozo as a distinct travel destination remains one of the main objectives of the Gozo Tourism Association (GTA). As part of this work, the Association participates in international tourism fairs to present the island's tourism offering to travel professionals in key markets. France remains a priority for the GTA, and participation in IFTM Top Resa in Paris forms part of the Association's ongoing efforts to strengthen Gozo's visibility in the French market.

The 2026 edition of IFTM Top Resa was held at Paris Expo Porte de Versailles. Gozo was once again represented by Mr Ryan Grech on behalf of the Gozo Tourism Association, as part of the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) stand. The Association's presence on the stand provided a dedicated point of contact for travel trade professionals interested in learning more about the island.

As one of France's leading business-to-business tourism fairs, IFTM Top Resa brings together travel agencies, tour operators, destination representatives and other industry partners from across the international travel sector. For the GTA, the fair offered an opportunity to introduce Gozo to professionals who advise clients and develop travel programmes, while keeping the island visible among those already familiar with the Maltese Islands.







Gozo's appeal as a destination rests in part on the variety of experiences available within a small area. The island's cultural heritage, coastal and rural landscapes, outdoor activities and slower pace of life give travel professionals several ways to introduce Gozo to their clients. Trade fairs such as IFTM Top Resa provide a setting in which the GTA can present these aspects of the island together and explain what visitors can experience during a stay in Gozo.

The Gozo Tourism Association's participation in IFTM Top Resa 2026 was made possible through the continued support of the Malta Tourism Authority and the Directorate for Product Development within the Ministry for Gozo. The Association thanks both entities for supporting its participation in international tourism fairs and helping to maintain Gozo's presence in key overseas markets.

Latest Statistics
Inbound Tourism

Inbound Tourists to Gozo – September 2026 vs 2025

According to the National Statistics Office (NSO), Gozo recorded an increase in both same-day and overnight visitors in September 2026 compared with the same month in 2025.

Same-day visitors increased by 8.3%, from 223,815 in September 2025 to 242,302 in September 2026. Overnight visitors recorded a stronger increase of 30.0%, rising from 23,540 to 30,607.

Gozo/ Comino	September			2025/ 2026
	2024	2025	2026	% change
Day Visitors	199,419	223,815	242,302	**8.3%**
Overnight Visitors	24,199	23,540	30,607	**30.0%**

Between January and September 2026, same-day visitors increased by 12.2%, from 1,681,879 to 1,887,333, compared with the same period in 2025.

Overnight visitors increased by 26.1%, from 142,687 to 179,957. Overnight visits grew at a faster rate than same-day visits both in September and over the first nine months of the year.

Gozo/ Comino	January - September			2025/ 2026
	2024	2025	2026	% change
Day Visitors	1,488,536	1,681,879	1,887,333	**12.2%**
Overnight Visitors	139,322	142,687	179,957	**26.1%**

Malta NSO
National Statistics Office

GOZO TOURISM ASSOCIATION