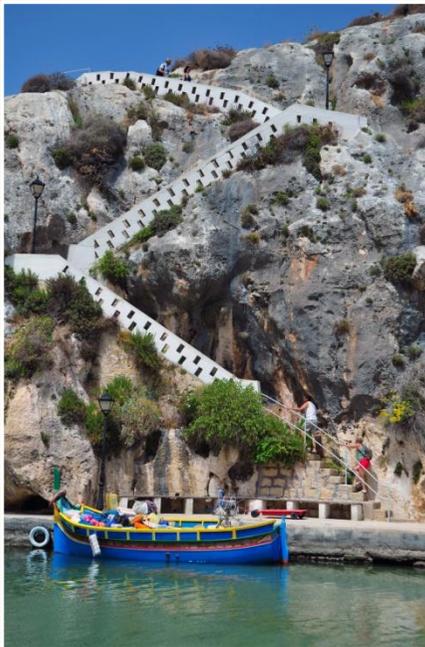
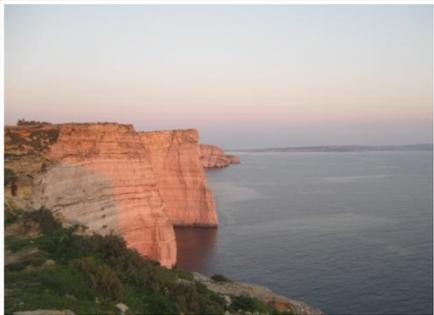


Good Practice Cases in Sustainable Tourism Destinations

The creation of new heritage trails in Gozo (Malta)

ITEMS	SECTIONS	DESCRIPTION	PICTURES
Name of the Organization submitting this practice case	Name	Coastal and Marine Union EUCC, Ministry for Gozo, Għaqda Inħobbu l-Munxar u x-Xlendi and Ta' Klula Foundation	
	Contact	research5@qualitycoast.info ; secretariat@qualitycoast.info ; visitgozo@gov.mt ; info@munxarxlendi.org ; info@santalucija.com	
Name (in EN) of the destination	Name (in EN) of the destination	Gozo	
	Administrative Organizations and country	The Ministry for Gozo is responsible for the central administration of the Island of Gozo. This Ministry implements and monitors policies set at the national level, while promoting regional policies and measures relevant to the specific needs of Gozo. Its overall mission is to promote economic, social and cultural development in Gozo while fostering the island's natural environment and identity. Gozo also has 14 Local Councils and 3 Administrative Committees, responsible mainly to address local issues in accordance to the principle of subsidiarity.	
	Tourism Organizations	Malta Tourism Authority and the Gozo Tourism Association	
	Surface	67 Km ²	
	Resident population	31,396	
	Tourism Arrivals	125,580	
	Tourism nights	848,851	
WHO	Name	Ministry for Gozo, Għaqda Inħobbu l-Munxar u x-Xlendi and Ta' Klula Foundation	
	Website	www.eco-gozo.com	
WHY	The reason for action	Gozo boasts a strong cultural heritage and its population possesses a strong island identity which gives the island's population a character which goes beyond mere demographic numbers or the size of the island. It has a large number of heritage sites (archaeological sites, fortifications, chapels, churches and museums amongst others) which are considered to be of outstanding natural, historical and cultural value to the island. The Ministry for Gozo, through its ecoGozo vision, has recognised that the culture, heritage and identity of the island of Gozo need to be safeguarded. Moreover, in the context of sustainable development, these need to be made to play a significant role in developing the islands' potential further, and attract quality tourism to the island.	
	Issues and challenge	One of the biggest challenges facing heritage tourism is ensuring that the resources that attract visitors are not destroyed in the process, neither by the tourists nor by inappropriate development. Information gathering and research together with lack of human resources on the part of NGOs, were the main challenges of these heritage trails.	
			
			 <p style="text-align: center;">MINISTRY for GOZO</p>

<p>HOW</p>		<p>The EcoGozo Action Plan 2010-2012 has dedicated efforts towards the conservation of unique heritage sites of the island increasing its accessibility to the public. In line with the objectives of this plan, another two new heritage trails have been developed around the countryside of Santa Luċija and the cliff sides of Xlendi and Munxar. These initiatives have been promoted by two Gozitan associations (Għaqda Inħobbu l-Munxar u x-Xlendi and Ta' Klula Foundation) with the financial assistance provided by the Ministry for Gozo through the Eco Gozo scheme for NGOs. With a length of about 6.5 km and 7.5 km, both heritage trails go along a number of streets, lanes, and countryside paths of these three localities, linking archaeological sites, historic public spaces, heritage buildings and natural landscapes in the coastal and rural environment. Two booklets (also available online)¹ describing these circular trails have been designed to be used as a guide during these walks and have been distributed mainly in farmhouses, souvenir outlets, hotels and the Malta Tourism Authority. Besides photographs, maps and route descriptions, the book guide books also contain a rich array of information about the history and heritage of the area, local legends, and the main cultural, historical and natural assets that visitors can see on the routes. In addition, interactive kiosks and information panels have been installed in specific areas of importance in Munxar and Xlendi that provide information for tourists visiting these areas. Visitors can also picnic or take a rest in belveders and promenades along these heritage trails, which have recently been embellished by the respective Administrative Committees through the ecoGozo scheme for Local Councils and Administrative Committees.</p>	  
<p>RESULTS</p>	<p>Benefits</p>	<p>Several groups of foreign visitors walking along these heritage trails have been witnessed by locals, all leaving positive comments. These trails were also very well received by the operators in the tourism industry. By promoting Santa Luċija and Munxar and Xlendi trails, visitors in Gozo are enabled to better appreciate the charm of these localities all year round and have an interactive experience rather than be presented with simple artefacts. These long-distance trails not only provide healthy recreation and physical activity opportunities for visitors but also a resource to experience and enjoy the history, heritage and folklore of the island as well as the natural landscapes in which they are located. Throughout these walks, Gozo offers a holistic and diverse experience to attract tourists interested in the Gozo's local heritage. Therefore, these trails have helped to valorise the historic and cultural heritage of typical Gozitan villages and their surroundings and reduce seasonality in a sustainable manner. This initiative has proved to be an important tool especially for tourists to further market the uniqueness and distinctiveness of these rural areas in line with the Eco Gozo objectives.</p>	

¹"A heritage trail through the village of Santa Lucija and its environs":

http://www.ecogozo.com/index.php?option=com_phocadownload&view=category&download=153%3Aa-heritage-trail-through-the-village-of-santa-lucija&id=7%3Agreen-tips&Itemid=8&lang=en

"A walk through the districts of il-Munxar and ix-Xlendi and their history, heritage, and folklore":

http://www.ecogozo.com/index.php?option=com_phocadownload&view=category&download=199%3Ail-munxar-u-x-xlendi&id=22%3Atourism&lang=en

	Recognition and Awards	QualityCoast Gold Award 2012-'13
REFLECTION	Multiplier effect and transferability	<p>The Ministry for Gozo is currently implementing a project aimed at setting up of a Heritage trail in Xagħra. This project which is in its final stages of implementation is part of an EU funded project under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural development bearing the title <i>“Walks and Trails on Rural Gozo”</i>. This project involves the identification and preparation of four new country walks and the upgrading of four existing ones. The Heritage Trail component includes the embellishment works on a number of heritage sites in Xagħra, the production of a guidebook and the reproduction of the guidebook’s content as an interactive presentation to be uploaded on 10 audio-visual information panels to be installed at various sites in Gozo,</p> <p>Another heritage trail has been developed in Għarb, as part of the ERDF project entitled <i>“Wied il-Mielgħ, towards an ecologically and culturally sensitive, sustainable tourism”</i>. This whole regeneration project enabled Għarb to be awarded the 5th edition of the European Destinations of Excellence Award.</p> <p>Two other heritage trails are in process of being developed - one in Qala and one in Victoria.</p>
	Lessons learned and critical success factors	The past years have witnessed an increase in tourists who come to Gozo for walking and/or hiking. It appears that the contact with the local people along their walks, is what makes Gozo’s heritage trails special and successful.

