

Gozo

Overview:

Gozo is the second largest island in the Maltese Archipelago in the Mediterranean Sea. In the mid-20th century, many Gozitans emigrated to the 'new' world countries like Australia, USA and Canada. Today, added to traditional crafts, agriculture and fishing, the Island's economy relies mostly on tourism and water sports like diving. Domestic tourism is critical to the island, especially during the low winter season.

Territory:

Roughly circular in shape, Gozo has an area of 14 kilometres by 7 kilometres. The highest point on the Island is Ta' Dbiegi Hill which rises 190 metres above sea level. The southern part of Gozo is low lying, but it rises near the coast where one finds the vertical cliffs of Ta' Cenc. The length of the shoreline round Gozo is 43km. Gozo is characterized by a series of low hills with terraced fields on the slopes characterize the Island. The Maltese archipelago is comprised of Malta, Gozo and three islets, Comino, Cominotto and Filfla. Cominotto and Filfla are uninhabited whereas Comino's land area is one square mile and has a population of 4.

Location:

Situated 5 kilometers to the Northwest of Malta. It is about 80 kilometres away from the Island of Sicily and about 190 kilometres from the North African coast.

Latitude and Longitude:

N 36 00 and E 14 36

Time Zone:

GMT -1

Total Land Area:

67

EEZ:

Climate:

The average winter temperature is 12 deg C (54 deg F.) There are really only two seasons in Gozo: the dry summer season, and the mild winter season. The average rainfall is 558.2 mm (22 inches). Rain rarely, if ever, falls during the summer months.

Natural Resources:

Globigerina limestone which is quarried and used for building houses.

ECONOMY:

Total GDP:	
1999	243,853,843.00 USD
2000	247,231,086.00 USD
2001	254,009,355.00 USD

Per Capita GDP:	
2000	8,138.00 USD
2001	8,236.00 USD

% of GDP per Sector:			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
1999	7.8%	19.7%	72.5%
2000	6.8%	19.7%	73.5%
2001	7.2%	17.5%	75.3%

% of Population Employed by Sector			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary

External Aid/Remittances:

The European Union is the main benefactor of Gozo. Following Malta's accession to the EU on 1st May 2004, Gozo has been receiving special support through Regional Policy initiatives such as upgrading of transport infrastructure, supporting the tourism sector and upgrading education centres with a financial contribution of 6.5 million Euros in 2004.

Growth:

In the mid-20th century, many Gozitans emigrated to the 'new' world countries like Australia, USA and Canada. Today, added to traditional crafts, agriculture and fishing, the Island's economy relies mostly on tourism and water sports like diving. Domestic tourism is critical to the island, especially during the low winter season.

Labour Force:

2001	10,539
2002	10,092

Unemployment	
Year:	Unemployment Rate (% of pop.)
2001	1.6%
2002	1.7%

Industry:

The Manufacturing Industry has shrunk throughout the last fifteen years. The Industrial Estate Zone in Xewkija employed more than 500 persons. However, the increasing cost of labour, transport costs to ferry goods to Gozo and back to Malta for export, and an economic depression in the late 90s has meant that most of the companies in the Xewkija Industrial Estate have closed down. The factory-based industry is mostly located at Xewkija, and may be classified in three categories, which are (1) low technology operations, using low-skill labour, employing mostly females. These tend to be export-oriented. These include the clothing and electronics manufacturing industries. The clothing industry, which employs about 40% of the factory-based manufacturing, may not have a promising future, since it faces continuous competitive threats from countries with lower unit labour costs; (2) domestically-oriented manufacturing which utilises imported material as input, such as the furniture industry. This industry employs a relatively high proportion of skilled labour, mostly men. This industry is also under threat and to an extent survives behind a wall of protective levies; (3) manufacturing utilising primary products, mostly food-processing. The construction and quarrying industries in Gozo provide full-time and part-time employment in Gozo. Many Gozitans participate in construction activity by building or helping to build their own houses. The construction and quarrying industries have a high multiplier effect since they contain a high proportion of inputs (labour and stone) which are domestically based. In addition they generate a high level of demand from other industries such as woodwork, and activities related to the finishing of the building (plumbing and electricity installation, plastering, tile-laying, painting and others).

Niche Industry:

Tourism and the craft industry are linked. The cottage industry is widespread and a well-established activity in Gozo. It includes production of knitted woollen garments and carpets (often utilising the wool of sheep bred in Gozo) and the production of cheeselets, utilising milk from Gozitan livestock. Another popular cottage industry is lace-making. The products of this industry are in demand by tourists.

Tourism:

An important characteristic of the economy of Gozo is its dependence on tourism. Gozo attracts many thousands Maltese visitors and about half a million international tourists (mostly day-trippers) yearly. Economic activity associated with tourism generates considerable income and employment to the Gozitans, since, as is well known, tourism tends to have a high multiplier effect. In the case of Gozo this effect is likely to be higher than in mainland Malta, since a high proportion of tourism expenditure in Gozo goes on food, accommodation and transport, in which Gozitans tend to have a high stake. There are four types of tourists visiting Gozo, namely international tourists who spend most of their visit in Gozo; international tourists who visit Gozo as day-trippers; Maltese visitors who visit Gozo for a few days annually; and Gozitan emigrants, who sometimes stay in Gozo for a few months, mostly in summer. In 1997, there were 1414 licensed hotel and guest-house beds and 1498 licensed holiday-apartment beds in Gozo. The annual occupancy rates is rather low amounting to 36%, and this is principally due to the low turnout in the winter months. There are about 600 full time jobs in hotel and catering establishments and many other jobs in economic activities related to tourism. The bulk of tourists visit Gozo during the summer months, and this gives rise to seasonal fluctuations, with a very high level of demand in summer and very slack demand in the winter and shoulder months. In 2001, there were 43,571 tourist residents (as opposed to day-trippers) on Gozo and in 2002 there were 40,749.

Imports and Exports:	
Tot. Value of Imports	0.00 ()
From Eu:	
Import Partners (EU:)	
Partners Outside EU:	
Import Partners:	
Tot. Value of Exports	()
To Eu:	
Export Partners:	
Partners Outside EU::	
Export Partners:	
Main Imports:	
Main Exports:	

TRANSPORTATION/ACCESS

External:

Number of Airports:

No external link.

Number of Main Ports:

Internal:

Air



One can opt for a direct helicopter flight from Malta International Airport to Gozo. The trip takes about 15 minutes and the service is available all year round.

Road:

The transportation on the island is mainly road transport; the transit system is relatively small and services the villages and places of interest on a limited schedule. Taxis are expensive and cater solely the tourism sector. Car rentals Car renting is available on the island and is the most efficient transport solution for foreign tourists on the island, given that the public transportation system lacks frequent service to different destination points. Increase in registration of motor vehicles: Private Vehicles: (2000)266; (2001)584; (2002)1210; Commercial Vehicles: (2000)83; (2001)81; (2002)901.

Sea:

Gozo Channel Co. Ltd. runs the sea link, between Malta and Gozo. The service operates round the clock in summer and between 5.00am and 11.00pm in winter. (Night trips are run in weekends).

Other Forms of Transportation:

Bicycles can be rented.

Economic Zones:

Energy Policy:

The PowerStation is located in Malta and energy is transported to Gozo through underwater cable.

Year	Total Energy Production (Mwh)	Type			Total Energy Consumption (Mwh)	Sector				
		Thermic (Mwh)	Geothermic (Mwh)	Other (Mwh)		Domestic (Mwh)	Commercial (Mwh)	Public Service (Mwh)	Industry (Mwh)	Public Lighting (Mwh)
2001	0	0	0	0	0	32,503,000	16,593,000	2,865,000	2,234,000	2,865,000



Official Currency:

The Maltese Lira (Pound)

Banking and Insurance:

Number of Banks and Credit Unions:

Number of Agricultural Credit Unions:

Number of Insurance Companies:

There are a number of bank branches and ATM services in Victoria and in other towns and villages.

Financial Services:

Communications/E-Commerce:

Cable TV 58.1%; Conventional Analogue (terrestrial) TV 57.6%; Desktop computer 31.4%; DVD player 10.2%; Mobile phone 59.4%; Portable Computer 1.0%; Satellite Dish connected to TV 20.0%; Households with internet access 25.2%.

Public Ownership:

Land Use:

The 2001 Census of Agriculture states that Gozo and Comino have a Total Utilised Agricultural Area of 1,712 hectares of land. 87.7% of this figure is arable land, 3.97% classified as orchard land and 6.02% classified as fallow land, i.e. land left unplowed and unseeded during a growing season.

Agriculture/Forestry:

The agriculture sector in Gozo is very fragmented, with about 82% of all holdings being smaller than one hectare. However, because of its geological formation, Gozo is more fertile than mainland Malta. The number of full-time farmers in Gozo has decreased constantly in recent decades, and their number is now about 200. There are about 5000 part-time farmers. Practically all agricultural workers are self-employed with only about 50 of them working as hired employees. The agriculture sector in Gozo can be divided into three categories: 1. Livestock rearing and dairy farming. Gozo at present produces about 25% of all milk supply in the Maltese islands. 2. Vegetable and forage production. This activity is important for household consumption and as input for economic activities such as food processing and livestock rearing. 3. Horticulture. This is relatively underdeveloped in Gozo but there may be a good potential for its development.

Marine Activity:

Fishing:

The fishing industry in Gozo does not employ many people on a full time basis, and it cannot be considered as a major industry in Gozo. However it is an important supplier of food for local consumption and for the tourist industry.

Marine Life:

Critical Issues:

The major problem of agriculture and fishing in Gozo relates to inefficient production due to outdated methods of cultivation. This is to an extent associated with the fact that a very large proportion (about 40%) of Gozitan farmers and fisherman are over 50 years of age. Gozo has faced a downturn in industry, especially in the manufacturing sector. This relates to the very small domestic market which necessitates exports and which, therefore, has to compete in the international market. Another important problem, which can be mitigated through an industry support policy, relates to transport costs. Because of the insularity problems (double insularity in the case of Gozo) industry incurs relatively high per unit costs on imported material and on exported finished products.

JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES

Capital:

Victoria (known also as Rabat Ā– Ghawdex)

Political System:

The pattern set by the early British governors of a centralised administration was never broken, although the stirrings of a "regional" identity were always

felt in the island. Thus, a Gozo Civil Committee came into existence during the late fifties. It was to be made up of representatives from Victoria and all Gozo's villages elected by district committees set up for each village; representatives of the bishop and of the island's archpriests and parish priests; as well as not more than three co-opted members. The Civic Committee was to take into consideration only matters that affected the community in general and not particular individuals, avoiding under all circumstances subjects that were of a notoriously controversial nature. The Civic Committee's aims were to consider and satisfy the needs of Gozo and of Gozitans in the cultural, economic and social fields, by direct and immediate dealings with the authorities. The Gozo Civic Council: The Civic Committee was the direct forerunner of the Gozo Civic Council, which was established by Ordinance NÂ° XI of 1961 on 14th April 1961. Under the Ordinance, the Civic Council was endowed with a legal personality and provided with fourteen district committees which were meant to operate as the branches of local government. A change in government policy in the seventies brought forward a referendum on the future of the Gozo Civic Council. The referendum was held on November 11th 1973. Only 195 of the 15,621 persons entitled to vote or 1.2% of the eligible voters cast their vote. Of these 173 were in favour, 41 against and 17 invalid. On November 27th 1973, Government presented in Parliament the Gozo Local Government (Repeal) Bill. Parliamentary Committee for Gozo: On November 23rd 1983, a Parliamentary Committee for Gozo was set up by virtue of a resolution approved by the House of Representatives. The Committee was set up to discuss the problems of Gozo and so help the Gozitans better understand the decisions that affected their daily life. Ministry for Gozo: In May 1987, the Nationalist Government set up a Ministry for Gozo with the aims of co-ordinating the activities of the various Ministries in Gozo and to take specific initiatives for the welfare of Gozo. From then on, the Ministry was responsible for the Government's capital programme for Gozo and all the public expenditure for the island in this regard was appropriated under its budgetary vote. Gradually, the Recurrent Expenditure in respect of Gozo was also extricated from the relative Votes under the various Ministries and included under the Gozo Ministry. The Nationalist Government argued that the Ministry for Gozo had executive authority as any other Ministry and that it had its own Business Plan, its own policies, projects, programmes and initiatives and its own votes. Moreover, the Minister answered directly to Parliament as well as to the people of Gozo and was the Cabinet's representative in Gozo and Gozo's representative in the Cabinet. The Labour Party felt that the set-up of a Ministry for Gozo, parallel to the structure of local councils could not give the best results. On taking office after the October 1996 elections, the Labour Government appointed a Parliamentary Secretary, instead of a Minister for Gozo, and the Prime Minister himself took Gozo affairs under his portfolio to ensure that those ministries having ongoing projects and delivering services in Gozo would do so with commitment and without indifference. The Labour Party proposed the establishment of a Gozo Regional Council, composed of all Gozitan MPs, representatives of all local councils in Gozo, the Parliamentary Secretary responsible for Gozo affairs in the office of the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister himself as Chairman of the Council. A White Paper proposing the establishment of a Regional Council for the island was published in July 1997 and a Bill was subsequently presented to the national Parliament in June 1998. The Bill however did not move beyond its first reading. In September 1998 there was a change in government and the new Nationalist Government re-established the Ministry for Gozo with the roles, functions, powers and competences it previously enjoyed.

Political Parties:

Gozo represents the thirteenth electoral district and has five out of the sixty five seats in the bi-party House of Parliament. During the last general election in 2003, the Nationalist Party elected 3 Members of Parliament, whereas the Malta Labour Party elected two Members of Parliament.

Important Legislation:

Gozo is a separate geographical component of the Maltese state; it enjoys a fair degree of administrative autonomy. Gozo has its own Bishop since 1865; its own Minister in the Cabinet of Ministers since 1992. Gozo has always had its own administrative structure within the public service. Its elective structures were removed in 1973 and reintroduced in a different format under the Local Councils Act. In 1987, Gozo received greater autonomy through the introduction of a separate Ministry in terms of Section 82(1) of the Constitution, responsible for co-ordinating the functions of Government as well as promoting the economic, social and cultural development of the Island. The Ministry administers funds provided by Parliament for projects including industrial development, tourism, agriculture, fisheries, roads, drainage, waste, public buildings, education, health, environment, housing and sports. Malta has joined the European Union as of 1st May 2004. For that purpose, Gozo will be considered as a separate region from Malta for statistical purposes (NUTS III), while the Maltese islands will be classified together for the purposes of EU funding (NUTS 1 and 2 levels). Gozo's regional development will be a separate priority in Malta's programme for EU funding (Single Programming Document) and a Gozo Regional Project Committee will be directly involved in how EU funds are used in Gozo.

Principal Taxes:

Associated Power:

Republic of Malta

Citizenship:

Gozitans hold a Maltese Passport. Some of the returned migrants and their offspring enjoy dual-citizenship.

Paradiplomacy:

The Embassy of the United States of America offers its services for American citizens residing in Gozo. People in Gozo needing the following embassy services can be obtained in Gozo such as US passport applications, report of birth abroad, filing of immigrant visa petitions (spouses only), notarial services, application for US Social Security benefits and other services related to social security.

HUMAN RESOURCES

In 2002, the population density in Gozo was 455 inhabitants per square kilometre. There are 14 localities on Gozo. (estimate 2003) Rabat (Gozo)6,842; Fontana 881; Ghajnsielem & Comino 2,521; Gharb 1,098; Ghasri 392; Kercem 1,656; Munxar 867; Nadur 4,347; Qala 1,663; San Lawrenz 576; Sannat 1,789; Xaghra 3,958; Xewkija 3,360; Zebbug (Gozo) 1,667;

2003			
Island	Area (km sq.)	Population	% of Total Population

Population:	
Year	Resident Population

Age of Population:	0-14	15-24	25-49	50-64	65 and up
2001	8260	2,760	8,000	7,320	3,700

Migration:

According to the 1995 Census, a considerable proportion of the population of Gozo is born overseas. A total of 2549 persons or 8.78 per cent of the Gozo population were born overseas. The proportion of the population of persons in a particular locality in Gozo who were born overseas varies from a low of 5.6 % for Ghasri to a high of 12.8 % for Gh'sielem. In fact, 6 localities, namely, Gh'sielem, Gharb, Nadur, Munxar, Qala and Zebbug, have more than 10 percent of their population born overseas. At the other end of the scale, we find Ghasri, Kercem and Victoria with around 5% of their population



born overseas. Australia has contributed the largest numbers of overseas-born, with the exception of Gh'sielem, Nadur, and Ghasri, where the largest number came from USA, with Australia taking second place.

Crude Birth Rate:	
2000	11.6%
2001	9.44%
2002	9.21%

Life Expectancy:

There are no statistics on life expectancy for Gozo as separate from mainland Malta. Life expectancy at birth for females in 2003 was 80.5 years and for males was 76.7 years.

Crude Death Rate:	
2000	9.1%
2001	9%
2002	7.5%

Ethnicity:

The Gozitan population is made up of the same type as the Maltese (descendants of ancient Carthaginians and Phoenicians, with strong elements of Italian and other Mediterranean stock).

Class Division:

Languages:

The language is Maltese (Malti) which is of a Semitic origin with overtones of romance. It is written in the Latin alphabet. The vast majority of the locals can speak English while the Italian language is also widespread. Today one can easily find young people who can also speak German, French or Spanish as a third language.

Religion:

The main religion on the island is Roman Catholic.

Literacy:

According to the 1995 Census, the male literacy rate on Gozo is 86.25% and the female literacy rate is 89.92%.

Education System:

Number of Elementary and Nursery Schools on the Island (2003):18; Number of Secondary Schools on the Island (2003):4;

Total Pre-schools:(2003)	
Total Primary Schools	
First Level:	
Second Level:	
Third Level:	
Total Secondary Schools:	4
Total Professional Schools	
Universities:	

Number of Schools per Island:											
		Pre-school		Elementary			High-school		Prof.	University	
		Pub	Priv	1	2	3	Pub	Priv		Pub	Priv

Students Enrolled:					
Year:	Pre-School	Elementary	High-school	Prof.	University

Teachers							
Year	Pre-School	Elementary			High-School	Prof.	University
		1	2	3			

No university on the island except a branch of the University of Malta. No specific statistics available pertaining to attendance. Most Gozitan students attend tertiary education in Malta.

Medical Services:

Gozo has a general hospital with 159 beds. A newer part of the hospital has 100 psychiatric and geriatric beds.

HISTORY AND CULTURE

History:

Gozo's situation has over the centuries determined the lifestyle of its people. In Roman times, the Island had a central town where the Castello is now situated in Victoria (Rabat). Settlements were spread around the countryside, with villas around which wheat and olives were cultivated. During the Middle Ages and right up to the first half of the seventeenth century, people found it difficult to live away from the Castello area. After 1551, when a siege of Gozo was successfully carried out by Moorish pirates, and up to 1637, the Gozitan population was obliged by law to spend the night inside the walls of the Castello. There was a whole range of penalties for those who failed to observe this requirement. In such an environment, a particular Gozitan sense of identity was bound to develop. Hospitaller Gozo Following the siege of 1551, the island gradually recovered the activity levels it had enjoyed previously. Before the siege, the population of Gozo stood at some 6,000. It then fell to a "few hundred", but then increased again and reached some 2,300 by the following decade (today the resident population of the island is close to 30,000). The Governor of Gozo As soon as the Order of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem established itself in Malta, the Universitas of Gozo had sought the confirmation of its rights and privileges from Grand Master Philippe Villiere L'Isle Adam and insisted that they be placed under his special care. L'Isle Adam's successor, Juan de Homedes, eventually created the post of Governor to represent him on the island. The island's administration was in the hands of the Universitas Gaudisii, the municipal Town Council of Gozo, answerable to the Governor of the island, whose post was established in 1550. In his work, the Governor was assisted by two jurati, a treasurer, two Cattapani, two Judices Idiotae and a Maestro di Piazza whose role was to provide legal, police, taxation, food supply and health services to the population, which was scattered in numerous settlements. One of the jurats stood for the Governor during the latter's absence. With time and increasing security from privateering raids, settlement patterns outside Rabat consolidated into villages with Xewkija becoming the first real Gozitan village outside Rabat in the final quarter of the seventeenth century. Broadly speaking this structure for civil organisation in Gozo remained during the long reign of the Order, though it is a moot point whether any real scope for autonomous action existed within these structures. The centralising tendencies of the Order's administration are well known. However the effects of distance might have helped to provide the "managers" of Gozo with their own flexible ways of doing things. Provisional Gozitan Government: That the Gozitan population - or at least their leading decision-makers - retained a sense of autonomy seems to result from what happened after the Knights left and during the uprising against the French. Then, steps were taken to set up a provisional Gozitan government. At a congress held on 18th September 1798, the Archpriest of the Matrix Church of Santa Marija Saver Cassar was elected head of the provisional government and general superintendent of Gozo. The Congress declared that the Gozitan people no longer recognised French rule and therefore decided to set up a provisional government to which the Gozitan people would feel obliged to give loyalty. The Gozitan delegates appointed as their representatives citizens to speak on behalf of the population of Ghajnsielem, Imgarr, Rabat, Sannat, Gharb, Zebbug, Xaghra and Xewkija. The Gozitans requested help from Sicily and on 6th September 1798, Archpriest Cassar sent a sloop to Sicily begging the authorities there to send food and other assistance to Gozo. Gozo under British Rule - Centralist Administration: With British rule, centralising tendencies became apparent in Gozo. The first British governor took several drastic steps to strengthen his hold in Gozo. On 15 October 1814, the post of Governor was suppressed, and on 31st December 1818, the Universitas, the local municipal council, which had functioned since around 1397, followed suit. A luogotenente had been appointed for Gozo, one of six appointed for the Maltese islands. The one for Gozo actually lived in Malta but had six deputies spread around Gozo to help him. This system inevitably meant that Gozitan affairs were given low priority and a long period of official neglect ensued. Even so, the urge for some form of local autonomy did not die out and was possibly transferred to ecclesiastical as opposed to civil affairs. Already in 1798, Archpriest Cassar had asked King Ferdinand III of Sicily for Gozo to be set up as a diocese in its own right. The request was again taken up in December 1836, when two Gozitan canons, Gejtan Bondi and Frangisk Portelli and notary Nicolo Tabone personally presented another similar request to Pope Gregory XVI. A third request was made to Rome through the Catholic Governor Sir Richard More O'Ferrall in 1847, and ten years later, when Mgr Pace Forno was appointed Archbishop of Malta, it was spelled out that his See could be split up. In 1848, Archpriest Dr Michael Buttigieg of Rabat was appointed auxiliary bishop, becoming in September 1864, Bishop of the new and independent Gozo diocese. However, in 1944, Gozo became a suffragan diocese of the newly erected Metropolitan See of Malta. Over the years, the civil administration of Gozo became increasingly an appendage of the central one in Malta. As a result, the administration of Gozo came to depend on an Assistant Secretary, a bureaucrat entrusted with direct control over all government departments operating in Gozo. This official reported directly to the Lieutenant Governor. In 1921, the nomenclature of the post changed to that of Commissioner for Gozo, which initially retained the powers formerly allocated to the Assistant Secretary. However, many of his responsibilities were eroded as the direct control over functions exercised by central departments in Malta was assumed by the latter.

Referenda:

A referendum was held in 2003 across Malta and Gozo asking whether the island-state should join as a member of the European Union.

Recent Significant Events:

Music, Dance, Handicraft and Patrimony:

Sources:

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