

Notes to Applicants

Supporting Marketing Initiatives for Specific Niche Markets in Gozo 2019

A Scheme to Assist Businesses in Gozo to Promote Niche Markets in Gozo

Directorate for Tourism and Economic Development
Ministry for Gozo

January 2019



1. OBJECTIVE OF THIS SCHEME

A niche tourism market is a specific market segment, outlining a well-defined product that can be tailored to meet the interests of the consumer. Niche markets are instrumental for diversifying the product, minimising the effects of seasonality, and reducing the pressure on tourism hotspots by distributing tourists to less frequently visited places.

The National Tourism Policy 2015-2020 highlights that seasonality is one of the main issues of the tourism sector. It indicates that further investment in different niche markets can assist in bridging the gap between the peak season and the low season. The National Tourism Policy specifically highlights that stimulating demand during the low season can improve the sustainability of operators in the tourism sector, particularly in Gozo. The specific niche markets outlined in the policy are gastronomy, tourism for all including social tourism, sports and adventure, nature including rural and eco-tourism, religious travel, yachting, film location and film enthusiasts' tourism, crafts and others niche markets focusing on special interest demands.

The final objective of this scheme is to help Gozo increase the number of bed nights through quality, high-end tourism. Therefore the scheme seeks to assist operators located in Gozo to explore new or upcoming niches which could be developed further through participation in specialised fairs/events abroad, and through professional, international advertising initiatives. Preference will be given to operators who target emerging source markets, including Scandinavia, Russia, the Middle East and the United States, but not only, and to those offering a holistic package to consumers including at least two of the following components: transport, accommodation, and other tourist services which are not associated with transport or accommodation but which form a significant proportion of the package. The Directorate will also consider requests by operators who wish to benefit from this scheme, if it is proven by the operator/claimant that he/she is through his/her business seeking international promotion of niches that have the potential to attract high end tourism towards Gozo. However, it will remain at the discretion of the Directorate to evaluate and decide upon such requests.

The areas on which this scheme will be focusing are:

- Sports and adventure tourism (including diving);
- Religious tourism;
- MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events); and
- Weddings.

The Directorate will evaluate applications from other emerging segments and decide on a case to case basis, basing its decision solely on the segment's potential contribution to quality, sustainable tourism.

2. CRITERIA TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS SCHEME

Participation in the scheme is based on the following conditions:

- Operators must be licensed tourism operators/dive-centres, registered with the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA), and located in Gozo; and
- Operators must engage in international advertising initiatives, and/or participate in international fairs and events abroad; and

- Conduct any activities as outlined in the application during 2019.

3. CONDITIONS

3.1 Interested operators should fill in the electronic form and upload the required documentation as indicated.

3.2 It is important that all the operators fill in and provide **all** the information required including a copy of the Malta Tourism Authority licence, and a description of the marketing initiatives and international fairs that are planned for 2019 and for which support is being requested.

3.3 The Ministry for Gozo will cover **up to 50%** of the following eligible expenditure (**a**, and **b** below):

- a) up to a **maximum of € 3,000**, in the case of entities which decide to undertake **either** advertising in publications / social media / on-line / television targeted to a foreign audience and where Gozo is clearly communicated as a holiday destination **or** participation in international fairs/events abroad with the objective of promoting Gozo as a holiday destination.
- b) up to a **maximum of € 4,000** in the case of entities which decide to undertake both advertising initiatives and participation in international fairs/events abroad.

3.4 Costs related to web hosting and to the development of the entity's website and social media channels shall also be considered as eligible costs. Local promotion of the respective business entity or tourism related activity, such as for example leaflets distributed locally, or any other type of advertising or promotion that is not distributed internationally, are not considered eligible expenses for refund under this scheme.

3.5 The costs of participation in international fairs will cover **up to a maximum of 1 person** for the following activities:

- i. an **economy class air fare ticket** to and from the location of the fair;
- ii. up to the maximum of the early bird **registration costs / early bird participation fees**; and
- iii. **up to the maximum of 60% of the standard subsistence allowance cost to cover for bed and breakfast accommodation. The standard subsistence daily rate is published by the Ministry for Finance for Government and public-sector employees. This will be calculated on the number of nights to be spent abroad multiplied by the per diem allowance, irrespective of the time of departure from Malta and, will cover only up to a maximum of a day before the event, and a day after its conclusion. International representatives (i.e. persons who are already located abroad) who participate on behalf of the business entity shall not be considered eligible.**

3.4 Eligible expenditure will only be re-imbursed after the activities have been undertaken, and the relative documentation provided, including:

- a copy of the advertising undertaken in both print / social media or television. In the case of audio-visual material this should be presented on a CD or usb;
- a copy of all the invoices (including VAT). In the case of airplane tickets a copy of the airline's electronic ticket would be considered as the required proof;
- a signed state aid declaration form (which can be downloaded [here](#))

3.5 Interested operators should apply to participate in the scheme by filling in the electronic form, and uploading the required documents through the following [link](#), by not later than **Friday 29th March 2019 at 17:00hrs**. Each application will be acknowledged in writing on the e-mail address provided in the application. The Tourism & Economic Development Directorate will also guide the business entity on whether the proposed initiatives are eligible or not.

3.6 The Tourism & Economic Development Directorate would be entitled to make the required verifications with the Malta Tourism Authority, and other government entities on the information submitted. The Ministry for Gozo can also reject a particular application subject to the provision of incorrect information. The Ministry for Gozo can also request further information from the applicant prior to making a final decision.

3.7 For state aid purposes applicants must not have received more than €200,000 from any government entity within a period of 3 years i.e. in the previous 2 fiscal years and the current fiscal year. Applicants will also need to sign a declaration form to this effect (this can also be downloaded [here](#)), indicating similar types of aid received from any government entity during this period.

3.8 All the documentation required for the reimbursement of funds, as per **clause 3.4**, should be sent **by not later than Thursday, 31st October 2019 at 17:00 hrs on the address below:**

**Tourism and Economic Development Directorate
Ministry for Gozo
Saint Francis Square
Victoria, Gozo**

Claims for reimbursements submitted after this date will not be processed.

3.9 Disbursement of funds will start immediately once the required documentation (as per clause **3.4**) as presented to the Tourism & Economic Development Directorate is verified.

3.10 The Tourism & Economic Development Directorate may decide to close the scheme earlier than indicated subject to the allocated funds for this purpose being exhausted. The Directorate will publish a notice on its website (www.gozo.gov.mt) to this effect, if this is the case.