

Nadur: A Best Emerging Rural Zone for the Maltese Islands

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Background

Located in the east of Gozo, Nadur is set one of the highest hills in the Maltese islands. It has a population of around 4,700 people. The locality offers an interesting mix of urban, rural and coastal areas forming a diverse agglomeration of landscapes and ecosystems. About 87.5 per cent of its land territory falls outside the permitted development zone.

Rich Cultural Heritage

Nadur boasts of a rich cultural heritage. The feast of its patron saints – St. Peter and St. Paul – also known as the feast of “Mnarja”, celebrated on the 29th of June, is rooted in Maltese religious and social rituals and customs.

The village of Nadur holds specific events that have become an important fixture in Gozo’s calendar of

cultural events. These include the Nadur Carnival, the Wine Festival and the Christmas Market amongst others. The Nadur carnival has today become synonymous with the locality and has grown into an event which is attended by many visitors from mainland Malta and by foreign tourists. The event has special characteristics and is characterised by spontaneous activities. Another major event is the wine festival – three days of local wine tasting. This festival is set within an agro-tourism context, which should help to create a tourism niche market. The Christmas market is another attraction for tourists and helps to popularise Nadur as an off-peak tourist destination.

Major Landmarks

The Ta’ Soppu and Ta’ Kenuna towers are major landmarks in this locality. Ta’ Soppu Tower was built during the reign of the Knights of St John (1530 – 1798) by Grand Master Nicholas Cottoner



and has been referred to also by the names Dahlet Qorrot Tower or San Blas Tower taking the name of the two bays lying on either side of the tower. The tower, perched 120 metres above sea level, is renowned for its inadequacy to defend the island against the French invasion of Gozo on the 10th June 1798. Truly, the French Commandant had chosen an inlet between Soppu Tower and Ramla Bay called Rđum ta' Vnuta. When the Gozitans saw the ships loaded with French soldiers making their way towards land, the soldiers on guard in the Tower started firing the two cannons on the incoming armada. But their efforts were soon neutralized by the cannons on L'Etoile and La Pluvier. Reynier's troops soon landed without any further resistance. The tower remained in operation until 1st April 1873, after which date, no more soldiers were stationed for guard duties there. Since then, it has been abandoned. The other watch-tower found in Nadur is Ta' Kenuna Tower that was built by the British towards the middle of the 19th century. This tower now serves as a telecommunication link between Malta and Gozo. From its top, one can get a panoramic view of most of the island of Gozo, Comino and the northern part of Malta.

Agri-Tourism Potential

Nadur has great potential for agri-tourism. Agriculture in this locality includes the cultivation of thousands of citrus and olive trees within the Bingemma and San Blas valleys. If properly developed, agri-tourism could further integrate the livelihood of farmers and with that of tourism operators, as the valleys offer a congenial visitor experience.

The promotion of agri-tourism in Nadur generates various benefits for farmers and business. Farmers have a wider market for their citrus and olives, while business people gain from the increased visitor flows to the locality. In addition property owners benefit by the growth in demand for the renting of farmhouses and flats in the area. There are also spill-over effects such as the embellishment and conservation of the natural environment the restoration of cultural assets. In addition, the scenic beauty of the locality is exploited for walking tourism activities.

The European Destinations of Excellence Pilot Project

Nadur has been selected amongst ten other rural villages as the Best Emerging Rural Zone for the Maltese Islands, in the framework of the European Destinations of Excellence Pilot Project, launched by the European Commission. This locality has successfully met the required qualities and standards of sustainability, holistic management and improvement, offering visitors an agro-tourism experience. Nadur is a typical example of an initiative that enshrines the principles of economic, social, environmental and cultural sustainability. Through the European Destinations of Excellence pilot project Nadur has gained recognition on both a local and international level whilst also setting an example of best practice to other localities. Not only has it led to further initiatives being organised in the village itself but also to the promotion of Nadur throughout the European Union.



The logos in connection with the European Destinations of Excellence: Best Emerging Rural Zone pilot project.

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