



**Presentation to  
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# **Tourism diversification of the Malta destination**

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# Malta

Located at the centre of the Mediterranean.  
High population density  
Now heavily reliant on international tourism







In the late 1950s and early 1960s,

- The introduction of package tours facilitated new tourism markets
- Malta needed to diversify its economy because of the rundown of the British naval base

Following modest beginnings in the early 1960's, tourism became Malta's fastest growing industry.

Malta's tourism dependent on air travel.

Improvement of Malta's air travel infrastructure.

New Malta airline in mid-70s.

More recently, since 2006 increased seat capacity due to low-cost airlines



Until 2004, financial incentives supporting British tour operators.

This perpetuated a “narrowly focused, low return, excessively seasonal and environmentally unsustainable character” of Malta’s tourism.

From 2000, Malta sought to capitalise on the tourism resources in which it had clear competitive advantage.

For Malta, what can you tell me about ..... ?

Nature and extent of urban development

Natural coast and coastal developments

Historic towns

Archaeology and other heritage

Tourism resorts

Location of tourism accommodation

Tourist travel in Malta



What can you tell me about ..... ?

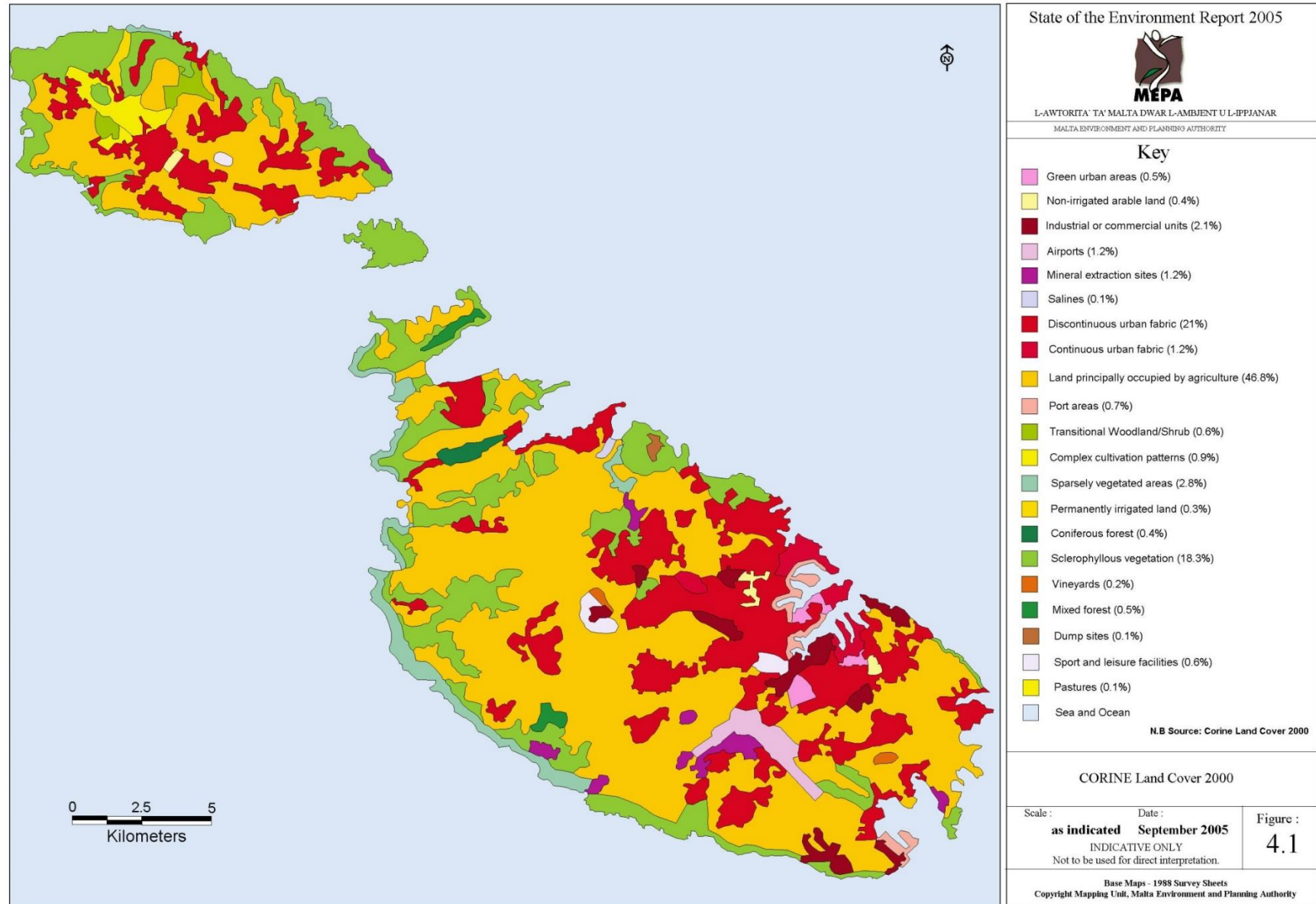
# Nature and extent of urban development





What can you tell me about ..... ?

# Nature and extent of urban development



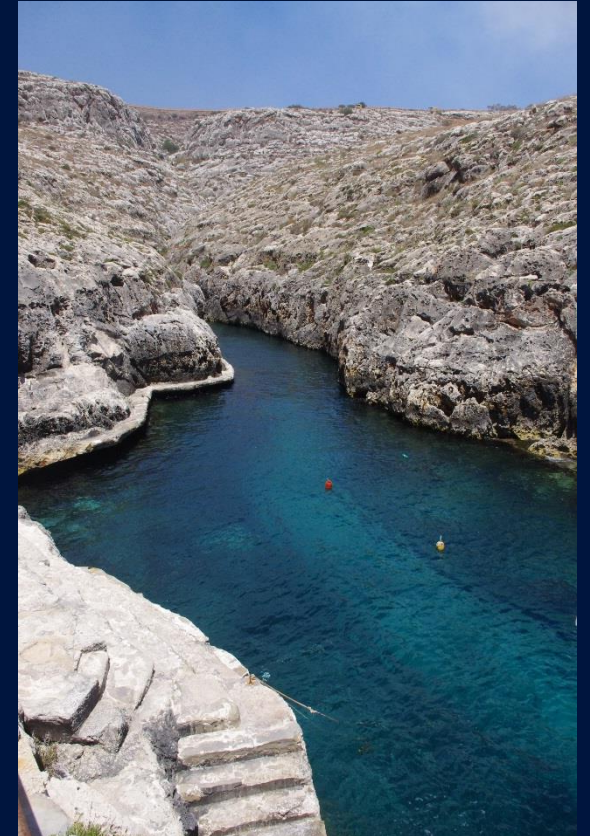
## Nature and extent of urban development

- A highly urbanised inner harbour region with few publicly accessible open spaces.
- Substantial poor quality development in recently-developed urban areas, including tourism resorts
- A lot of building activity, with building sites not adequately sealed off.
- Urban spaces mostly dominated by parked cars and moving vehicles.
- Generally poor environment for pedestrians, with poor quality pavements and/or pavements taken over by tables and chairs.
- Increased pressure for tall buildings.
- Streetscapes are generally unattractive.



What can you tell me about ..... ?

# Natural coast and coastal developments





## Natural coast and coastal developments

- Many rocky beaches along the north east coast of the island.
- Some sandy beaches in the north but generally small.
- In some non-urbanised areas there are developments that impinge on the scenic value of the beaches.
- One replenished beach at St. George's Bay. This is the only sandy beach in the St. Julians area.
- Nature of rocky coastline makes it very difficult to create new sandy beaches.
- One perched sandy beach in Bugibba.

What can you tell me about ..... ?

# Countryside and nature



## Countryside and nature

- Limited countryside due to size and extent of urbanisation.
- Increasing number of inappropriate developments in rural areas.
- Countryside mostly dominated by agriculture activity.
- Some pockets of very attractive countryside with typical Mediterranean flora and fauna.
- 15% of the territory designated as Natura 2000 to protect important habitats and species.
- Some conflict of countryside use between nature appreciation and bird hunting.



What can you tell me about ..... ?

# Fortified historic towns



Valletta  
Mdina  
Birgu  
Cittadella

## Fortified historic towns

- Some very attractive historic towns, with attractive urban spaces.
- Fortifications surrounding them mostly intact.
- A common feature is the outward views of sea or countryside.
- Valletta is a World Heritage Site.
- Grand Harbour made even more scenic and attractive because of surrounding fortified towns.
- Sometimes difficult to reconcile conservation requirements with modern day uses for historic buildings.
- Sometimes problem of access for traffic and parking.



What can you tell me about ..... ?

# Archaeology and other heritage



Hagiar Qim Temples





## Archaeology and other heritage

- Neolithic temples dating back to 5000 BC, designated as World Heritage sites
- Many archaeological sites across Malta, some are provided with interpretation but most are not.
- A lot of British built heritage, including barrack buildings and forts. Very little of the British heritage is properly restored and presented.
- Other built heritage includes historic village cores, small chapels in the countryside, beautifully adorned old churches in some towns,

What can you tell me about ..... ?

# Tourism resorts

- St. Julians/Sliema/Gzira
- Bugibba/Qawra
- Marsaskala
- Marsalforn (Gozo)
- Xlendi (Gozo)



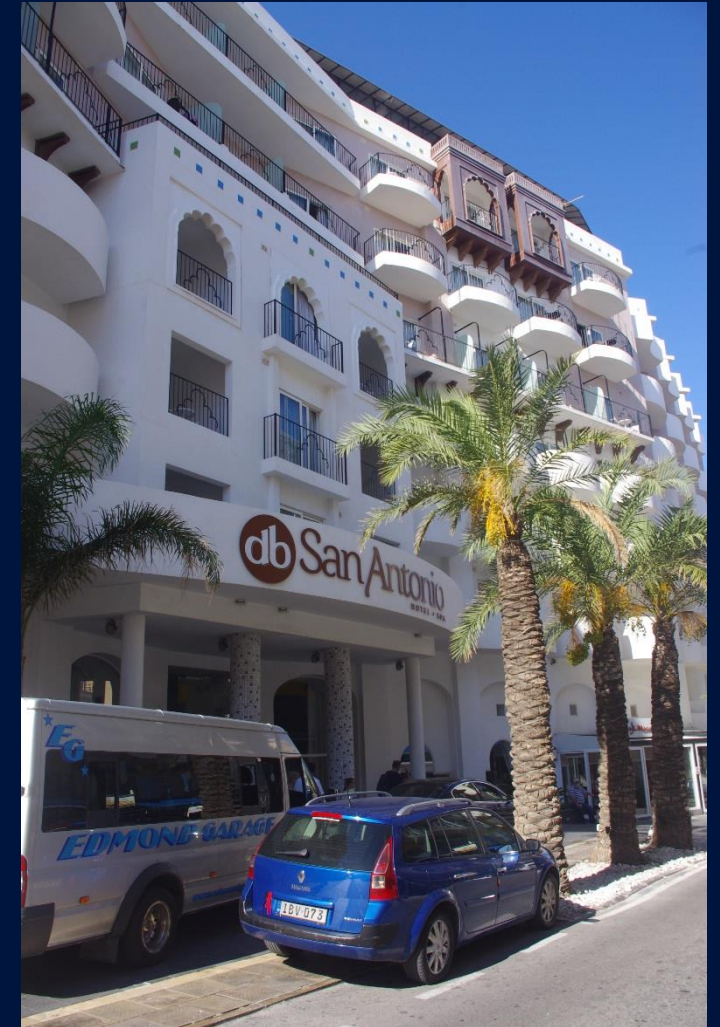
## Tourism resorts

- Poor quality development
- Close to rocky beaches
- Other than swimming, they lack daytime activities in which tourists can engage.
- Requires travel to get to the visitor attractions
- Have developed as entertainment hubs for Maltese and tourist
- Mix of tourism accommodation with permanent residents and summer residents.



What can you tell me about ..... ?

# Location and nature of tourism accommodation



## Location and nature of tourism accommodation

- Concentration of hotels in St. Julians/Sliema/Gzira and Bugibba/Qawra.
- Few hotels in or close to historic areas, in spite of recent increase of boutique hotels in Valletta.
- A good choice of tourism accommodation available including many high quality hotels.
- With internet booking, it is easy for client to buy accommodation according to requirements and budget.
- Package travel dropped from 67% in 2006 to 43% in 2015.
- Sharp increase in shared accommodation (Airbnb and others).

What can you tell me about ..... ?

# Tourist travel in Malta





## Tourist travel in Malta

- Tourist travel in the destination is very relevant because most accommodation is distant from the main visitor attractions.
- Public transport extensive but has weaknesses.
- Car rental provides greater freedom and flexibility but can be stressful driving
- Hop-on hop-off (open top buses) effective to get to the visitor attractions but expensive
- Taxis suitable for more affluent tourists



With reference to mass tourism destinations .....

Why diversify?

How does a tourism destination diversify?

When a destination diversifies towards heritage/culture what does it need to do?

What difficulties are caused by diversification?

Is diversification away from mass tourism always as sustainable as it is made to seem?

Three scenarios of tourism diversification \*:

**Replacement** of mass tourism with heritage/ cultural tourism.

**Parallel** development of heritage/cultural tourism with mass tourism.

Heritage/cultural tourism **supplements** the current mass tourism.

Of the three scenarios, which did the Malta destination most closely follow?

\* Source: Ashworth, G. J., & Tunbridge, J. E. (2017). 18 *From Blue to Grey? Malta's Quest from Mass Beach to Niche Heritage Tourism*. In Harrison, D., & Sharpley, R. (Eds.). (2017). *Mass Tourism in a Small World*. CABI.

End of presentation