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PRESS RELEASE

New visitor booking system to protect Blue Lagoon's environment

Starting Thursday 1st May, a new online visitor booking system will regulate the number of visitors at the Comino's Blue Lagoon, to protect and preserve the delicate ecosystems of this popular Natura 2000 site.

As announced earlier this year, the Malta Tourism Authority, in collaboration with the Tourism Ministry and other entities and authorities, is launching this system as part of a multi-pronged drive to augment sustainability and enhance visitor experience at the Blue Lagoon.

"Book, Protect, Enjoy" is the basis of the new system, whereby individuals or groups arriving by private or commercial vessels wishing to set foot at the Blue Lagoon, will need to prebook using a free online system - $\frac{\text{bluelagooncomino.mt}}{\text{bluelagooncomino.mt}}$. Visitors can book one of the three available daily time slots (08:00-13:00, 13:30-17:30, and 18:00-22:00). Using basic details and an email address, the booking system will instantly generate a unique QR code, to be presented to officials at the site's coastal and land access points. Visitors will be provided with a unique wristband, allowing access for the duration of the time slot.

- Booking site: <u>bluelagooncomino.mt</u>
- Three time slots: 08:00–13:00, 13:30–17:30, 18:00–22:00
- Booking generates a QR code
- Wristbands issued at entry points
- Unauthorised access may be subject to a fine

The new system will be introduced on Thursday, 1st May 2025. In summer 2024, up to 12,000 visitors were recorded at the Blue Lagoon at any one time, especially at peak hours. The new booking system allows a maximum of 4,000 visitors at Blue Lagoon at any one time. Access without a valid booking will not be permitted and infringement may be subject to a fine. During the first few weeks, officials on site will provide guidance to visitors who may not yet be familiar with the booking process.

The new system is one of the first actions of a two-year project spearheaded by Team Blue Lagoon, bringing together several ministries, authorities and entities, including the Malta Tourism Authority, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Tourism, the Ministry for Gozo and Planning, Transport Malta, the Environment and Resources Authority, the Police, LESA, and the Civil Protection Department. In summer 2025, this first phase this project will also include the following actions:

- Safer, extended swimming zones
- Improved waste management



- Additional sanitation facilities
- Increased enforcement throughout

The Malta Tourism Authority and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Tourism will soon be launching stakeholder consultations on other long-term protection and rehabilitation measures. All measures are planned to be in place by summer 2026.