



NATURA 2000 - STANDARD DATA FORM

For Special Protection Areas (SPA),
Proposed Sites for Community Importance (pSCI),
Sites of Community Importance (SCI) and
for Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

SITE **MT0000034**
SITENAME **L-Inħawi ta' Ta' Ċenċ**

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1. SITE IDENTIFICATION

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1.1 Type B	1.2 Site code MT0000034
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1.3 Site name

L-Inħawi ta' Ta' Ċenċ

1.4 First Compilation date	1.5 Update date
2008-07	2019-09

1.6 Respondent:

Name/Organisation:	Environment and Resources Authority
Address:	Hexagon House, Spencer Hill, Marsa MRS 1441
Email:	natura.2000@era.org.mt

1.7 Site indication and designation / classification dates

Date site classified as SPA:	0000-00
National legal reference of SPA designation	No data
Date site proposed as SCI:	2008-09
Date site confirmed as SCI:	2009-12
Date site designated as SAC:	2016-12
National legal reference of SAC designation:	Government Notice No. 1379 of 2016, in accordance with the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations, 2016 (S.L. 549.44)

2. SITE LOCATION

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2.1 Site-centre location [decimal degrees]:

Longitude
14.2623

Latitude
36.0189

2.2 Area [ha]:

140.21

2.3 Marine area [%]

0.0

2.4 Sitelength [km]:

0.0

2.5 Administrative region code and name

NUTS level 2 code **Region Name**

MT00	Malta
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2.6 Biogeographical Region(s)

Mediterranean (100.0
%)

3. ECOLOGICAL INFORMATION

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3.1 Habitat types present on the site and assessment for them

Annex I Habitat types						Site assessment			
Code	PF	NP	Cover [ha]	Cave [number]	Data quality	A B C D	A B C		
						Representativity	Relative Surface	Conservation	Global
1240			6.88		G	B	B	A	B
1510			4.16		G	C	C	B	C
3170			0.11		G	B	B	B	C
5330			14.18		G	A	B	B	B
5410			8.17		G	C	B	B	C
5430			6.67		G	C	A	B	C
6220			47.57		G	B	B	C	C
8210			6.9		G	B	B	A	B

PF: for the habitat types that can have a non-priority as well as a priority form (6210, 7130, 9430) enter "X" in the column PF to indicate the priority form.

NP: in case that a habitat type no longer exists in the site enter: x (optional)

Cover: decimal values can be entered

Caves: for habitat types 8310, 8330 (caves) enter the number of caves if estimated surface is not available.

Data quality: G = 'Good' (e.g. based on surveys); M = 'Moderate' (e.g. based on partial data with some extrapolation); P = 'Poor' (e.g. rough estimation)

3.2 Species referred to in Article 4 of Directive 2009/147/EC and listed in Annex II of Directive 92/43/EEC and site evaluation for them

Species				Population in the site							Site assessment			
G	Code	Scientific Name	S	NP	T	Size		Unit	Cat.	D.qual.	A B C D	A B C		
						Min	Max				Pop.	Con.	Iso.	Glo.
P	4079	Cremnophyton lanfranconi			p	50	100	i	R	P	B	A	A	B
P	4092	Elatine gussonei			p				R	P	B	B	A	C
P	4084	Hyoseris frutescens			p				R	P	B	B	A	C
P	4114	Linaria pseudolaxiflora			p				V	P	B	C	A	C
P	4105	Ophrys melitensis	Yes		p					DD	C	B	A	B
P	4085	Palaeocyanus crassifolius			p				R	P	B	B	A	B

Group: A = Amphibians, B = Birds, F = Fish, I = Invertebrates, M = Mammals, P = Plants, R = Reptiles

S: in case that the data on species are sensitive and therefore have to be blocked for any public access enter: yes

NP: in case that a species is no longer present in the site enter: x (optional)

Type: p = permanent, r = reproducing, c = concentration, w = wintering (for plant and non-migratory species use permanent)

Unit: i = individuals, p = pairs or other units according to the Standard list of population units and codes in accordance with Article 12 and 17 reporting (see [reference portal](#))

Abundance categories (Cat.): C = common, R = rare, V = very rare, P = present - to fill if data are deficient (DD) or in addition to population size information

Data quality: G = 'Good' (e.g. based on surveys); M = 'Moderate' (e.g. based on partial data with some extrapolation); P = 'Poor' (e.g. rough estimation); VP = 'Very poor' (use this category only, if not even a rough estimation of the population size can be made, in this case the fields for population size can remain empty, but the field "Abundance categories" has to be filled in)

3.3 Other important species of flora and fauna (optional)

4. SITE DESCRIPTION

4.1 General site character

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Habitat class	% Cover
N08	40.79
N27	1.85
N05	9.83
N09	36.89
N23	10.56
N06	0.08
Total Habitat Cover	100

Other Site Characteristics

The Ta' Ċenċ area, located in the southwest of Gozo, comprises a relatively undeveloped stretch of open land characterised by a number of geomorphological units supporting a conglomeration of natural habitats. In this respect, the Ta' Ċenċ area is highly influenced by one of the largest fault complex systems of Gozo, where the area is bound by a steep escarpment along its northern periphery and a belt of sheer coastal cliffs to the south. These vertical lower coralline limestone cliffs border the southern half of the site, extending from Ta' Ċenċ to Il-Bajja ta' Mgarr ix-Xini. The vertical sides support rupestral communities, rich in endemic species. The northern half of the site is characterised by an extensive karstic Globigerina limestone terrain plateau that extends from the western

end of Ix-Xaghra l-Kbira in a southeastward direction towards Tal-Kalkara, Il-Qortin iż-Żghir and Ta' Nanas, occupying a central portion of the plateau, and along the southern direction towards Tad-Debda, Ix-Xaghra and Il-Qortin il-Kbir, thus occupying an expanse of land overlooking the cliffs on the western and southwestern sectors. These karst areas are typified by a mosaic of grasslands, ermes, phrygana and pre-desert scrub communities. Formerly cultivated, terraced fields occupy a significant portion of land to the east (as at Is-Sisien, Tal-Kalkara and Tas-Smina) and southeast (at Ta' Riglis, Lizzgandlu and Ta' L-Iskandlu). A number of trees (*Ficus carica* and *Ceratonia silqua*) and large shrubs also occur on the peripheries in some of the former fields. The steep-sided valley at Wied Sabbara drains a fair extent of the land cover towards the eastern side. Wied Sabbar shows a mosaic of natural communities; dominated by *Euphorbia dendroides* or *Hypericum aegypticum* on the steep sides, watercourse vegetation along the valley bed, and archaeophytic assemblages. The Ras in-Newwiela promontary forms a flat Globigerina Limestone cliff-top platform that is colonised by maritime steppe communities, dominated by *Lygeum* and *Stipa*.

4.2 Quality and importance

Within this site, the open karstic plateau is characterised by relatively shallow soils colonised by various grassland, phrygana and pre-desert scrub assemblages. This area in general supports a wide range of flora and fauna that include various reptiles; small mammals, including *Atelerix algirus*; and various invertebrate groups, including the endemic *Armadillidium schmalfussi*, *Stenosis melitana*, *Tentyria laevigata leachi* and *Pimelia rugulosa* spp. *melitana*. The areas from Fuq tal-Gruwa/Ix-Xaghra l-Kbira to Ta' Nanas consist mostly of phrygana and steppic assemblages, which also include flora and fauna of interest, including the endemic molluscs *Muticaria macrostoma oscitans*, and *Trochoidea spratti*. The Ta' Nanas area also houses a relatively large but localised population of the sub-endemic *Scilla sicula*, as well as fairly extensive patches dominated by *Brachypodium retusum*. The phrygana communities of Ta' Ċenċ extend throughout the northern escarpment that defines the northern boundary of the area, from Fuq tal-Gruwa to Il-Ħamra, extending partly to Il-Qortin iż-Żghir. This habitat type is characterised by *Anthyllis hermanniae* and labiate shrubs, particularly *Thymra capitata*. *Anthyllis hermanniae* also occurs in other areas, as at Ix-Xaghra l-Kbira, but does not characterise the habitat type, which is mostly typified by various annuals and other plants typical of the Mediterranean xeric grasslands, but also including andropogonid grasses, as *Hyparrhenia hirta*. These xeric grassland habitats can be found nearly throughout the entire Ta' Ċenċ area, although the status of its distribution and conservation varies. The areas near Il-Qortin iż-Żghir and Ta' Nanas host grasslands in a good conservation status, whereas the grasslands in other areas, such as at Ix-Xaghra and Il-Qortin il-Kbir, are more disturbed. Thermo-Mediterranean and pre-desert scrub communities are particularly well-developed in the area, these being often characterised by dense populations of *Euphorbia dendroides*. The community within this site represents one of the best examples throughout the Maltese Islands and is deemed to be at a highly favourable conservation status, conferring a high ecological value and uniqueness to this habitat type in the area. This habitat type occurs on the extensive karstic plateau at Il-Qortin il-Kbir, at the headwaters of Wied Sabbara and at Il-Blat ta' Psaila. On the western valley-sides of Wied Sabbara, this habitat type occurs in conjunction with *Hypericum aegypticum*; such assemblage is usually referred to as phrygana, but requires further studies as to its distinction from pre-desert scrub and other similar habitat types. The temporary rainwater rock pools occur scattered all over the area, depending on karstic depressions and rainfall. Examples of such communities are found in the areas of Ta' l-Ghadira, Il-Qortin il-Kbir and Il-Qortin iż-Żghir, and include an array of threatened vascular flora, including chandelier algae/stoneworts (*Charophyta* species), *Elatine gussonei* (Annex II Habitats Directive), *Damasonium bourgaei*, *Ranunculus saniculaefolius*, and *Zannichellia melitensis*, fairy shrimps (*Branchipus* sp./spp.) as well as the amphibian *Discoglossus pictus* (Annex IV Habitats Directive). Vegetated sea cliffs of the Mediterranean coasts with endemic *Limonium* spp. and calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation, are both associated with coastal limestone cliffs, and occur as a mosaic of natural habitats throughout the belt of coastal cliffs extending from Ta' Ċenċ to Il-Bajja ta' Mġarr ix-Xini. The cliffs at Ta' Ċenċ support a very important rupestral maritime community with a variety of species that are otherwise rare across the Maltese Islands. Such species include *Atriplex lanfrancoi*, *Cheirolophus crassifolius*, *Matthiola incana* ssp. *melitensis* and *Ysoeris frutescens*, all threatened Maltese endemic cliff species. The assemblage is also based on other endemics and species with a restricted distribution in the Mediterranean, including *Limonium melitense*, *Salsola melitensis*, *Hypericum aegypticum*, *Crucianella rupestris*, *Daucus rupestris* and *Senecio leucanthemifolius*. In addition, *Coronilla valentina* s.l. and *Echium sabulicola*, two species rare on the national scale, also grow at Ta' Ċenċ and Ras in-Newwiela respectively. In this respect, it should be noted that the cliff of Ta' Ċenċ support the best known population of the Annex II (Habitats Directive) species *Cheirolophus crassifolius* in the island of Gozo (this species is rare on the island of Gozo). Footpaths in the area in general house an interesting assemblage of plant species, particularly within the area of Wied Sabbara, where *Evax pygmaea*, *Romulea* spp., *Moraea sisyrinchium*, *Plantago coronopus* s.l., *Euphorbia exigua* s.l. and *Filago cossyrensis* occur.

4.3 Threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the site

The most important impacts and activities with high effect on the site

Negative Impacts			
Rank	Threats and pressures [code]	Pollution (optional) [code]	inside/outside [i o b]
L	E02		b

Positive Impacts			
Rank	Activities, management [code]	Pollution (optional) [code]	inside/outside [i o b]

M	I01		i
L	K01.01		i
L	H06.01		b
L	D01.01		i

Rank: H = high, M = medium, L = low

Pollution: N = Nitrogen input, P = Phosphor/Phosphate input, A = Acid input/acidification,
T = toxic inorganic chemicals, O = toxic organic chemicals, X = Mixed pollutions

i = inside, o = outside, b = both

4.4 Ownership (optional)

4.5 Documentation

5. SITE PROTECTION STATUS (optional)

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5.1 Designation types at national and regional level:

5.2 Relation of the described site with other sites:

5.3 Site designation (optional)

6. SITE MANAGEMENT

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6.1 Body(ies) responsible for the site management:

Organisation:	Environment and Resources Authority
Address:	
Email:	natura.2000@era.org.mt

6.2 Management Plan(s):

An actual management plan does exist:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Name: Rdumijiet u L-Inħawi ta' Ta' Ċenċ Link: https://era.org.mt/en/Pages/Natura-2000-Management-Planning.aspx
<input type="checkbox"/> No, but in preparation	
<input type="checkbox"/> No	

6.3 Conservation measures (optional)

7. MAP OF THE SITES

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INSPIRE ID:

MT.ERA.MT0000034

Map delivered as PDF in electronic format (optional)

Yes No

Reference(s) to the original map used for the digitalisation of the electronic boundaries (optional).

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