

# Malta



ICT & Ageing

Geographic Digital Divide

eAccessibility

# eInclusion

Cultural Diversity

Inclusive eGovernment

Digital Literacy & Competences

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### **Disclaimer:**

This document is not intended to be exhaustive. Its purpose is to give an overview of the general eInclusion status in Malta. Even though every care has been taken to ensure accuracy, the information herein should be treated as indicative and no responsibility for errors can be assumed. Neither the European Commission, nor any person acting on its behalf can be held responsible for the use that could be made of the information provided.

## Country Profile

### Basic data and indicators

#### Basic Data

**Population (1 000):** 412.9 inhabitants (2010)

**GDP at market prices:** 5 749.7 million Euro (2009)

**GDP per inhabitant in PPS (Purchasing Power Standards, EU-27 = 100):** 78.0 (2009)

**GDP growth rate:** -2.1 % (2009)

**Inflation rate:** 1.8 % (2009)

**Unemployment rate:** 7.0 % (2009)

**Government debt/GDP:** 68.6 % (2009)

**Public balance (government deficit or surplus/GDP):** -3.8 % (2009)

Source: *Eurostat*

**Area:** 316 km<sup>2</sup>

**Capital city:** Valletta

**Official EU language:** Maltese, English

**Currency:** Euro

Source: *Europa website*

#### Information Society Indicators

**Percentage of households with Internet access:** 64 % (2009)

**Percentage of households with broadband connection:** 63 % (2009)

**Percentage of individuals regularly using the Internet:** 55 % (2009)

**Percentage of individuals using the Internet for uploading self-created content:** 5 % (2008)

**Percentage of individuals using the Internet for reading online newspapers/magazines:** 32 % (2009)

**Percentage of individuals using the Internet for finding information about goods and services:** 48 % (2009)

**Percentage of individuals using the Internet for seeking health-related information:** 30 % (2009)

**Percentage of individuals using the Internet for looking for a job or sending a job application:** 14 % (2009)

**Percentage of individuals using the Internet for doing an online course:** 4 % (2009)

**Percentage of individuals using the Internet for seeking information with the purpose of learning:** 34 % (2009)

**Percentage of: individuals using the Internet for interaction with public authorities:** obtaining information 22.7 %, downloading forms 15.6 %, returning filled forms 10.1 % (2009)

Source: *Eurostat*

*Editorial notice: Statistical indicators referenced in this section reflect those of Eurostat at the time the Edition is being prepared.*

## eInclusion History

### Main developments and key milestones (in reverse chronological order)

For the latest developments, see: [ePractice news for eInclusion](#)

## Recent News

### July 2010

- ▶ On 8 July 2010, Hon. Charlò Bonnici, the Parliamentary Assistant for Infrastructure, Transport and Communications (MITC) launched the '[Second Step' Training Programme](#) which enables participants to achieve a diploma in ICT for free. This [training programme](#) was organised by the Malta Information Technology Agency (MITA) and co-financed by the European Union through the European Social Fund and National Funds with a co-financing rate of 85 % EU funds and 15 % National Funds.

Dr. Peter Xuereb, Chief Officer of the newly set up Human Capital Department within MITA, explained that the 'Second Step' training programme contributes towards the Government's ambition of establishing Malta as a centre of technology excellence and promotes equal opportunities by targeting different groups to improve their employability. In fact, 'Second Step' targets individuals who are unemployed, at risk of unemployment, those employed in the manufacturing industry, women who would like to return to work, school leavers and those who opt to advance or change their career.

The training programme, spanning over two years, is available on a full/part-time basis and applicants should choose from three ICT National Diplomas in the following areas:

- Information Systems
  - Information Technology
  - Computing and Information Systems.
- ▶ Close to 31 000 users have accessed the Internet via the 19 new Wi-Fi Spots across Malta and Gozo during the first four months this 2010. "In the coming months, a further 69 free Wi-Fi spots will be set up across Malta and Gozo, bringing the total number of hotspots to 88," said Ing Philip Micallef, Executive Chairman of the Malta Communications Authority (MCA).

The Parliamentary Secretary for Local Councils Chris Said said that the Local Councils have been asked to identify the most frequented places in their localities for free Wi-Fi to be installed. "The offering of this service falls in line with other government sponsored initiatives and strategies including the organisation of free courses in IT that are on offer at most local councils in Malta and Gozo," said Dr. Said.

Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Communications, Dr. Austin Gatt said that "ICT has changed the way we live and communicate with one another, not to mention the opportunities it presents in maximising our resources. The result of effective collaboration between entities, this initiative launched today is an important step towards providing 'Internet on the Go' for members of our community. Attracting people of all ages, these hotspots allow easy access to emails or other online services at any time of the day from either their mobile phone or a laptop and is a step closer in making Malta a leading nation in Internet accessibility," he concluded.

The contracts signed on 1 June 2010 between the Department of Local Government and the MCA, are valid for two years. The Department of Local Government is covering all recurrent costs whilst the MCA is covering the installation and infrastructural costs.

## May 2010

On 13 April 2010, a **Community Training and Learning Centre (CTLC)** was set up at the Kordin Correctional Facility in Malta. "Today, having basic skills in the use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) has become as important and essential as knowing how to read and write," said Hon Austin Gatt, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Communications during the launch of a new Community Technology Learning Centre (CTLC) at Kordin Correctional Facility. "Irrespective of one's age, occupation or social status, one should be able to make use of these technologies to ensure a better quality of life," he continued.

In recent years, the Government has facilitated a number of projects aimed at minimising the digital divide and proliferating social inclusion by means of ICT. This centre will offer basic training in various areas of ICT with the aim of empowering individuals with the skills to contribute to the well-being of the community in general and to enjoy a better sense of inclusion. Over the past months, the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) has facilitated the delivery of basic courses which proved to be a success with 5 100 individuals benefiting from such training.

The establishment of these CTLCs has been possible through the collaboration between a number of Government entities, non-profit organisations and Local Councils, all sharing the same eInclusion objective, that of ensuring that all individuals in their respective localities have the opportunity to gain the ICT skills that are required today.

## News 2009 and before

### 2009

During *2009*, the MCA launched an awareness campaign based on audiovisual broadcasts featuring short and to-the-point information about ICTs and their various applications in daily life. Targeting the general public, these features covered topics such as eAccessibility, shopping online, the digital switchover and eGovernment amongst others. The features were aired on popular TV magazine programmes and uploaded on popular social networking sites.

The MCA also continued to implement a number of initiatives aimed at reaching disadvantaged sections of the population to ensure adequate access to, and usage of various ICT applications as a means of improving quality of life. As part of these initiatives, refurbished computers were donated to a number of entities providing services of a social nature and two new training centres (CTLCs) were opened in Lija and Senglea. The MCA also continued to facilitate basic literacy training in various areas of ICT at no charge.

### 2008

The SmartStart scheme and the PC for 99c were launched in *February 2008*. The SmartScheme offered persons with a disability, those benefiting from social or unemployment assistance benefits and non-governmental organisations, the opportunity to purchase refurbished PCs in good working condition at an affordable price. The PC for 99c scheme allowed the general public to purchase PCs at the affordable rate of € 0.99 per day.

### 2007

In *2007*, the Government launched the '[Smart Island' Strategy](#) which is the 'National ICT Strategy for 2008-2010'. The Strategy envisioned Malta becoming ranked as one of the top ten information societies by 2010. This Strategy has been a vision of a country where ICTs have not been a mere information and communications tool, but a primary vehicle for setting straight social inequalities, disadvantages and disabilities, whilst at the same time a key economic differentiator aimed at improving the quality of life of our citizens and of those who visit Malta. The 'Smart Island' vision underlines the crucial notion that

technology is not considered to be an end in itself, but rather a unique and timely means to the national aspirations, ambitions and objectives of Malta and its people.

In this context, the Strategy is based on three horizontal objectives which mark the reasons why Government has decided to embark on it:

- ▶ **Connecting Society:** Address the remaining gaps in the Maltese information society; the Government's aim was to network Malta and the Maltese into one connected society.
- ▶ **Creating More, Better and Smarter Jobs:** Harness the opportunities that ICTs offer and translate them into better jobs, paying higher salaries, generating more value added and ancillary non-ICT jobs.
- ▶ **Equalising Society:** Apply the power of ICTs to identify, analyse and adjust social inequalities. ICT should be used to ensure social equality among the Maltese people.

The visionary notion of 'The Smart Island' picked up where the 2004 'National ICT Strategy' stopped and aimed at reflecting the evolutionary impact of the technological developments, the maturity of the local environment and the eagerness for further sophistication which every Maltese and Gozitan has rightly expected.

## 2003

In *2003*, the Government launched the 'National ICT Strategy 2004-2006' which comprised thirteen strategic streams:

- ▶ fighting the digital divide across all levels of society;
- ▶ promoting and extending holistic ICT education and accessibility to technology;
- ▶ using ICTs to further improve the quality of Maltese citizens;
- ▶ using ICTs as an effective management tool within the public sector as an efficiency-realisation mechanism and as a vehicle to improve the quality of working life of public employees;
- ▶ proliferating the delivery of first-class, accessible and secure Government services;
- ▶ promoting the ICT culture in SMEs with the objective of making them derive the benefits of introducing ICT in their operations;
- ▶ enabling and empowering the local businesses to gain access to the larger global market by participating in the eBusiness community;
- ▶ consolidating the external ICT environment;
- ▶ building confidence, trust and security in the use of ICTs;
- ▶ strengthening the local indigenous ICT private sector and supporting ICT entrepreneurship;
- ▶ internationalising the Maltese ICT industry to compete in the global environment;
- ▶ transposing the benefits of EU membership in the attainment of a first-class information society;
- ▶ promoting the role and the contribution of the Maltese information society in the global ICT.

## 2002

In *2002*, households with a desktop computer amounted to approx. 38 %. Since then over 70 % of households have access to a computer, enabling the household to tap into the benefits of ICTs.

## 2001

In *2001*, the Government set up the eMalta Commission which was responsible for developing the information society and fighting the digital divide.

## 2000

- ▶ In 2000, mobile phone subscriptions per 100 inhabitants were only 29 compared with 109 in 2009.
- ▶ During the first eMalta years (2000-2003), the Government set out to establish Malta as a regional centre of excellence in the ICT sector. Amongst the initiatives implemented, IT Academies were set up to increase the ICT skills base in Malta; Community Technology Learning Centres (CTLCs) were set up to offer free access to the use of PCs and the Internet to the public; and, ICT literacy courses were delivered to thousands of persons for free.

## eInclusion Strategy

### Main strategic objectives and principles

#### The National ICT Strategy ('Smart Island') 2008 – 2010

The National ICT Strategy ('Smart Island') 2008-2010 is a cornerstone of Government's 2015 vision of transforming Malta in a centre of excellence of ICT.

Great advancement has been registered on all fronts of the strategy: Household accessibility to ICTs has been enormously enhanced; eGovernment has been developed into a mainstay of the Maltese ICT environment; hundreds of students graduate in ICT specialisations; ICT education has become amongst the most sought after vocational and undergraduate educational streams; the rate of local and foreign ICT investment is reaching unprecedented heights and, not the least, the advent of SmartCity (Malta) will permanently transform the knowledge-based industry in Malta.

The Strategy is based on **three horizontal objectives** which mark the reasons why Government has decided to embark on it:

- ▶ **Connecting Society:** Address the remaining gaps in the Maltese information society; the Government's aim was to network Malta and the Maltese into one connected society.
- ▶ **Creating More, Better and Smarter Jobs:** Harness the opportunities that ICTs offer and translate them into better jobs, paying higher salaries, generating more value-added and ancillary non-ICT jobs.
- ▶ **Equalising Society:** Apply the power of ICTs to identify, analyse and adjust social inequalities. ICT should be used to ensure social equality among the Maltese people.

The 'Smart Island' has been constructed on the following **five strategic parameters**:

- ▶ **Three landscape determinants:**
  - The primary determinant is the i2010 Action Plan of the EU Commission which defines the EU context of the further development of the information society within the framework of the EU's Lisbon Agenda.
  - The second is the national RTDI strategy which maps out Malta's path towards establishing itself as an increasingly relevant player in the research, development, technology and innovation sectors.
  - The third is the National Industrial Policy which defines the economic transition which the industry is to follow to enhance the nation's competitiveness.
- ▶ **SmartCity Malta:** The development of the global knowledge-based township in Malta goes beyond the physical dimension of the ICT and media business park. SmartCity will re-define the relevance of the information economy and serve as an enabler for the attainment of the ICT services hub vision and as a motivational driver for the development of human resources. SmartCity shall also grow into the global flag-bearer of the country's achievements in the ICT sector, taking Malta into the top league of the ICT destinations, the world over.
- ▶ **360-degree approach:** The 'Smart Island' strategy is a national strategy. The strategy was developed through a '360-degree approach' through which the interests and objectives of the wider information society and economy have been prioritised. The strategy is not meant to replace the vertical strategies and programmes such as the eGovernment strategy and the eLearning strategy. Conversely, the 'Smart Island' shall serve as the guiding strategy for the development of the vertical programmes which are subsidiary to it.
- ▶ **Based on leading international practice:** The strategy has been developed on the lines of the best international practice available in the ICT sector. Leading national strategies have been reviewed together with recorded global best practices in the information society and economy fields.

Where possible, the 'Smart Island' does not seek to re-invent the wheel, but rather to adapt leading-edge developments to the local context.

- ▶ **Result-not textbook-driven:** The 'Smart Island' is neither built on textbook strategies, nor on stock processes. It is built on the critical mass of the experience of the multiple stakeholders contributing to shaping it and is fundamentally driven by the results which society and economy, at large, aim to attain out of its deployment and the further proliferation of ICTs.

The 'Smart Island' strategy is composed of the following **seven streams**:

- ▶ Stream 1 - Delivering a next-generation ICT environment
- ▶ Stream 2 - A connected society – bridging the last and the new miles
- ▶ Stream 3 - Developing potential into a smart and global workforce
- ▶ Stream 4 - Putting the 'e' in everything
- ▶ Stream 5- Re-inventing Government
- ▶ Stream 6 -Taking Care of (e) Business
- ▶ Stream 7 - Developing a world-leading ICT industry

## Stream 2 - A connected society – bridging the last and the new miles - Transforming ICTs into a social equaliser

This Strategy aims at delivering to the Maltese a world-class ICT environment. This stream ensures that all can enjoy its benefits. The **digital divide mission** is merely an update of the mission to overcome the literacy divide. Having overcome the barriers of access and affordability, the Maltese Government finds it necessary to overcome cultural hostility, indifference, fear and lack of confidence. The fact that technology is now practically affordable by anyone and all Maltese citizens have easy and inexpensive means of learning how to use it, does not mean that the digital divide mission has been completed; every citizen must have access and be able to use that technology.

According to this stream, technologies must be and remain affordable and accessible for all members of the Maltese community. Barriers of age, linguistic preference, gender and social provenance – among other perhaps less obvious obstacles – must be overcome as new technologies come in and exacerbate existing differences. All schools in all communities in Malta and Gozo must share equal access and provide to pupils of both sexes equal opportunities to learn. All children, of any intellectual or physical ability, should be part of that action.

Among other target groups, the people with disability have benefited from the overall digital divide efforts. For them it has not simply been a matter of encouraging them to use technology as common practice; it was mostly a case of assisting them in using technology to overcome barriers that they face in the physical world, i.e. to use technology to live more complete lives.

That type of technology can help other vulnerable members of the community live fuller lives as well. Senior citizens can use all the services they need avoiding issues of mobility. They can continue learning and discovering new ways of improving their lives.

Everyone should be able to afford a computer with a broadband connection at home.

The National ICT Strategy, therefore, recognises that ICT should be a '**social equalizer**'. Specific commitments to **eAccessibility** include the following:

- ▶ Funding for the Foundation for IT Accessibility (FITA)
- ▶ Government actions and collaboration with industry to promote the availability and take-up of Assistive Technology
- ▶ Government actions to enhance accessibility of eGovernment content and produce accessibility guidelines in public procurement of ICT

- ▶ Government actions to incentivise voluntary accessibility programmes by industry.

## 'Smart Learning' Strategy

The 'Smart Learning' programme gave birth to the concept of eLearning in schools by designing a strategy and an action plan. The strategy regarding 'Smart Learning' devised a plan covering all the necessary levels so that eLearning expands in schools.

The first co-ordinated action in this strategy was the distribution of new laptops to school teachers; all computers in primary and secondary schools were renewed and three schools were selected as show schools, as an example to what all schools should achieve in the future.

Furthermore, as part of the initiatives taken, 3 800 laptops were distributed to school teachers together with the necessary training in order to have access to the best technology available, and be in a position to carry out their duties in an enhanced way. Nearly 6 000 computers in schools were changed by means of the PC Leasing Agreement, which Government had concluded in early 2008 with the private sector.

According to this strategy, the number of computers in primary and secondary schools should increase in order to reach a national level of having one computer for every four students. This should result that Malta together with the United Kingdom and Luxemburg, will be amongst the leading countries in Europe with regard to the number of computers available for students.

## 'Vision 2015' project

### Information and communication technology (ICT)

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is one of the seven sectors (Financial sector, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Tourism, Manufacturing, Health, Education and Gozo) defined by the Government in the 'Vision 2015' project. 'SmartCity' represents an indication of Government's objectives for this sector. Indeed, Government aims to extend the concept of 'SmartCity' to a national level – 'SmartMalta' – aiming to attract foreign investment operating in this sector. Moreover, the Government aims to achieve a world class information society, where all citizens would benefit and where ICT would be used to reduce social inequalities and disadvantages.

## eInclusion Legal Framework

### Main legal texts impacting on the development of eInclusion

#### eAccessibility Legislation

The Government's National ICT Strategy 2008-2010 contains a range of eAccessibility commitments. These initiatives are relatively recent, and in terms of actual levels of accessibility achieved to date, Malta is below the European average.

#### Laws in practice for persons with disability

Related legislation in force protecting the disabled consists of:

[Persons with Disability \(Employment\), Chapter 210 Act II of the Laws of Malta - Act II of 1969, as amended by Acts XIV of 1969, XII of 1976, XI of 1977, XIII of 1983 and XXVI of 1995](#)

This Act established (i) the setting up of a Register of Disabled Persons, which is kept and administered by the Employment and Training corporation (Article 5); (ii) that enterprises and institutions that employ not less than twenty (20) workers should employ a quota (at present 2%) of disabled persons chosen from this Register (Article 15(8)). This percentage is established by the Minister responsible for this sector after consultation with the Corporation (Article 16(2)); (iii) the right of the Minister to specify special types of employment as reserved employment for disabled persons (Article 19); (iv) that breaking this law or regulations that emerge from it is punishable by a fine of not more than E232.94, or imprisonment of not more than three months, or both (Article 29).

- ▶ [Legal Notice 156 of 1995 – Subsidiary Legislation 210.01, Registration and Appeal of Persons with Disability Regulations](#)
- ▶ [Legal Notice 157 of 1995 – Subsidiary Legislation 210.02, Standard percentage of employment of Persons with Disability Order](#)
- ▶ [Legal Notice 158 of 1995 – Subsidiary Legislation 210.03, Designated Employment of Persons with Disability Order](#)
- ▶ [Legal Notice 159 of 1995 – Subsidiary Legislation 210.04, Part-Time Employment of Persons with Disability Regulations](#)

[Employment and Training Services Act, Chapter 343 - Act XXVIII of 1990, as amended by Acts XV of 1995, XVI of 1997 and II of 2005](#)

[Employment and Industrial Relations Act, Chapter 452 - Act XXII of 2002, as amended by Acts IX of 2003 and III of 2004](#)

- ▶ [Legal Notice 461 of 2004 – Subsidiary Legislation 452.95, Equal Treatment in Employment Relations - Act I of 2000](#)

*Source: Protection of disabled people under Maltese and European Law*

### Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act, Chapter 413, Act I of 2000, as amended by Legal Notice 426, 2007

The Equal Opportunities Act (Disabled Persons) 2000 (EOA) is inspired by the American Anti-Discrimination Act, the UK Disability Discrimination Act and the Australian Disability Discrimination Act. It covers six areas: education, employment, goods and services, access, insurance and accommodation. As amended, provides the legal basis for public website accessibility obligations. The Act outlaws discrimination in employment, education and provision of goods and services, amongst others, though it does not make specific reference to accessibility of websites.

Despite the absence of a direct reference to ICTs in the legislation, this act appears to be having an impact on eAccessibility. The authority established under the legislation - the Equal Opportunities Compliance Unit within the National Commission Persons with Disabilities (KNPD) - has responded to complaints on eAccessibility issues by raising issues with providers and effecting mediation to achieve agreements for improved eAccessibility.

*Source: [Accessibility to ICT products and services by Disabled and Elderly people](#)*

The purpose of this Act is to provide equal opportunities for persons with disability in a number of areas of social life. This Act is relevant to the right to non-discrimination and equality in its entirety. The Act states that the prohibition of disability discrimination applies in the areas of employment (Part III, Title I), education (Part III, Title II) and in the provision of goods, facilities and services. The Act sets out that employers are to make "reasonable accommodation" for disabled persons; this includes restructuring jobs, acquiring or modifying equipment or devices, appropriately adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials/policies, and providing qualified readers or interpreters (Article 7(5)). The Act also provides a number of exemptions where disability discrimination will be deemed not to have occurred in the fields of employment, education and the provision of goods and services.

*Source: ["MeAC – Measuring Progress of eAccessibility in Europe" study](#)*

According to Chapter 413 of this Act, it is illegal to discriminate against a person because of their disability in various aspects of life, including employment. Through this Act, a disabled person has the right to apply for a job, become an apprentice or receive training. A disabled person's application must be considered in a just manner on the basis of merit. Employers must provide those goods and services that a disabled person needs in order to do his/her work, as long as these goods and services are reasonable. This also applies for training. Employers cannot refuse to employ a disabled person if: (i) reasonable modifications to working conditions and arrangements have to be carried out; (ii) the disabled person cannot carry out parts of the job which are not essential for that job.

Accessibility guidelines produced by the [Foundation for Information Technology Accessibility \(FITA\)](#), a quasi-NGO, whose core funding is provided by the government IT agency, MITTS (Malta Information Technology and Technical Services – MITTS Ltd), have an 'official' status in that Government websites are required to pass a FITA accessibility check at pre-launch stage.

FITA provides an ICT accessibility audit service to both public websites (through MITTS) and commercial websites. The requirements in both cases derive from the Equal Opportunities Act (Disabled Persons) of 2000.

### UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 2006 and entered into effect in May 2007. According to the '[National Policy on Disabled Persons and Employment](#)', Malta has not yet ratified this Convention. It however signed it in March 2007 and Malta has expressed the wish to ratify it, together with the Optional Protocol, thus strengthening the Equal Opportunities Act so that it conforms completely to this Convention and the EU Council Directive ([2000/78/EC](#)).

## Data Protection/Privacy Legislation

### Data Protection Act, Chapter 440

The Data Protection Act, Chapter 440 makes provision for the protection of individuals against the violation of their privacy by the (electronic) processing of personal data and related matters.

## eCommunications Legislation

### Electronic Communications (Regulation) Act, Chapter 339

In September 2004, the Electronic Communications (Regulation) Act was published in the Government Gazette of Malta (no. 17 652) together with a number of associated acts amending and partially repealing previous telecommunications and related legislation, as well as previously applicable secondary regulations.

This legislative change transposed into Maltese law the EU regulatory framework for electronic communications, namely: Directive [2002/21/EC](#) ('Framework' Directive); [2002/20/EC](#) ('Authorisation' Directive); [2002/19/EC](#) (Access and interconnection Directive); [2002/22/EC](#) ('Universal service and user's rights Directive'); and [2002/58/EC](#) ('ePrivacy' Directive).

The Electronic Communications Networks and Services (General) Regulations of 2004 transposed the EU Universal Service Directive. Section 29 of the Regulations specifies that the national regulatory authority can impose obligations to ensure access to and affordability of publicly available telecommunication services by people with disabilities that is equivalent to that enjoyed by other end users. The obligation includes among other services, access to emergency services, directory enquiry services and directories. In addition, this section also specifies that the regulatory authority can set terms and conditions to ensure that disabled end-users can take advantage of the choice of undertakings and service providers available to the majority of end-users. There seems to be a requirement for the main mobile phone operator to provide mobile handsets that can be used by people with hearing difficulties.

## eInclusion Actors

### Main roles and responsibilities

#### National eInclusion

##### Policy/Strategy

#### **Ministry for Infrastructure, Transport and Communication** (*Ministeru għall-Infrastruttura, Trasport u Komunikazzjoni, MITC*)

The MITC leads the Government's efforts to realise the [National ICT Strategy](#) ('Smart Island') 2008-2010.

#### **Malta Communications Authority** (*L-Awtorità Maltija għall-Komunikazzjoni, MCA*)

Besides the regulation of electronic communications networks and/or services, postal services, electronic commerce and information society service providers, the MCA is also responsible for the national policy on the connected society and eBusiness take-up and growth.

The MCA represents Malta on EU eInclusion discussions.

#### **Malta Information Technology Agency** (*L-Aġenzija tat-Teknoloġija tal-Informatika ta' Malta, MITA*)

This agency is responsible for developing policies, programmes and initiatives in the sector of Information and Communication Technology, propagating ICT within society and the economy, and promoting and delivering programmes with the intention of enhancing ICT education and the use of ICT, as a learning tool.

#### **Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family** (*Ministeru tal-Edukazzjoni, Xogħol u l-Familja, MEEF*)

The Ministry has prepared the '[National Cultural Policy](#), Malta 2010' which provides for the maximisation of new media and ICT usage to further foster cultural management, dissemination of knowledge, and provide improved related products and services.

##### Coordination

#### **Ministry for Infrastructure, Transport and Communication** (*Ministeru għall-Infrastruttura, Trasport u Komunikazzjoni, MITC*)

The Ministry for Infrastructure, Transport and Communication (MITC) coordinates the development and implementation of the eInclusion policies.

#### **Malta Communications Authority** (*L-Awtorità Maltija għall-Komunikazzjoni, MCA*)

The MCA coordinates the implementation of national initiatives on digital Inclusion. The Authority also coordinates participation and contribution of NGOs and other public entities.

#### **Malta Information Technology Agency** (*L-Aġenzija tat-Teknoloġija tal-Informatika ta' Malta, MITA*)

MITA placed under the leadership of MITC, has taken over some of the Ministry's responsibilities. In particular, the MITA serves as the central driver of the ICT policy in Malta by becoming the means through which the Government determines its ICT priorities. This agency is responsible for delivering and managing the execution of all programmes related to the implementation of information technology and related systems in Government with the aim of enhancing public service delivery.

### Foundation for IT Accessibility (FITA)

The Foundation for Information Technology Accessibility (FITA) is the principal advocate and coordinator for making Information Communications Technology (ICT) accessible to disabled people in the Maltese islands. Its information services assist disabled individuals in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device, intended to increase, maintain, or improve the individual's quality of life.

### National Commission for Persons with Disability (*Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Diżabilità*, KNPDP)

KNPDP is part of the portfolio governed by the Ministry for Social Policy, and works in collaboration with non-government organisations in Malta, co-ordinating efforts and voicing the Maltese government policies on disability matters.

## Implementation

### Malta Communications Authority (*L-Awtorità Maltija għall-Komunikazzjoni*, MCA)

The MCA is responsible for the implementation of initiatives under the national policy on digital inclusion.

### Malta Information Technology Agency (*L-Aġenzija tat-Teknoloġija tal-Informatika ta' Malta*, MITA)

This agency is responsible for the implementation of the National Strategy for information technology. It carries out all the programmes related to the implementation of the systems connected with information technology within the public sector with the main aim of consolidating the services offered to the public. This organisation is also responsible for the operation of MITTS Ltd, as well as certain functions which were being implemented directly by the Ministry.

### Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family (*Ministeru tal-Edukazzjoni, Xogħol u l-Familja*, MEEF)

The Ministry is responsible for implementing the 'National Cultural Policy, Malta 2010' and by extension the new media and ICT tools as means for cultural diversity expansion and growth.

## Support

### Malta Communications Authority (*L-Awtorità Maltija għall-Komunikazzjoni*, MCA)

The Authority supports public entities and NGOs to establish community centres (CTLCS) that are open for training and provide free access to computers and the Internet. A total of 16 centres have been set:

- ▶ Access, Vittoriosa
- ▶ Fondazzjoni Salvinu Spiteri, Floriana
- ▶ Inspire Bulebel, Zejtun
- ▶ Birkirkara Local Council, Birkirkara
- ▶ Employment & Training Corporation, Valletta
- ▶ PHRF, Kordin
- ▶ National Council of Women, Blata l-Bajda
- ▶ Richmond Foundation, Sta Venera
- ▶ Employment & Training Corporation, Xewkija GOZO
- ▶ Malta Institute of Management (ED), Pembroke
- ▶ Kalkara Local Council, Kalkara
- ▶ Isla Local Council, Isla

- ▶ Local Council Association, Balzan
- ▶ Corradino Correctional Facilities, Corradino
- ▶ Caritas San Blas, Siggiewi
- ▶ A.T.T.I.C. Parroċċa San Frangisk, Qawra

### **Malta Information Technology Agency (*L-Aġenzija tat-Teknoloġija tal-Informatika ta' Malta, MITA*)**

This agency supports the full implementation of IT programmes in Government and is responsible for the propagation of ICT within society, as well as for providing an efficient and effective infrastructure for services to Government in ICT, increasing the application of information and communication technology in society, and promoting and carrying out programmes with the intention of enhancing ICT education, so that ICT application serves as a tuition tool.

### **Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family (*Ministeru tal-Edukazzjoni, Xogħol u l-Familja, MEEF*)**

The Ministry has provided its support through various websites focusing on online learning and through the specific efforts of the Directorate for life-long learning whose online courses aim to help the Maltese population become computer literate.

### **Foundation for IT Accessibility (FITA)**

The Foundation for IT Accessibility (FITA) based within Malta Information Technology and Technical Services (MITTS) Ltd, has been working on a set of guiding principles relating to ICT and accessibility for disabled persons. FITA's principle function is to provide support to disabled individuals in overcoming, or removing barriers to education and employment through ICT. Through empowerment and social inclusion, disabled persons need to rely less on family and state support, minimising the digital divide and contributing productively to society and the economy.

This body (FITA) aims at:

- ▶ promoting equal opportunities for all through ICT;
- ▶ providing training services in ICT for disabled people;
- ▶ gathering and disseminating information;
- ▶ increasing awareness on ICT matters;
- ▶ liaising with and facilitating public and private endeavours in creating equal ICT opportunities;
- ▶ offering consultancy services to private and public organisations in information technology.

FITA has the assistive technology know-how and computer equipment required in order to provide a review and assessment service for websites and software applications.

### **Resource Centre (FITA)**

FITA's services mainly focus on researching and disseminating information relating to Information and Communication Technology and to improving disabled persons' quality of life.

The FITA premises host an information resource centre which can be used by those entities and individuals seeking guidance in sourcing specialised computer equipment and software. The [Resource Centre Catalogue](#) is available in MS Word format. The FITA Resource Centre is constantly updated with the latest information on Assistive Technology and software products. Its ultimate objective is to ensure that this information resource is constantly updated with catalogues, demo software, hardware documentation and other specialised publications relating to ICT and disability.

### **National Commission for Persons with Disability (*Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Diżabilità, KNPD*)**

The National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (KNPD) undertakes an active role in promoting accessibility of both public and private websites.

## eInclusion Who's Who

### Main eInclusion decision-makers and executives

#### Ministers responsible for eInclusion



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Source: <https://www.mita.gov.mt/>

## eInclusion Areas

### Riga Declaration Priorities

#### ICT & Ageing

##### Status in ICT & Ageing

The digital divide between the generations is unnervingly high. The percentage of computer use by people over 55 is very low when compared with that of a younger age group.

Percentage of individuals using computers (different age groups) in 2009:

- ▶ 16-24 years of age: 90 %
- ▶ 25-54 years of age: 58 %
- ▶ 55-74 years of age: 19 %

*Source: Information and Communication Technologies, Training in ICT, MITC*

##### Actions to support ICT & Ageing

#### Computer Training Learning Centres (CTLCs)

The [CTLCs initiative](#) is a great endeavour to bridge divide existing with people over 55 years. Older people use considerably less the computers compared to younger people, as demonstrated in the above mentioned related data. Due to that fact, the Maltese Government undertakes the necessary actions to make such technology more accessible to the public.

*Source: Information and Communication Technologies, Training in ICT, MITC*

#### myWeb Plus - ICT Training for the Elderly

'myWeb plus' is an ICT Training programme offered for free to people aged 61 years and older through the Community Technology Learning Centres (CTLCs) established in partnership with a number of non-Governmental organisations. At the end of the training programme, the elderly participants are presented with a certificate of attendance by the CTLCs and the Ministry for Infrastructure, Transport and Communication (MITC). The end objective of the training programme is to enable participants to use different technologies that can improve the quality of their lives. This training programme administered by MITC, also aims to reduce participants' fear of technology while familiarising them with technology.

The training programme will not exclusively teach in theory the use of computer, email and the Internet; but it will offer a more practical approach by teaching the use of a wider variety of technologies in everyday life. It will comprise a 20 hour teaching on how to use technology in practice in everyday chores, including how to use Internet Banking; how to use ATMs; how to purchase online; how to use digital cameras, save photos on a computer and print photos and send them by email; how to participate in online Forums; how to use eGovernment services; how to access online educational games to accompany the grandchildren when surfing the Internet; how to take precautions for Internet Safety; how to use a DVD; how to use a microwave; how to take fuel from an automated machine and how to use a mobile phone, amongst others.

*Source: Information and Communication Technologies, Initiatives, MITC*

## Geographic Digital Divide

### Status of Common Access to Electronic Content and Services

Thanks to its small size and ICT development, Malta has attained 100 % of broadband coverage, 75 % penetration in households, and near universal broadband uptake by SME's.

*Source: Minister's speech at the eInclusion conference - 29 January 2010*

The following Information Society Indicators' data show the status of broadband and Internet access in Malta in 2009:

- ▶ Percentage of broadband penetration rate: 26.2 % (2009)
- ▶ Percentage of level of Internet access - households: 64 % (2009)
- ▶ Percentage of households having access to the Internet, by type of connection:
  - Percentage of households using a broadband connection: 63 % (2009)
  - Percentage of households using a modem or ISDN: 2 % (2009)
- ▶ Percentage of individuals using a laptop to access the Internet: 14 % (2009).

*Source: Eurostat*

Compared to the 2010 status, in first three months of the year 2008, 55 % of Maltese homes had access to broadband internet. That was higher than the EU average which was 48 % in the same period.

Broadband in Malta is delivered by means of copper cable or wireless. At the end of June 2008, a total of 93 409 connections to broadband were registered, out of which 51.85 % had cable access, 45.96 % ADSL and 2.19 % Wimax. 87 % of subscribers to DSL and 64 % of subscribers to cable had a speed of 2Mbps or faster. The number of subscribers having a speed higher than 10 Mbps totalled 7 695, or 8 % of subscribers in that same period.

*Source: Information and Communication Technologies, International Connectivity, MITC*

### Actions to support Common Access to Electronic Content and Services

#### Community Technology Learning Centres (CTLCs)

Malta Communications Authority (MCA) has deployed thirteen (13) [Community Technology Learning Centres](#) (CTLCs) across Malta and Gozo, providing an opportunity for people without home access to use computers free of charge. WiFi hotspots with free, safe and filtered internet access are set up in the principal squares and open places around the Islands.

#### Blueskies initiative

It is an [initiative](#) which together with the continued promotion and rollout of wireless broadband technologies has played a crucial role in ensuring that all Maltese consumers have access to some form of broadband. In 2008, some 6 000 people registered for the first time to have access to the Internet from the comfort of their homes; this resulted to Internet connections for 55 % of the Maltese homes.

#### The Computer for €0.99c scheme

This [scheme](#) was launched in early 2008 and aimed at giving the opportunity to the public to buy a latest technology computer at the rate of €0.99c daily. Those who purchased a computer by means of this scheme between February and July of that year from authorised shops were entitled to a refund of 16 % from Government on the price of the computer. This refund was applicable only to those computers which were purchased at a price not exceeding € 1 165. Thanks to this initiative 8 912 families benefited from this scheme and purchased a computer at subsidised rates. These applicants amounted to 7 % of Maltese families. It was estimated that 43 % of the applicants purchased a computer for the first time, whilst the remaining 57 % purchased a new computer in order to upgrade it to the latest technology.

Source: *Information and Communication Technologies, Training in ICT, MITC*

## eAccessibility

### Status of eAccessibility

In Malta, guidelines have been prepared to promote and provide guidance for a barrier free and accessible content production. They have been specifically designed to ensure that content is accessible to all users regardless of the individual's special requirements. Policy approaches based on equality/anti-discrimination legislation have considerable potential in the eAccessibility field. Such approaches can provide people with disabilities – individually or collectively – with the right to seek redress if confronted with inaccessible ICT equipment or services, either in relation to ICT-based goods and services in a general sense, or in relation to specific usage contexts.

Source: '*MeAC – Measuring Progress of eAccessibility in Europe*' study

### Actions towards eAccessibility

#### Sites for people with disabilities conforming to WAI standards

All sites that are developed for Government use are tested for compliance to [Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\)](#) standards. This aims to ensure that people with disabilities are able to access Government services.

#### 'SmartStart' scheme

The 'SmartStart' initiative was launched in February 2008 and aimed to serve as a bridge to reduce the digital divide and to ensure that information and communication technology is accessible to the public.

Thanks to this initiative, persons with special needs registered with the National Commission for Persons with Disability (KNPD), were given the opportunity to buy a reconditioned computer. All those eligible were able to choose either a Pentium III, or Pentium IV. These computers were refurbished by improving the hardware and the installation of new software.

The distribution of these computers started in September 2008. 949 reconditioned computers were distributed under the 'SmartStart' scheme. The first 280 computers were distributed to persons with special needs. In this manner, more persons with special needs were given access to information and communication technology besides further investment made by the Government through financial aid to the National Commission for Persons with Disability (KNPD) and the Foundation for Information and Technological Accessibility (FITA) in order to carry out a series of new initiatives.

The Government with the backing of KNPD and FITA intends to develop guidelines for purchases which would guarantee that ICT systems are accessible to everyone, provide the necessary assistance so that training centres are accessible to everyone, provide programmes for training people with special needs in order to increase their opportunities for work places, analyse existing laws and proposals for new legal measures, and finally, propose guidelines of how the provisions of the Equal Opportunities Law are to be observed and enforced.

Source: *Information and Communication Technologies, Training in ICT, MITC*

#### ICT Refurbishment workshop

For various reasons, not all disabled persons may make the most effective use of a brand new computer, like the ones the [Malta Community Chest Fund](#) and the National Commission for Persons with Disability (KNPD) assist in buying. In many cases the Foundation, through [ICT refurbishment workshop](#), still considers that some disabled persons, can effectively benefit from using older computer equipment, which better matches their needs. To this end, a [computer pooling scheme](#) has been set, wherein organisations wishing to dispose of computer equipment can donate it to FITA, which in turn will issue it out on loan at no cost to disabled persons who can make good use of it.

Source: *Projects & Initiatives-FITA*

### **FITA Resource Centre services**

The Foundation for Information and Technological Accessibility (FITA) Resource Centre services mainly focus on researching and disseminating information relating to Information and Communication Technology and aim at improving the quality of life of the disabled. That information resource centre can be used by entities and individuals seeking guidance in the sourcing of specialised computer equipment and software. The [Resource Centre Catalogue](#) is updated regularly and available in MS Word format.

Online versions of interesting [articles and papers](#) from Teaching Exceptional Children, CEC and other publications are hosted. For specific ICT and disability interests, one might view the [factsheets](#) provided through Abilitynet containing information on the following topics:

- ▶ [Sources of Information on Accessible Web Design](#)
- ▶ [Software to Assist Adults with Learning Difficulties](#)
- ▶ [Computing and Learning Difficulties](#)
- ▶ [Dyslexia 'Toolkit'](#)
- ▶ [Epilepsy and Working with VDUs](#)
- ▶ [Free & Cheap Solutions for those with a Visual Impairment](#)
- ▶ ['Getting Round'-Difficulties with the Keyboard and Mouse](#)
- ▶ [Keyboard Shortcuts in Windows 95/98/NT](#)
- ▶ [Voice Recognition and Dyslexia](#)
- ▶ [Computing and communications technology for people with a hearing impairment](#)
- ▶ [Brief Notes on Approaches to the Use of Computers by People with Impaired Vision](#)
- ▶ [Single Handed Keyboard Use](#)
- ▶ [Tweaking the Web](#)

The FITA Resource Centre is constantly updated with the latest information on Assistive Technology and software products. The Centre's ultimate goal is to ensure that this information resource is constantly updated with catalogues, demo software, hardware documentation and other specialised publications relating to ICT and disability.

Source: *ICT Resource Centre-FITA*

### **Other actions**

To address web accessibility issues, amongst others, the Government has established the **Foundation for Information Technology Accessibility (FITA)** (for more information, see 'Actors' section).

## **Digital Literacy and Competences**

### Status on Digital Literacy and Competences

Thanks to the **Computer for € 0.99€ scheme** initiative, launched in early 2008, 8 912 families benefited from this scheme and purchased a computer at subsidised rates. These applicants amounted to 7 % of Maltese families. It was estimated that 43 % of the applicants purchased a computer for the first time, whilst the remaining 57 % purchased a new computer in order to upgrade it to the latest technology.

Source: *Information and Communication Technologies, Training in ICT, MITC*

The following Eurostat Information Society Indicators show the level of Digital Literacy of the Maltese people:

- ▶ Percentage of individuals regularly using the Internet: 55 % (2009)
- ▶ Percentage of individuals' level of computer skills: 12 % (2009)
- ▶ Percentage of individuals' level of Internet skills: 22 % (2007)
- ▶ Percentage of individuals using the Internet for sending/receiving e-mails: 51 % (2009)
- ▶ Percentage of individuals using the Internet for reading online newspapers/magazines: 32 % (2009)
- ▶ Percentage of individuals using the Internet for internet banking: 32 % (2009)
- ▶ Percentage of individuals using the Internet for doing an online course: 4 % (2009)
- ▶ Percentage of individuals using the Internet for seeking information with the purpose of learning: 34 % (2009)
- ▶ Percentage of individuals using the Internet for interaction with public authorities: 24 % (2009)
- ▶ Percentage of individuals using the Internet for returning filled in forms to public authorities: 10 % (2009)
- ▶ Percentage of individuals using the Internet for seeking health-related information: 30 % (2009)
- ▶ Percentage of individuals using the Internet for looking for a job or sending a job application: 14 % (2009)
- ▶ Percentage of individuals using the Internet for uploading self-created content to any website to be shared: 5 % (2008)

Source: *Eurostat*

#### Actions towards stimulating Digital Literacy and Competences

##### 'Smart Women'-training programme in ICT

This programme was launched in 2008 with the intention of increasing women's participation in the work market. After the completion of the training, those participants, who have successfully attended the programme, receive certificates in Information and Communication Technology.

The first training programme (Digital Literacy Curriculum-DLC) was held in the summer of 2008; 960 women participated in this programme. The sessions of 20 hours comprised an introduction of how to use a computer and the necessary skills required by the participants to use computer technology in everyday life.

This course covers five modules:

- ▶ computer basics, (a basic introduction to computers and the use of various components);
- ▶ Internet and the world wide web (an introduction to what Internet is, how to access it, applications of e-mail);
- ▶ productivity programmes (covering the application of software in business, education and at home);
- ▶ computer security (an introduction to risks which exist in computer security and how can they be avoided);
- ▶ digital lifestyles (an introduction to the use of new technologies, namely, audio-digital, digital filming and photography).

##### 'myWeb'-training programme in ICT

By means of the [Community Technology Learning Centres](#) (CTLCs), the Government provides open access to the community in Information and Communication Technology. This has been done by organising training courses in ICT in programmes, namely, 'myWeb'. This training is aimed at individuals who wish to gain skills in the Information and Communication Technology sector, and therefore reduce the digital divide.

The 'myWeb' training course is an ICT literacy course - planned to address the needs of adults - that has been offered for free and which has been updated regularly. It is offered for free to the public and teaches how to use a PC, the Internet, email, and eGovernment services, amongst others. The 'myWeb' course was also customised to be taught to persons with disabilities.

### **'myWeb Plus'-training programme in ICT**

'myWeb Plus' is another ICT training course, planned to assist participants in using different technologies and ultimately improving their quality of life totally taking advantage of Information and Communication Technology.

Both programmes were successful and attended by approximately 750 students.

### **'First Step'-advanced training programme in ICT**

Another ICT training programme, named 'First Step', aimed at preparing participants for a higher level of training in ICT, with the intention of assisting them in advancing their career in this sector. More than 300 persons have benefited from this programme; amongst them, there were: unemployed people, people at risk of being unemployed for a long time, persons looking for work, youngsters holding few certificates, women wishing to re-enter the work force and people over 40 years of age.

This training course covered a basic curriculum in ICT, as well as provided technical elements to those completely new to this sector. This was the first step for approximately 350 individuals who started acquiring ICT skills. This project was co-financed by European Social Funds and constituted another step forward in the teaching of ICT during 2008.

### **'My Potential' scheme**

Another initiative was taken in 2008 in order to enable individuals to achieve their full potential in ICT and this by means of the scheme **'My Potential'**. This scheme is being managed in partnership between the private and the public sectors – between MITA and the main partners involved in the ICT education and training sector. This scheme started in 2006, and has grown so as to cover a portfolio of 82 certifications issued by renowned private sector companies and institutions. All those who are unemployed or students can benefit from reduced rates and a tax credit up to a maximum of 100 %. More than 1 085 individuals have taken advantage of this scheme and follow ICT studies. This required an investment of nearly € 4.1 million by the Government. The success being attained by 'My Potential' is the result of the strong collaboration existing between the Ministry for Infrastructure, Transport and Communication (MITC) and those providing the service.

### **Community Technology Learning Centres (CTLCs)**

Malta Communications Authority (MCA) has deployed sixteen [Community Technology Learning Centres](#) (CTLCs) across Malta and Gozo, providing an opportunity for people to receive mentoring and training in basic ICT skills for life. The MCA is preparing a training curriculum specifically for use in the CTLC's. These centres in the community serve as a place for learning and acquiring skills in Information and Communication Technology in order to widely spread information about the use of technology. Last but not least is the intention to increase digital literacy and at the same time make accessible Information and Communication Technology to different levels of society, and naturally encourage the further use of such technology.

### **'Smart Learning' programme**

This [programme](#) contained co-ordinated actions in the strategy of 'Smart Learning', for instance, the distribution of new laptops to school teachers. All computers in primary and secondary schools were renewed and three schools were selected as show schools, to set an example as to what all schools should achieve in the future. As part of the initiatives taken, 3 800 laptops were distributed to school teachers together with the necessary training so as to have access to the best technology possible, and in order to be in a position to carry out their duties in an enhanced way.

Furthermore nearly 6 000 computers in schools were changed by means of the PC Leasing Agreement which Government had concluded in early 2008 with the private sector. It was intended to increase the number of computers in primary and secondary schools in order to reach a national level of having one

computer for every four students. That aimed at rendering Malta (together with the United Kingdom and Luxemburg) to be amongst the leading countries in Europe with regard to the number of computers available for students.

*Source: Information and Communication Technologies, Training in ICT, MITC*

## **NISCO**

The National Information Society Advisory Council is by no means a new initiative. Over the past years, the construction of the information city has been completed. In this information city, there are schools where children have been able to receive the highest standards of education and the benefits of information technology. The Maltese society enjoys the benefits of an information city where technology improves the quality of lives of the Maltese people. The most challenging part was not the construction of the information city; it was ensuring that no members of the Maltese society would remain overwhelmed by technology and left without the skills and the means to access the goods and services offered thanks to IT literacy and affordability.

*Source: Information and Communication Technologies, NISCO, MITC*

## **ICT Training for disabled and non-disabled people**

The Foundation for Information and Technological Accessibility (FITA), through [ICT training](#), coordinates the running of a tuition scheme, in conjunction with other educational/training entities. Booster sessions and ICT awareness sessions are organised with a view to integrate disabled and non-disabled students who can benefit from this tuition.

*Source: Projects & Initiatives-FITA*

## **ICT courses for disabled people**

The Foundation for Information and Technological Accessibility (FITA) organises ICT courses ([including ECDL courses](#)) for disabled persons having an intellectual or communication impairment.

### ▶ **Computer office skills for non-sighted and partially sighted individuals**

The Foundation for Information and Technological Accessibility (FITA) provides specialised ICT Training services for non-sighted and partially sighted individuals who are registered as disabled persons with the [National Commission for Persons with Disability](#) (KNPD). The training is carried on a one to one basis, and can range from basic computer awareness up to word processing, audio editing, the Internet and email.

### ▶ **ICT Skills for persons with an intellectual disability and/or communication difficulties**

In May/June 2003, the Foundation for Information and Technological Accessibility (FITA), in collaboration with the Maltese College for Art Science and Technology (MCAST), set up a pilot project consisting of a basic course in Computer Office Skills for persons with an intellectual disability. It was a success and the knowledge gained from this project was put to good use in subsequent courses.

*Source: ICT Training Services-FITA*

## **Services for Adults**

### **Directorate for life-long learning - Ministry of Education**

This [site](#) gives a complete picture of the courses (Academic, Information Technology, Literacy, Numeracy, Crafts, Leisure and Creative Arts) that the Adult Learning Unit of the Directorate for Lifelong Learning offered for the academic year 2009-2010. Those courses are addressed to learners (youths and adults) who wish among other aims to:

- ▶ become computer literate; and,
- ▶ obtain the ECDL certificate;

### Youth Specialisation Studies Scheme - YSSS

A [programme](#) aimed at students wishing to carry out, or pursue their studies in ICT and Educational Services, among other areas.

### EPITOME: Empowerment Programme for IT use: Outreach for Micro Entrepreneurship

EPITOME is an ESF funded project and has the overall objective to increase the number of adults acquiring sound ICT skills with a focus on entrepreneurship. The project aims to contribute towards an increase in employment and stimulation of competitiveness in the face of the economic changes and the increasingly tougher challenges of globalisation.

The specific objectives to be achieved by implementing the project are:

- ▶ identify the ICT and entrepreneurial training needs of the Maltese labour force;
- ▶ develop and deliver a training curriculum to address the skill gaps identified;
- ▶ support the course with seminars and publicity campaigns.

## eInclusion and Cultural Diversity

### Actions towards eInclusion and Cultural Diversity

#### National Cultural Policy, Malta 2010

This [policy](#) prepared in close collaboration with the National Commission for Persons with Disability (KNPD), supports initiatives that provide for:

- ▶ access, full enjoyment and active participation in cultural events and manifestations of the disabled;
- ▶ maximisation of broadcasting media (including new media) to enable such access;
- ▶ development of a 'Culture of dialogue' through the maximum use of online platforms of intercultural dialogue, thus improving the exposure and understanding of different cultures;
- ▶ improving and extending the use of ICT tools in cultural management and in the dissemination of knowledge, including the digitisation and online accessibility of collections;
- ▶ development of a national audiovisual strategy through an interministerial network, incorporating broadcasting, new media, creative content online, required as a framework measure to guide the strategic development of this sector;
- ▶ adoption of ICT tools for artistic expression, cultural management, product and services development;
- ▶ full use of traditional and new media to promote cultural diversity and combat all forms of discrimination in schools, hospitals, prisons and communities;
- ▶ research and studies to be disseminated through updating mechanisms, including online tools.

## Inclusive eGovernment

### Status on Inclusive eGovernment

Malta is considered to be one of the leading EU Member States in both the availability and sophistication of eGovernment services. According to the European Commission 2009 report '[Smarter, Faster, Better eGovernment - 8th Benchmark Measurement](#)', Malta has set an ambitious and comprehensive strategy for reforming government and the economy. It has shown significant progress on Information Society indicators, and is performing above the EU average. Its eGovernment performance has been remarkable in achieving full online availability and sophistication, as well as high user-experience scores.

Mostly used administrative public services are available online in a transaction-based model, enabling citizens and businesses to interact with Government in a fully self-service environment. In fact, the Government's strategy focused on attaining the highest degree of sophistication in the implementation of the services and not to merely place forms online.

The accelerated deployment of eGovernment was driven by the development of a central electronic identity framework which offers a secure, single sign-on authentication mechanism to all citizens for all eGovernment services, hence simplifying the use of eGovernment services. The success of eGovernment is increasingly being measured not only by the availability of the services, but also by their application and use by citizens and businesses.

### Actions towards Inclusive eGovernment

#### **eServices for people who cannot/do not want to use computers**

The Government has launched an initiative with Local Councils and Insurance Companies to make them act as agents. An agent delivers the eService on behalf of Government to people who cannot or do not want to access electronic services directly.

#### **Services for Children**

##### **Instant Homework Help and Online Tutoring at Home service**

Affordable online private educational tutoring and instant homework assistance is provided through the site 'Links for Learning'. That site could accommodate your children's homework and overall educational needs.

##### **'www.cyberkids.com' website**

The mission of '[Cyberkids](#)' is to provide a voice for young people on the Internet. We accomplish this by publishing original creative work of kids aged 7 to 12. Even though most of the content on 'Cyberkids' is geared toward children aged 7 to 12, parents may also find certain information in this site that may interest them. In the 'Cyberviews' area, one may find movies, books and product reviews. In the 'Launchpad' area, there are links, categorised by subject, to Internet sites useful to kids. The 'Learning Centre' has links to sites where your child can find online tutoring, help with homework and information on scholarships.

##### **'Ask Jeeves for Kids' service**

'[Ask Jeeves for Kids](#)' is a fast, easy and kid-friendly way for kids to find answers to their questions online. Designed to be a fun destination site focused on learning and 'edutainment', 'Ask Jeeves for Kids' uses natural-language technology that allows kids to ask questions, such as "Why is the sky blue?" or "What's it like to live in space?", in the same way they would ask a parent, friend or teacher. This service combines human editorial judgment with filtering technology to enable kids to find both relevant and appropriate answers on the Web.

#### **Other actions**

The [Community Technology Learning Centres](#) (CTLCs) offer support services to the public to learn how to use eGovernment services.

# The Future of eInclusion

## Research in Practice & Future Challenges

### Research in Practice

#### National project

##### 'ICTforALL' initiative

The 'ICTforALL' initiative is a national awareness and training campaign intended to promote technology as a means to enhance quality of life. The training component will offer participants the opportunity to experience different ICT applications and to learn how to apply these in everyday life. Sending an email to a friend abroad, using eGovernment services and sharing a digital photo with friends are just some of the many digital lifestyle situations addressed in the training.

The 'ICTforALL' training will be delivered at the Community Training and Learning Centres (CTLCs) that have been set-up across the Islands in recent years. These centres are administered by a number NGOs and Local Councils.

Over the past months, the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) has upgraded all centres with new computer equipment. In addition, the [Employment & Training Corporation](#) (ETC) is also supporting this initiative by making a number of its centres available for training.

This initiative will be supported by a strong audiovisual campaign showing people from different walks of life using ICTs.

### Future Challenges

The following constitute eInclusion future objectives:

- ▶ increase the international submarine connections;
- ▶ become a regional leader in eLaw, provision of secure services and IP protection;
- ▶ increase the yearly ICT graduates output to 1 500;
- ▶ establish 101 High-Speed broadband access centres in communities;
- ▶ ensure 75 % of the population uses the Internet regularly;
- ▶ increase Malta-relevant content on the World Wide Web;
- ▶ place all government services online in real time;
- ▶ create 4 000 new jobs in ICT and 250 new ICT jobs in Gozo;
- ▶ increase awareness on ICT matters;
- ▶ foster public and private endeavours to support equal ICT opportunities;
- ▶ expand training services in ICT for disabled people;
- ▶ improve and extend the use of ICT tools in artistic expression, in cultural management and in the dissemination of knowledge;
- ▶ use traditional and new media to promote cultural diversity and combat all forms of discrimination;
- ▶ use the inclusive power of digitisation for social cohesion and a better life for everyone.

### **European Commission - eInclusion Practice**

eInclusion practice ([epractice.eu](http://epractice.eu)) is an information and exchange service for European professionals.

The eInclusion factsheets are one of the [epractice.eu](http://epractice.eu) services. The factsheets present an overview of the eInclusion status and progress in the European countries.

The eInclusion factsheets are produced and updated once a year.

The eInclusion practice is an initiative of the Directorate General for the Information Society and Media, European Commission.

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