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PART 19/27

## **COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**

### **Digital Decade 2025 country reports**

#### *Accompanying the document*

**Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions**

**State of the Digital Decade 2025: Keep building the EU's sovereignty and digital future**

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# DIGITAL DECADE 2025 COUNTRY REPORTS

**Malta**

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## Executive summary

Malta performs very well on the uptake of AI and digitalisation of businesses, while there is room to further expand the pool of ICT specialists. The country is a top performer in the digitalisation of public services. Malta shows a moderate level of ambition in its contribution to the Digital Decade having set 12 national targets, 58% of which aligned with the EU 2030 targets. The country is following its trajectories moderately well with 50% of them being on track (considering 2024 trajectories defined for 4 KPIs out of 8 analysed). Malta addressed 38% of the 8 recommendations issued by the Commission in 2024 by making some changes through new measures.

Significant progress has been achieved over the last year, particularly in the share of enterprises adopting AI, which reached 17.3%, and in expanding connectivity infrastructure—most notably through the ongoing roll-out of fibre-to-the-premises (FTTP) networks. Malta has reached the Digital Decade targets for Very High Capacity Networks (VHCN) in 2019 and basic 5G coverage in 2022. FTTP deployment is still underway but is progressing rapidly towards full national coverage. Challenges remain in improving basic digital skills across the population and addressing the shortage of ICT specialists.

Malta has increasingly oriented its digital policies toward enhancing digital sovereignty, to better control and safeguard its digital infrastructure, data, and technologies, through a multi-dimensional approach. Malta is advancing digital sovereignty by strengthening national cybersecurity through initiatives like CYBER+ALT, expanding threat detection, and building secure infrastructure, while promoting local innovation via dedicated start-up funding and digital policy frameworks.

Digital Decade KPI <sup>(1)</sup>	Malta				EU		Digital Decade target by 2030	
	DESI 2024 (year 2023)	DESI 2025 (year 2024)	Annual progress	National trajectory 2024 (3)	DESI 2025	Annual progress	MT	EU
Fixed Very High Capacity Network (VHCN) coverage	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	-	82.5%	4.9%	100.0%	100%
Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) coverage	69.6%	86.2%	23.9%	-	69.2%	8.4%	100.0%	-
Overall 5G coverage	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	94.3%	5.9%	100.0%	100%
Edge Nodes (estimate)	17	32	88.2%	-	2257	90.5%	-	10000
SMEs with at least a basic level of digital intensity (2)	-	81.3%	2.2%	-	72.9%	2.8%	85.0%	90%
Cloud	58.2%	-	-	-	-	-	80.0%	75%
Artificial Intelligence	13.2%	17.3%	31.4%	18.8%	13.5%	67.2%	27.2%	75%
Data analytics	35.6%	-	-	-	-	-	51.1%	75%
AI or Cloud or Data analytics	68.3%	-	-	-	-	-	-	75%
Unicorns	4	4	0.0%	-	286	4.4%	-	500
At least basic digital skills	63.0%	-	-	-	-	-	75.0%	80%
ICT specialists	4.7%	5.2%	10.6%	5.5%	5.0%	4.2%	8.0%	~10%
eID scheme notification		Yes						
Digital public services for citizens	100.0	99.7	-0.3%	100.0	82.3	3.6%	100.0	100
Digital public services for businesses	100.0	100.0	0.0%	-	86.2	0.9%	100.0	100
Access to e-Health records	88.0	93.7	6.5%	-	82.7	4.5%	100.0	100

(1) See the methodological note for the description of the indicators and other metrics

(2) DESI 2025 reports the version 4 of the Digital Intensity Index, that is comparable with the DII value from DESI 2023 (referring to year 2022) for the calculation of the annual progress. It is not comparable to the national trajectory that is based on version 3 of the index.

(3) National trajectory value if present in the national roadmap and if the indicator was measured in DESI2025 (year 2024)

**According to the special Eurobarometer on ‘the Digital Decade’ 2025**, 80% of Maltese citizens consider that the digitalisation of daily public and private services is making their lives easier. Concerning the action of the public authorities, 90% consider it important to counter and mitigate the issue of fake news and disinformation online, and regarding competitiveness, 87% consider it important to ensure that European companies can grow and become “European Champions” able to compete globally.

## A competitive, sovereign, and resilient EU based on technological leadership

**Malta has a strong position when it comes to digital infrastructure, outperforming the EU average and reaching full VHCN and basic 5G coverage.** The roll-out of fibre networks is continuing and progressing at a fast pace. Regarding 5G in the 3.4–3.8 GHz band, Malta still lags behind the EU but it is expanding rapidly.

**Most of Maltese enterprises show at least a basic level of digital intensity and uptake of AI is above the EU average**, although challenges persist particularly among smaller enterprises. Malta is nurturing a dynamic and expanding start-up ecosystem through concrete support measures such as the *Start-Up Finance scheme*, the *Start-Up Residence Programme*, and the creation of a €10 million *Venture Capital Fund*. The country is also investing in digital skills and innovation infrastructure, including a national roadmap that promotes emerging technologies and supports scale-ups. Malta is actively strengthening its cybersecurity capabilities and digital resilience, with the goal of reducing dependency on external technologies and enhancing control over its digital ecosystem, although challenges remain in adopting key internet standards like IPv6 and DNSSEC.

## Protecting and empowering EU people and society

**Most of the people in Malta have at least basic digital skills and the country made some progress on the share of ICT specialists in employment, but there is room to improve gender balance.** In 2024, the share of ICT specialists in employment grew to 5.2%. While interest in STEM and ICT careers is growing, skill shortages remain a concern. The majority of the Maltese population (63%) has at least basic digital skills, and the country prioritises inclusivity in the implementation of the National eSkills Strategy 2022-2025.

**Digital public services are well-developed and widely accessible**, reflecting Malta’s focus on user-centric, simplified administration. National strategies promote sovereign digital solutions, aiming to ensure a secure and inclusive digital transformation for all citizens.

## Leveraging digital transformation for a smart greening

Malta is committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, with a focus on sustainability, resilience, and innovation across all sectors. Digital technologies are recognised as a key enabler in this transition, helping businesses adopt sustainable practices and boosting overall competitiveness. The government is fostering collaborations with the private sector to drive forward sustainability goals and integrate digital solutions in the green transition.

## National Digital Decade strategic roadmap

Malta did not submit an updated national Digital Decade roadmap in 2025; therefore, the measures and targets for 2030 remain unchanged from those outlined in the initial 2023 roadmap. In 2024, Malta continued the implementation of existing measures but did not take any new measure. In total three

targets (i.e., VHCN, 5G and Digital Public Service for Citizen) have already been reached. All the other targets align with the EU level goals for 2030, except for three national targets (basic digital skills, number of ICT specialist and SMEs with at least a basic level of digital intensity) that fall slightly below the EU targets. Trajectories for edge nodes, e-Health and unicorns are missing. Although the roadmap covers nearly all objectives of the Digital Decade, some aspects may require more effort. Furthermore, the roadmap is composed of 66 measures with a total budget of EUR 285 million (equivalent to 1.27% of GDP) covering most of the targets. It still covers all objectives of the Digital Decade such as a human-centred digital space, resilience and security, sovereignty, green, and protection of the society. These achievements are the result of targeted public policies under the *Malta Digitali 2022–2027* strategy, with a strong focus on enhancing public digital services and connectivity.

## Funding & projects for digital

Malta allocates 26% of its total recovery and resilience plan to digital (EUR 68 million)<sup>1</sup>. In addition, under cohesion policy, EUR 129 million, representing 17% of the country's total cohesion policy funding, is dedicated to advancing Malta's digital transformation<sup>2</sup>. Malta is directly participating in the IPCEI on Microelectronics and Communication Technologies (IPCEI-ME/CT). Malta is a participating state of the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking (JU) and of the Chips JU.

Malta has not yet presented any project in the framework of Digital Decade's Best Practice Accelerator<sup>3</sup>.

## Digital Rights and Principles

According to a support study, Malta has been one of the most active Member States in implementing the [European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles](#), with over 100 initiatives overall and 35 new initiatives launched in 2024. Malta is most active in the area of solidarity and inclusion and digital education, training and skills. Less activity has been identified with regards to connectivity and Sustainability. Measures in the area of solidarity and inclusion appear to have most impact on the ground, in contrast to those addressing freedom of choice.

### Recommendations

- **ICT specialists:** Promote ICT and STEM career opportunities and related education programmes, especially among women.
- **Basic digital skills:** Prioritise reskilling and upskilling initiatives, leveraging public-private partnerships and EU funding, and promote digital literacy particularly among those with lower educational backgrounds.
- **Cybersecurity:** Implement targeted initiatives to strengthen internet security and enhance DNSSEC adoption, and support the development and deployment of cybersecurity capabilities.

<sup>1</sup> The share of financial allocations that contribute to digital objectives has been calculated using Annex VII to the Recovery and Resilience Facility Regulation. Last data update: 16 May 2025.

<sup>2</sup> This amount includes all investment specifically aimed at or substantially contributing to digital transformation in the 2021-2027 Cohesion policy programming period. The source funds are the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, and the Just Transition Fund.

<sup>3</sup> The Best Practice Accelerator (BPA) is a platform that enables Member States to share successful measures and challenges encountered in their efforts to meet their Digital Decade targets and objectives. Best practices are made available to Member States via the BPA Repository and showcased in regular workshops, currently focused on three thematic clusters: Digital Skills, Green IT, and the Uptake of Digital Technologies.

- **AI:** Continue the efforts to strengthen the uptake of AI, especially among SMEs, and in connection with the deployment of other technologies, such as cloud and edge nodes.
- **Connectivity infrastructure:** Continue efforts to deploy fibre networks and 5G pioneer bands and promote uptake.
- **Digitalisation of SMEs:** Enhance efforts to close the digitalisation gap between SMEs and large enterprises, in order to maximise the economic potential of SMEs.



# A competitive, sovereign and resilient EU based on technological leadership

**Malta is strategically positioning itself as a key player in fostering a competitive, sovereign, and resilient EU through technological leadership, leveraging innovation, digital transformation, and strategic investments to enhance economic growth and security.** The government continues to implement strategic policies to attract investment, particularly in research, development, and innovation (RDI) within digital technologies. The country's start-up ecosystem can count on over 300 start-ups, which contribute significantly to GDP, particularly in Fintech, gaming, and AI.

**In Malta, the predominance of SMEs in the business landscape presents challenges for the adoption of digital technologies, as smaller enterprises often face resource and investment constraints.** SMEs accounted for around 96.5% of all enterprises with more than 10 employees, while large enterprises accounted for only 3.5% in 2022. The size of the ICT sector was above the EU average (10.14% vs 5.46% in gross value added in 2022)<sup>4</sup> and its R&D business expenditure accounted for 47.89% of total R&D expenditure in 2022 (a significant increase compared to 38.19% in 2021). Moreover, R&D personnel in the ICT sector accounted for 44.44% of total R&D personnel in 2022, increased from 40.47% in 2021.

**Malta was among the early adopters of 5G in Europe,** with operators rolling out commercial services to ensure widespread coverage. Investments in high-speed broadband, including the availability of fibre-to-the-home (FTTH) networks and a nationwide cable DOCSIS 3.1 network, complement the 5G network, enhancing connectivity for both businesses and individuals. Malta's national strategy aligns with EU digital targets, aiming to leverage advanced infrastructure to support smart cities, IoT applications, and emerging technologies.

**Malta has set ambitious goals to position itself as a leader in the AI race.** The country was among the first in Europe to launch a national AI strategy, focusing on innovation, ethical AI development, and sectoral adoption across industries such as healthcare, finance, and public services. With government-backed initiatives, investment incentives, and collaborations with academia and industry leaders, Malta aims to create a thriving AI ecosystem. While challenges remain, including in talent development and scaling AI adoption among businesses, Malta continues to strengthen its AI infrastructure to drive competitiveness and economic growth in the digital era.

**As Malta advances its digital transformation, ensuring national sovereignty has become a fundamental priority across all digital initiatives.** Given the country's reliance on global tech providers and digital infrastructures, safeguarding data security, regulatory autonomy, and technological resilience is crucial. This includes strengthening cybersecurity frameworks, fostering local innovation, and ensuring that critical digital infrastructure, such as cloud services and AI applications, remains under national or European governance. By prioritising sovereignty, Malta aims to enhance its digital resilience, reduce external dependencies, and maintain control over its technological future. According to the 2025 Eurobarometer<sup>5</sup>, 89% of Maltese think that building efficient and secure digital infrastructures and data processing facilities should be a priority for the public authorities.

<sup>4</sup> Most of the indicators mentioned in the country report are explained in the DESI 2025 Methodological Note accompanying the State of the Digital Decade report 2025

<sup>5</sup> Special Eurobarometer 566 on 'the Digital Decade' 2025: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news-redirect/883227>

## Building technological leadership: digital infrastructure and technologies

Malta has developed a robust digital infrastructure, with high-speed connectivity, advanced cloud services, and regulatory frameworks supporting the country's digital transformation.

### Connectivity infrastructure

**In 2024, Malta was at 100% of VHCN coverage (2030 national target: 100%) and stood above the EU average of 82.49%.** Malta already reached the target of 100% of households connected in 2019.

**Malta was at 86.2% of FTTP coverage (2030 national target: 100%) in 2024, after a jump of 23.9%, and stood above the EU average of 69.24%.** Malta did not provide a national trajectory point for 2024. Malta's growth rate therefore far exceeded the EU's growth rate of 8.4% (from 63.87% in 2023). FTTP coverage increased also in sparsely populated areas that, however, in Malta represent only a small share of households (0.6%). In these areas, it was 26.63% in 2024, below the EU average of 58.78%, but with a significant growth rate of 64.6%. **In 2024, Malta was at 100% of 5G coverage, in line with its national target – which it had already reached in 2022, and stood above the EU average of 94.35%.** Since 2022, all households had access to 5G, significantly exceeding the EU average. As such, Malta positions itself as a leader in overall coverage.

**Malta's 5G coverage in the 3.4-3.8 GHz band remained below the EU average in 2024, but it is expanding rapidly.** In 2023, total household coverage stood at 24.66%, significantly lower than the EU average of 51.06%. In 2024, Malta's coverage increased to 40%, still trailing the EU's 67.72%. However, Malta has demonstrated strong growth in this area, with a 62.2% increase, outperforming the EU's 32.6% growth rate. Similarly, coverage in sparsely populated areas reached 10.05% in 2024, compared to 26.19% in the EU. Despite this gap, Malta's growth rate in these areas is 66.4%, surpassing the EU's 65.1%, indicating accelerated expansion efforts to enhance 5G availability in both urban and rural regions.

**In 2025, Malta's assignment of harmonised spectrum for 5G pioneer bands stood at 25%,** unchanged compared to 2024, and below the EU average of 74.63%, reflecting partial take-up of key 5G frequencies by the market notwithstanding the fact that the spectrum has been made available.

**In 2024, Malta's 5G SIM card adoption rate reached 26.6%, up from 21.32% in 2023,** reflecting an annual growth rate of 24.8%. While this demonstrates a steady rise in adoption, Malta's growth rate remains lower than the 63.9% recorded across the EU. In comparison, the EU's 5G SIM penetration rose from 21.7% in 2023 to 35.56% in 2024, outpacing Malta both in adoption levels and growth rate. This suggests that while Malta is making progress in 5G adoption, it is lagging behind the broader European trend, potentially due to differences in infrastructure expansion, market dynamics, or consumer adoption rates.

**In 2024, fixed broadband subscriptions for ≥ 100 Mbps in Malta stood at 79.61%,** placing it above the EU average of **71.88%** for the same year and reflecting significant growth from 70.61% in 2023. This marks a notable increase, highlighting Malta's strong broadband infrastructure development. Comparatively, the EU average for high-speed broadband adoption rose from 65.9% in 2023 to 71.88% in 2024. While both Malta and the EU experienced substantial growth, Malta continues to outperform the EU average, indicating a faster transition toward high-speed connectivity. This trend suggests that Malta is prioritising faster broadband services, possibly due to private sector investments, and increasing consumer demand for high-speed internet.

**Malta has experienced a steady increase in the share of fixed broadband subscriptions with speeds of 1 Gbps or higher**, rising from 11.69% in 2023 to 16.99% in 2024. While this growth reflects ongoing investment in high-speed broadband infrastructure, Malta's penetration remains below the EU average, which grew from 18.47% in 2023 to 22.25% in 2024. The expansion of gigabit connectivity is essential for supporting the continued digital transformation and Malta's economic competitiveness.

In conclusion, Malta has made significant strides in developing its digital infrastructure, particularly in terms of 5G coverage and high-speed broadband. The country has achieved full 5G coverage across all households, surpassing EU averages. Despite strong progress in 5G coverage, particularly in the 3.4-3.8 GHz band, Malta still lags behind the EU in coverage. Additionally, the share of fixed broadband subscriptions  $\geq 1$  Gbps is growing, but remains below the EU average.

## *VHCN and FTTP*

Malta has already achieved 100% coverage in VHCN by way of a nationwide cable DOCSIS network (since 2019) and the advanced deployment of FTTP infrastructure. For FTTP, Malta's target for 2030 remains at 100% as per the initial roadmap submitted in 2023. Given the latest figures, the target seems realistic.

**Being an island in the Mediterranean Sea, Malta relies heavily on submarine cables as vital digital infrastructures to maintain its security and sovereignty.** These undersea communication networks play a crucial role in ensuring reliable connectivity, supporting economic growth, and safeguarding national interests. As a small island nation, investing in and maintaining these infrastructures is essential for sustaining technological advancement and national security. Malta is involved in the MEDUSA project, including the installation of a state-of-the-art, high-capacity fibre-optic submarine cable. This initiative aims to enhance digital connectivity across the Mediterranean, strengthening Malta's role as a key hub for secure and resilient communications. By investing in cutting-edge infrastructure, the project supports economic growth, innovation, and regional cooperation, ensuring faster and more reliable data transmission for businesses and communities alike.

## *5G*

Malta has already achieved 100% coverage in 5G. Nationwide 5G coverage was achieved by one of the three operators in 2022, while the other two mobile operators provided this level of coverage towards the end of 2023.

Malta has achieved comprehensive 5G coverage, with all populated areas benefiting from this advanced network. The country has deployed over 1100 base stations, 440 of which are equipped with 5G NR technology. The median mobile data speed stands at 81.18 Mbps, reflecting the robust performance of the network.

The roll-out of 5G in Malta has been spearheaded by key telecommunications operators, which are continuing to enhance the offer.

In 2021, Malta allocated the mid-band 3.6 GHz spectrum to operators. While the assignment was originally intended to take place through an auction, the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) opted for a direct allocation, as demand did not exceed the available spectrum. Currently, coverage stands at 40%. Although the 700MHz and 26GHz bands have been made available and the assignment framework is in place, there is currently no industry demand for their use. Operators appear to have sufficient low-band spectrum (800MHz and 900MHz) to meet existing coverage needs, and there seems to be no viable business case for deploying the 26GHz band. Given its population density, Malta

can be compared to a European city in terms of spectrum needs, and the assigned spectrum is evenly distributed among the three operators. While Malta has made progress in spectrum harmonisation, further assignments are needed to maximise 5G coverage, capacity, and performance.

**2024 recommendation on connectivity infrastructure:** Ensure sufficient access of new players to spectrum for innovative business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) applications and encourage operators to speed up the deployment of 5G stand-alone core networks.

**In 2024, Malta continued the implementation of existing measures but did not take any new measure.** Currently all three operators active in Malta have deployed 5G based on 5G-DSS.

## Semiconductors

**Malta has positioned itself as a key player in the global semiconductor industry, by fostering a competitive ecosystem that supports innovation, research, and advanced manufacturing.** With established semiconductor production facilities, including a major manufacturing plant operated by STMicroelectronics, Malta contributes significantly to both European and global supply chains. By strengthening Europe's semiconductor capabilities, Malta's strategy directly supports the EU's goal of technological sovereignty and reduced dependency on external supply chains.

**The country actively participates in the European Chips Act.** As demand for semiconductors continues to rise, Malta remains committed to strengthening chip production capacity, supply chain resilience, and technological self-sufficiency, aligning with the EU's broader strategy for digital and economic sovereignty. In this context, Malta is also establishing a National Competence Centre to support R&D, skills development and industrial innovation in semiconductor technologies. Moreover, the semiconductor sector has been identified as a strategic priority under Malta Vision 2050, reflecting its importance to Malta's long term economic and technological ambitions.

## Edge nodes

Despite a specific survey has not been conducted in Malta, the Edge Node Observatory estimated a potential number of 32 edge nodes deployed in Malta. This is an increase of 88.2% compared to 2023 (when the country had an estimated 17 edge nodes). The current number of edge nodes deployed is significant considering the country's size. However, this is only an estimation and may not reflect the current reality. Maltese organisations were not surveyed to calculate this estimation, which has been produced by the Edge observatory as an extrapolation by using a clustering methodology that associates Member States based on their similarities in terms of socio-economic parameters, intensity of IT use and other indicators correlated with the actual and potential use of digital transformation. Malta does not have a 2030 target for edge nodes.

Edge computing serves as a crucial enabler for AI, future network deployments, and IoT. The national roadmap emphasises the capability of the existing infrastructure to deliver latencies below 20 milliseconds.

## Quantum technologies

**Malta recognises the strategic importance of quantum technologies and is aligning its efforts with the EU's broader vision.** The country aims to foster research and development in quantum computing, cryptography, and communications, with a focus on building expertise and exploring industry applications. While the country is still in the early stages of adoption, potential updates to the strategy may include enhanced funding initiatives, partnerships with European research institutions, and the

integration of quantum-ready infrastructure to strengthen national and EU-wide technological resilience.

## Supporting EU-wide digital ecosystems and scaling up innovative enterprises

**The state of digitalisation of enterprises in Malta is more advanced than last year.** However, challenges remain in scaling digital transformation, particularly for SMEs. Malta's digital start-up ecosystem continues to grow, supported by government incentives, accelerator programmes, and an increasing number of tech hubs, positioning the country as an attractive destination for innovation-driven businesses.

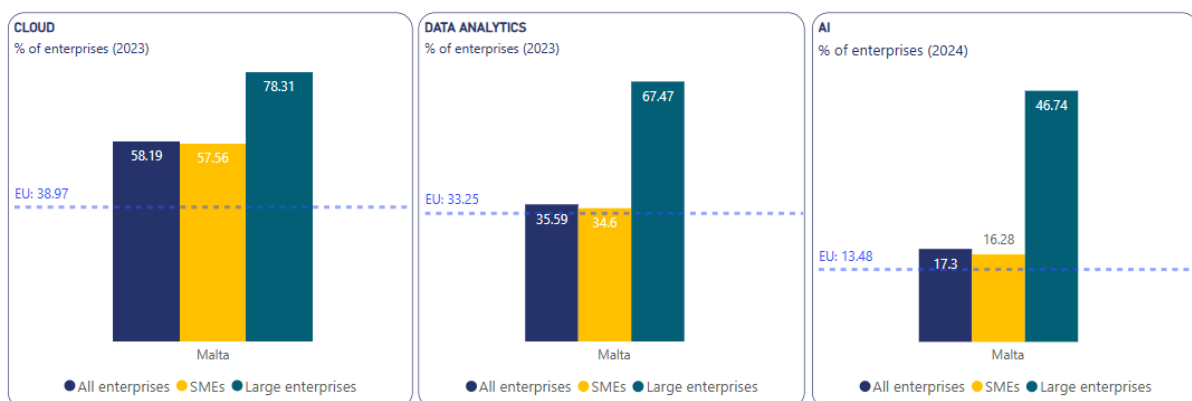
### SMEs with at least basic digital intensity

**In 2024, 4 out of 5 (81.28%) SMEs in Malta had at least a basic level of digital intensity (2030 national target: 85%), after an increase of 2.2% between 2022 and 2024.** Malta therefore stands well above the EU average of 72.91%. More specifically, 46.93% of SMEs in Malta achieved high or very high digital intensity, significantly surpassing the EU average of 32.66%. As such, Malta positioned itself as a strong performer in SME digital transformation across the EU.

**Malta's 2030 target for SMEs with basic digital intensity is slightly below the EU-level target of 90%.** However, given Malta's currently high share of digitalised SMEs, reaching the EU target by 2030 is highly likely. Despite this, the 2030 target set out in the roadmap falls short of the EU benchmark, and no new SME-specific measures were introduced in 2025.

**Malta hosts one European Digital Innovation Hub (EDIHs).** The [DiHubMT](#) EDIH primarily assists SMEs and mid-caps by facilitating the adoption of digital technologies, offering business incubation services, and providing access to financing opportunities. DiHubMT features a state-of-the-art workspace equipped with cutting-edge technologies, including AI, augmented and virtual reality (AR/VR), 3D printing, drones, cybersecurity solutions, and robotics. It also offers 'test before invest' support to help businesses explore technologies before committing to investments. Additionally, the hub promotes digital skills development through training, upskilling, and reskilling programmes, and fosters innovation networks to encourage collaboration and the exchange of best practices<sup>6</sup>.

### Take-up of cloud/AI/data analytics



**According to new data collected in 2024, 17.3% of enterprises in Malta adopted AI (2030 national target: 27.2%) - a 31.36% increase compared to 2023 – placing it above the EU average of 13.48%.** However, **Malta is lagging behind compared to its national trajectory.** Among SMEs, the uptake rate

<sup>6</sup> [DiHubMT - European Digital Innovation Hub - MDIA.](#)

was slightly lower at 16.28%, while large enterprises demonstrated a significantly higher rate of 46.74% (almost 1 out of 2). This reveals a gap of 30.46 percentage points between SMEs and large enterprises, which is in line with the EU gap.

**In 2023, cloud uptake among Maltese enterprises was 58.19% (2030 national target: 80%), showing a strong lead over the EU average of 38.97%.** More specifically, while SMEs had an uptake of nearly 57.56%, 78.31% of large enterprises adopted cloud services. Therefore, the difference in uptake between SMEs and large enterprises in Malta stood at 20.75 percentage points, which is lower than the EU-level gap of 31.68.

**The latest available data shows that in Malta, 35.59% of enterprises (approximately 1 out of 3) adopted data analytics in 2023 (2030 national target: 51.1%), surpassing the EU average of 33.25%.** More specifically, at 34.6%, SMEs had a lower uptake than large enterprises (67.47%). This reflects a gap of 32.87 percentage points between SMEs and large enterprises, which is lower than the EU gap of 39.72 percentage points.

**When taking the three technologies together, 68.25% of enterprises in Malta engaged with AI technologies, sophisticated or intermediate cloud computing services, or performed data analytics in 2023, well ahead of the EU average of 54.7%.** More specifically, at 67.67%, uptake among SMEs was slightly lower than among large enterprises (86.75%). This indicates a percentage point difference of 19.08 in uptake between SMEs and large enterprises in Malta, which is lower than the EU-level gap of 32.97. Notably, in 2022, SMEs in Malta contributed 41.8% of the total value added in the economy, whereas large enterprises contributed 34%.

Overall, the adoption of cloud computing, data analytics, and AI technologies in Malta demonstrated strong performance compared to EU averages, with a particularly high uptake of cloud services and artificial intelligence. The disparity in technology adoption between SMEs and large enterprises in Malta is smaller than the EU average, reflecting relatively more balanced engagement with digital technologies. However, SMEs' adoption rates remained consistently lower.

- [Cloud](#)

Malta's target for 2030 remains at 80%, above the EU-level target, as per the initial roadmap submitted in 2023. Given the latest (2023) figures and measures in place, the target seems realistic.

**To support the further adoption and development of digital technologies, Malta has allocated a significant part of its Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) to digitalisation.** One of the main measures adopted by the country to reach the cloud target is the **'SME digitalisation Scheme.'** The measure, funded by the RRP, seeks to support digitalisation investment initiatives and other digitalisation efforts by SMEs in several economic sectors. The Scheme is related to the cloud target, and is expected to contribute directly to the uptake of cloud computing and other related technologies.

- [Data analytics](#)

**In 2024 and 2025, Malta has made notable strides in the field of data analytics, reflecting a commitment to digital transformation and innovation across multiple sectors.**

The Malta Communications Authority has set its strategic direction for 2025-2027, highlighting the role of data analytics in enhancing communication services and regulatory frameworks. The strategy seeks to strengthen decision-making and service delivery within the sector through data-driven insights.



In this context, private firms are leveraging AI to boost efficiency and sustainability. Academic research is also contributing with local solutions, such as traffic prediction models. Although progress has been made, direct national measures to promote data analytics remain limited. Strategic plans call for targeted investments and initiatives like the Technology Assurance Sandbox to encourage best practices. Overall, these efforts highlight Malta's aim to strengthen its digital capabilities through data analytics.

- [Artificial intelligence](#)

**AI is at the forefront of Malta's digital transformation efforts.** Malta's National AI Strategy aims to position the country as a leader in AI by fostering innovation, investment, and ethical AI development. Launched as part of Malta's broader digital transformation agenda, the strategy focuses on three key pillars: investment, adoption, and governance. It encourages businesses to integrate AI, supports research and development, and ensures responsible AI use through regulatory frameworks. Government initiatives provide funding, training, and infrastructure to attract AI-driven enterprises, reinforcing Malta's commitment to becoming a competitive AI hub in Europe.

The 2025 Eurobarometer shows that 87% of Maltese think that public authorities should prioritise shaping the development of Artificial Intelligence and other digital technologies to ensure that they respect our rights and values.

**Malta's target for 2030 remains 27.2%, as per the initial roadmap submitted in 2023.**

**2024 recommendation on AI/Cloud/Data analytics:** (i) Continue implementing policies in the area of digitalisation of businesses. In particular, Malta should further facilitate access to secure and sovereign advanced digital technologies and solutions and encourage investment in digital research and innovation. (ii) Raise awareness about the benefits of digital technologies and increase participation in existing funding schemes, especially among the many family-owned micro, small and medium-sized businesses making up Malta's economy.

**In 2024, Malta made some efforts to address the recommendation through new policy actions in 2024:** in 2024 Malta began planning a new scheme, the "*Digitalise your SME*" which was launched in Q1 2025. The programme offers additional aid intensity for projects in areas such as AI, cloud computing, quantum technologies, and cybersecurity. The support is non-repayable grants to part-finance investment in these strategic digital technologies that have been identified, taking into account the digital decade targets.

## [Unicorns, scale-ups and start-ups](#)

**At the beginning of 2025, Malta had four unicorns, one more than the previous year (representing a 33.3% increase).** This growth highlights the resilience and potential of the Maltese start-up ecosystem, despite global economic challenges.

Malta has not set a target on the number of unicorns by 2030. Due to the country's inherent characteristics, a commitment to doubling the number of start-ups is not feasible – despite strong support measures for those that choose to set up business in Malta. Nevertheless, ongoing efforts are focused on building a start-up ecosystem that is responsive to the needs of entrepreneurs, enabling them to launch, scale, and grow sustainably.

**The ecosystem remains dynamic and is supported by initiatives such as 'Start in Malta',** which provides funding, mentorship, networking, and regulatory support to nurture innovation and entrepreneurship. While traditionally known for e-gaming and blockchain, the ecosystem is

diversifying into sectors like Fintech, AI, and legal tech. The **‘Start in Malta’** initiative together with the **National Malta Start-up Framework** are central to shaping a start-up-friendly environment. These efforts aim to reduce regulatory barriers, simplify equity administration, promote regional development, and support talent attraction through fiscal incentives, R&D backing, and apprenticeship programmes.

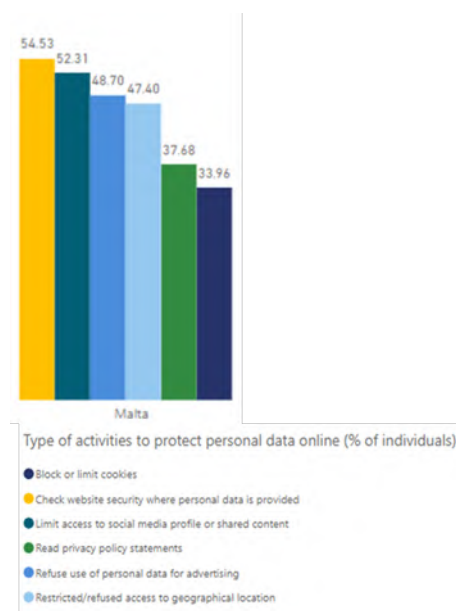
To improve access to venture capital, the government has established a EUR 10 million Venture Capital Fund, offering equity investments of up to EUR 500 000 per start-up in innovative sectors like Fintech, e-sports, life sciences and video game development. This is complemented by the Start-Up Finance Scheme, which provides up to EUR 1.5 million in repayable advances for small, innovative enterprises, particularly those in assisted areas.

Early-stage ventures benefit from initiatives like the Business Start Scheme, which offers seed funding of up to EUR 10 000, and the Seed Investment Scheme (SIS), which incentivises equity investments through tax credits, helping to reduce risk for investors in high-potential digital start-ups.

To attract international talent and capital, Malta offers a Start-Up Residence Scheme, providing residence permits for founders to establish their ventures locally. The country also positions itself as a regional hub through high-profile events like the EU Start-ups Summit (2024-2025), which is expected to bring together 2 500 participants from across Europe.

Challenges remain. Access to later-stage funding and the scaling of start-ups into unicorns are still limited, and while various types of support are in place, consistent implementation and ecosystem maturity are crucial to unlocking their full potential.

## Strengthening cybersecurity & resilience



**In Malta, over 3 in 4 individuals have basic digital safety skills.** 78.96% of the population took at least one action to protect their data online, exceeding the EU average of 69.55%. Over half (54.73%) of the population engaged in three or more such actions (and therefore could be considered as having above basic digital safety skills). Checking if websites were secure was the most common action (54.53%), while changing browser settings to limit cookies was the least frequent (33.96%).

**Regarding the resilience of digital infrastructures, awareness of cybersecurity among enterprises in Malta is decreasing and challenges remain.** The percentage of enterprises experiencing ICT security incidents leading to service unavailability, such as ransomware or denial-of-service attacks, increased in Malta, from 3.35% in 2022 to 5.16% in 2024. It remains above the EU average (3.43%) reflecting

relatively low defensive measures. Around 93.91% of Maltese enterprises have implemented some form of ICT security measures, marginally above the EU average of 92.76%, and 62.54% have actively engaged in raising employee awareness of ICT security obligations, a level above the EU average of 59.97%.



**Concerning the deployment of secure internet standards, in 2024, Malta's adoption of Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6) and Domain Name System Security Extension (DNSSEC) lagged behind EU averages.** Malta stood substantially below the EU average in the roll-out of Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6) for servers (6% vs an EU average of 17%), while it had not deployed IPv6 on the user side, against an EU average of 36%. IPv6 is an important protocol as it ensures the scalability, stability, and security of the internet. The deployment of this new version is increasingly urgent, as traditional IPv4 addresses have been long depleted. Regarding DNSSEC, Malta's adoption rate stood at 11% in Q3-2024. This rate is notably lower than the EU average of 47% during the same period. Countries like Finland, Czechia, Luxembourg, Sweden, Denmark, and Germany led on this indicator, with adoption rates above 70%.

**During 2024, Malta continued its commitment to enhancing cybersecurity and resilience in both the public and private sector.** Several initiatives were launched or expanded to strengthen the country's cybersecurity. Building on previous efforts, the CYBER+ALT scheme remained a key support measure for SMEs, with increased outreach and additional funding aimed at encouraging more businesses to adopt state-of-the-art cybersecurity solutions. Recognising the evolving threat landscape, the scheme introduced new incentives to promote advanced threat detection and response mechanisms.

**Following its introduction in late 2023, the Client Assessment Framework was fully rolled out in 2024, extending free security assessments to both public service entities and the private sector.** This initiative provided businesses with practical insights into their cybersecurity strengths and vulnerabilities, helping them adopt stronger security measures.

**The National Cybersecurity Community further solidified its role as a hub for collaboration between key stakeholders from the private sector, public administration, academia, and research.** Throughout 2024, the Consultation Council overseeing this initiative worked on refining policies and frameworks to enhance cybersecurity readiness at both local and EU level. A major milestone was the establishment of a Coordinated Vulnerability Disclosure (CVD) platform, ensuring that vulnerabilities are systematically reported and addressed to safeguard critical digital infrastructure.

**In addition, the Malta Critical Infrastructure Protection (MaltaCIP) Directorate continued to strengthen cybersecurity response capabilities under the EU-supported Connecting Europe Facility project.** In 2024, the Directorate expanded the available internal services to operators of essential services and digital service providers. These services focused on real-time threat intelligence sharing, early warning systems, and enhanced coordination between cybersecurity stakeholders to improve national resilience against cyber threats.

**A major step forward in 2024 was the further development of the National Cybersecurity Coordination Centre (NCC), which built upon its initial implementation in 2023.** The NCC intensified its efforts in driving cybersecurity initiatives, including policy development, risk assessments, and cross-sectoral cooperation. As part of this, the Cybersecurity Digital Skill Level Initiative (2023-2026) saw accelerated efforts in 2024 to enhance cybersecurity awareness and competencies among individuals and organisations in Malta. This initiative remains critical in fostering a digitally secure environment and ensuring that all stakeholders are equipped to respond to emerging cyber risks. According to the Digital Decade Eurobarometer 2025, 86% of Maltese think that an improved cybersecurity, better protection of online data and safety of digital technologies would facilitate their daily use of digital technologies.

# Protecting and empowering EU people and society

## Empowering people and bringing the digital transformation closer to their needs

**Malta's digitalisation strategy aims to bridge societal divides and ensure equal access to digital opportunities across various demographics.** Targeted initiatives are intended to increase inclusiveness by addressing gender, geographic, age-related, educational, and socio-economic disparities. Investments in nationwide broadband infrastructure and digital hubs in remote areas help mitigate geographic disparities.

**Age inclusivity is also a key focus**, with specialised training programmes aimed at equipping older adults with digital literacy skills to prevent generational digital exclusion. In the education sector, digital learning is integrated into national curricula, while reskilling initiatives support individuals with lower formal education to enhance their digital competencies. To address socio-economic barriers, the government provides subsidies, public access points, and community-driven digital learning initiatives, to make sure that financial constraints do not hinder digital participation.

Beyond digital inclusion, **Malta also recognises the impact of digitalisation on democracy, media, and disinformation.** Efforts are being made to promote media literacy, ensuring that people can critically assess online information and combat the spread of fake news and foster responsible digital engagement.

The protection of children in the digital space is another important area. Initiatives include online safety education in schools, parental guidance resources, and legal frameworks that regulate harmful online content. Measures such as safer internet campaigns and collaborations with tech companies help create a secure online environment for young users.

### Equipping people with digital skills

#### *Basic digital skills*

**In 2023, 63.02% of individuals aged 16-74 had at least basic digital skills (2030 national target: 75%) - after an increase of 2.9% compared with 2021 - significantly surpassing the EU average of 55.56%.** This achievement highlights Malta's success in promoting digital literacy across a broad demographic, ensuring a solid foundation for participation in the digital economy.

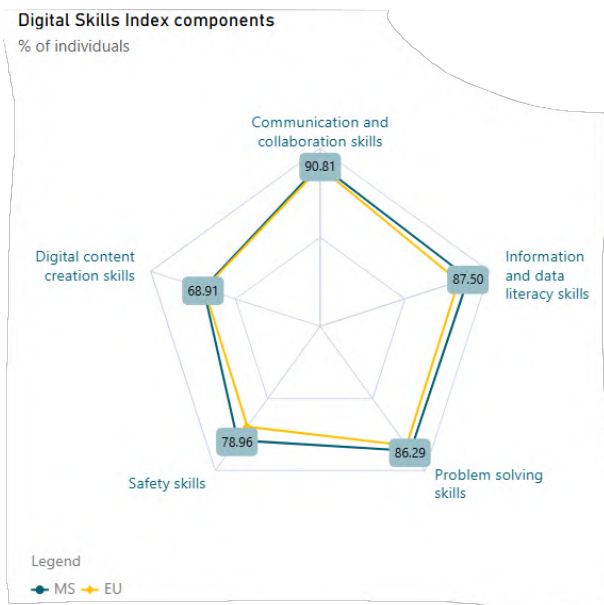
- **Gender gap:** Malta shows an uncommon situation in the gender gap, with 62.74% of men and 63.33% of women having at least basic digital skills, creating a minor gap of 0.59 percentage points in favour of women. This is against the typical EU trend, where the average gender gap is 2.23 percentage points in favour of men.
- **Education level:** Education continues to be a strong indicator of digital proficiency. In Malta, around 89.92% of individuals with higher education levels have at least basic digital skills, exceeding the EU average (79.83%). On the contrary, those with lower levels of education face

challenges, with only 30.86% having at least basic digital skills, below the EU average (33.61%) and with a gap with the national average of 41.06 percentage points.

- **Age groups:** Young adults in Malta aged 16-24 are the most digitally skilled in the EU, with the highest proficiency rate of 96.09%, largely surpassing the EU average (69.98%). The senior age bracket of 65-74 has lower skills, which at 21.87% fall below the EU average for that age group (28.19%).

**When looking at the Digital Skills Index components,** Malta achieves above average results in all five categories. Communication and collaboration skills are the highest at 90.81%, surpassing the EU average. The lowest scored area is digital content creation at 68.91%, which is just above the EU average.

In conclusion, Malta demonstrates a robust digital skills profile, with excellent communication and collaboration skills and a commendable rate among the younger population. The relatively small gender gap is a positive in Malta's digital landscape. However, the significant gap in skill levels based on education highlights the need for focused initiatives to improve digital literacy among those with lower educational backgrounds, particularly among the older generation. Specific courses are being provided to address this gap.



According to the 2025 Eurobarometer, 82% of Maltese think that human support to help accessing and using digital technologies and services would facilitate their daily use of digital technologies. 86% of Maltese respondents think that public authorities should prioritise ensuring that people receive proper human support to accompany the transformation brought by digital technologies and services.

**2024 recommendation on basic digital skills:** Continue encouraging people to take part in digital skills trainings by raising awareness and facilitating access, with a special focus on vulnerable groups.

**In 2024, Malta continued the implementation of existing measures but did not take any new measure.** Notably, Malta has continued implementing the National e-Skills Strategy 2022-2025 aimed at promoting the inclusive and equitable development of digital skills. This strategy emphasises collaboration between the public and private sectors to align education programmes with market demands and ensure coherence among all digital skills initiatives in Malta.

## ICT specialists

**In 2024, ICT specialists accounted for 5.2% of total employment (2030 national target: 8%) - after an increase of 10.6% compared with the previous year - above the EU average of 5%. The country is slightly lagging behind compared to its national trajectory.** Nevertheless, the growth rate observed is a promising result as, while Malta's total percentage of ICT specialists as a share of total employment was 4.7% in 2023, slightly below the EU average of 4.8%, its growth rate surpassed the EU-level growth rate of 4.2%. The percentage of female ICT specialists in Malta was 14.7% in 2024, below the EU

average of 19.5%. However, Malta's growth rate of 8.9% in female ICT specialists (from 13.5% in 2023) exceeded the EU's 0.5% (from 19.4% in 2023).

**Malta demonstrates its commitment to promoting ICT training, with a higher percentage of enterprises offering such training compared to the EU average.** In 2024, 31.12% of Maltese enterprises offered ICT training, compared to the EU average of 22.29%. This reveals an annual increase of 4.7% since 2022 (28.39%), while the EU average slightly declined, by 0.2% per year since 2022 (22.37%).

On labour market demand, Eurostat's experimental statistics based on web scraping show that, in the ICT field, the most sought after profile is that of software and applications developers and analysts, targeted by 40.4% of online job advertisements, compared to an EU average of 58%. In other fields, Malta shows a relatively higher demand for certain profiles than the EU average. For example, job postings for 'information and communications technology service managers' account for 6.0% of ICT-related ads in Malta, compared to 3.8% at EU level. Similarly, 'information and communications technology operations and user support technicians' make up 18.8% of Malta's ICT job ads, well above the EU average of 10.4%. This achievement highlights Malta's success in promoting digital literacy across a broad demographic, ensuring a solid foundation for participation in the digital economy.

**According to the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Maltese students performed strongly in both mathematics and science.** In mathematics, they achieved an average score of 499, significantly exceeding the international average of 478, and performing on a similar level to students in countries such as Italy and Norway. In science, their results were even more impressive, with an average score of 501, comparable to peers in Italy and New Zealand<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, Maltese students demonstrated resilience, with approximately 13% from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds ranking in the top quartile for mathematics performance, exceeding the OECD average of 10%<sup>8</sup>.

**2024 recommendation on ICT specialists:** Continue skills forecasting and improve cooperation with industry and the civil society to regularly evaluate and adjust education and training offers to labour market needs and encourage women to become ICT specialists.

**In 2024, Malta continued the implementation of existing measures but did not take any new measure.** The government continued to collaborate with industry bodies, private sector employers, and civil society through platforms like the Digital Malta Strategy and the National e-Skills Strategy 2022-2025, ensuring that education and digital skills training remains relevant and forward-looking.

Stakeholder engagement was emphasised in the Digital Education Strategy 2024-2030, which was launched in May 2024 to improve digital competencies at all levels of education, and to support lifelong learning pathways.

Key digital public services and solutions – trusted, user-friendly, and accessible to all

**On digital public services for citizens, Malta scored 99.7 (national 2030 target: 100), surpassing the average EU score of 82.32. As such, despite a minor decline, Malta is on track according to its national trajectory, having already reached 100 in 2023.** For cross-border digital public services for citizens,

<sup>7</sup> TIMSS 2023 International Results in Mathematics and Science. International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), 2023.

<sup>8</sup> OECD. (2023). PISA 2022 Results (Volume I): The State of Learning and Equity in Education.

Malta achieved a score of 100 in 2023, well above the average EU score of 68.37. Its score decreased slightly to 99.4 in 2024, but was still higher than the EU's 71.28. The slight decrease in the score for citizens is due to a correction in the assessment of cross-border online availability. In particular, one false positive from the previous year was adjusted (the *Career* 3.3 service, which requires in-person identification, had been mistakenly considered fully online in the earlier assessment).

**In the area of digital public services for businesses, Malta's total score was 100 in both 2023 and 2024, consistently outperforming the average EU scores of 85.42 and 86.23, respectively. As such, Malta reached its national 2030 target.** Similarly, for cross-border digital public services for businesses, Malta's score remained at 100 in both years, outperforming the average EU scores of 73.13 and 73.76.

**On access to e-health records, Malta scored 93.71 in 2024 (national 2030 target: 100) - an increase of 6.5% compared to the previous year - outperforming the average EU score of 82.7.** The country did not provide a national trajectory point for 2024, but it is progressing well.

## *eID*

**Malta has notified one electronic identification (eID) scheme under the eIDAS Regulation. The country excels in the adoption of electronic identification (eID) systems.** In 2023, 54.64% of individuals used their eID to access online services for private purposes, significantly surpassing the EU average of 41.11%. This reflects Malta's strong infrastructure for secure digital authentication and its success in encouraging its population to embrace eID for a variety of purposes. On the other hand, the share of individuals using government websites slightly decreased to 81.07% in 2024, compared to 88% in 2023.

## *Digitalisation of public services for citizens and businesses*

**In 2024, Malta achieved outstanding results in digital public service accessibility, reaching a score of 99.7 for citizens and a full score of 100 for businesses, meeting the EU's Digital Decade target of providing 100% access to key public services online.**

Businesses can conveniently access essential services through the [businessfirst.com.mt](https://businessfirst.com.mt) portal, while the user-friendly [servizz.gov.mt](https://servizz.gov.mt) is oriented towards citizens. Malta also stands out in terms of transparency, with a score of 100. The score for pre-filled forms reached 92.6 in 2024, down slightly from 94.0 in 2023. This small decrease is mainly due to the inclusion of a newly assessed service (*Business Start-up* 6.5), which requires users to manually complete a form. The absence of an automatic pre-filling function for this and a related service lowered the overall average. This strong overall performance is further reinforced by comprehensive user support, which received a perfect score of 100. According to the 2025 Eurobarometer, 85% of Maltese people think that accessing public services online will be important for their daily life by 2030.

**According to the OECD's Indicators of Regulatory Policy and Governance (iREG), Malta demonstrates a moderate level of performance in reducing administrative and regulatory burden.** While regulatory impact assessments are in place for primary laws, their systematic implementation and transparency could be further strengthened. Stakeholder engagement practices exist but are not consistently applied across all stages of the regulatory process.

Efforts have been made to simplify administrative procedures and reduce compliance costs, particularly through digitalisation. The [servizz.gov.mt](https://servizz.gov.mt) portal facilitates access to services for the general public, while [businessfirst.com.mt](https://businessfirst.com.mt) serves as a dedicated portal for businesses. Nonetheless,

there remains room for improvement in institutionalising good regulatory practices and enhancing *ex post* evaluation mechanisms to better assess the impact of existing regulations.

**Malta's digital strategy places strong emphasis on reinforcing the sovereignty of its digital administration.** A key priority is ensuring greater control over the State's information systems, with a focus on enhancing data governance, cybersecurity, and the resilience of digital infrastructure. The strategy aims to reduce dependencies on external providers where possible, promote the use of secure national platforms, and ensure that critical digital assets remain under the direct oversight of public authorities. This approach reflects Malta's commitment to safeguarding its digital autonomy while advancing the efficiency and trustworthiness of its public services.

## *e-Health*

**In e-health, Malta has achieved significant milestones**, with an increasing number of individuals having access to their electronic health records in 2024. This progress reflects the country's commitment to enhancing digital healthcare infrastructure, enabling people to manage their health more effectively while supporting interoperability across healthcare systems. By promoting accessibility and interoperability across healthcare systems, Malta enables its population to take a more active role in managing its health, while supporting more connected and efficient healthcare services.

According to the 2025 Eurobarometer, 83% of Maltese think that digital technologies will be important when accessing or receiving healthcare services (e.g., telemedicine, artificial intelligence for diagnosis diseases) for their daily life by 2030.

**2024 recommendation on e-Health:** Offer a mobile application for citizens to access their electronic health records. Increase the supply of health data by onboarding more categories of healthcare providers.

### **Malta some efforts to address the recommendation through new policy actions in 2024.**

Malta's e-health maturity score increased compared to last year. In Malta, all 13 data categories investigated in this framework are made available to citizens in a timely manner. Malta refers to timely data as data being available within 24 hours.

While citizens can access their electronic health records via an online portal, a mobile application is not available. The Ministry for Health (MHA) has initiated plans to also offer myHealth through a mobile application. MHA is also continuing the process to onboard existing historical health data onto the National Electronic Health Record repository as part of the process that will enable private healthcare providers to be able to link and share their own data to the same platform.

In the first months of 2024, Malta implemented the technical functionality for parents and legal guardians of children less than 18-years-old to apply to view their children's electronic health data, building on the legal basis already in place.

In 2024, more categories of healthcare providers are supplying health data, specifically public primary care physicians and community care centres and public geriatric nursing homes have connected to the system and are actively supplying data. However, none of the categories of private healthcare providers are sufficiently connected and supplying data. This remains the main gap in Malta's e-health maturity.



## Building a safe and human-centric digital environment and preserving our democracy

**In recent years, Malta has placed increasing emphasis on fostering a safe, inclusive, and human-centric digital environment.** Promoting responsible digital engagement and empowering citizens to participate in public life through digital means are key elements of this approach. Strengthening online civic and political participation is not only vital for preserving democratic values but also for ensuring that all voices are heard in the digital age.

**Between 2022 and 2024, the level of internet use for civic or political participation in Malta fluctuated.** In 2022, the indicator stood at 27.77, rising significantly to 34.46 in 2023, which suggests increased online engagement in civic and political activities. However, this upward trend did not continue, as the value dropped to 24.89 in 2024, marking a significant decline. Overall, the data indicates a peak in online civic or political engagement in 2023, followed by a notable decrease the following year. Nonetheless, when compared to the EU average, Malta consistently recorded higher levels of online civic or political participation throughout the period. The EU values showed a steady, gradual increase from 17.59 in 2022 to 20.45 in 2024. While Malta experienced more pronounced fluctuations, the EU trend suggests a slow but continuous growth in digital civic engagement.

In 2023, 54.45% of individuals in Malta declared having come across untrue or doubtful information or content on internet news sites or social media, higher than the EU average of 49.25%. Among those exposed, according to the survey, 29.09% verified its truthfulness, representing a moderate level of critical engagement in assessing the reliability of the information. Youth (16-24) (61.47%) reported slightly more exposure than adults (25-64) (56.85%), with verification rates of 36.48% for youth compared to 30.4% for adults. Males (54.22%) and females (54.7%) reported nearly identical exposure rates, with similar verification rates of 30.37% for males and 27.66% for females. According to the Digital Decade Eurobarometer 2025, Maltese think that the action of public authorities is urgent to protect children online regarding the negative impact of social media on children's mental health (91% of Maltese), cyberbullying and online harassment (93%) and to put in place age assurance mechanisms to restrict age-inappropriate content (93%).

Moreover, in 2023, in Malta, 45.47% of individuals encountered online messages that were considered hostile or degrading towards groups based on factors such as religion or social views, significantly above the EU average of 33.5%. Young people (16-24) (56.44%) reported higher exposure than adults (25-64) (47.68%), highlighting a notable age-related difference. Females (49.08%) also reported higher exposure than males (42.25%), indicating a moderate gender gap.

In conclusion, the 2023 data on online interactions in Malta reveals a concerning scenario, with a high proportion of individuals encountering perceived hostile and degrading online messages and potentially misleading information online. On a positive note, however, Maltese individuals demonstrated a moderate level of critical engagement in evaluating the accuracy of online content, particularly among young people (16-24).

**The impact of the spread of disinformation on Malta's youth was further corroborated by a Youth Eurobarometer survey, which revealed that Malta has the highest percentage of young people in the EU reporting frequent exposure to fake news.** To combat this, discussions have been ongoing about integrating media literacy into school curricula. In March 2025, it was highlighted that media literacy

is essential in addressing misinformation, with calls to emulate models like Finland, where media literacy is part of the educational system<sup>9</sup>.

**In terms of institutional measures, Malta has launched several awareness-raising initiatives and information campaigns designed to counter misinformation and promote responsible digital behaviour.** These include fact-checking platforms, educational workshops, and collaboration with civil society organisations to strengthen digital resilience. In particular, media literacy efforts have been linked with broader data literacy actions, equipping individuals not only with the means to identify disinformation but also to understand how their data is used online and how algorithmic biases can shape the information they see. Furthermore, actions are under way to support journalists and public figures targeted by online smear campaigns, including legal protections and reporting mechanisms for online harassment.

## Leveraging digital transformation for a smart greening

**Achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 lies at the heart of Malta's long-term economic and environmental vision.** As a small island state vulnerable to the effects of climate change, Malta is increasingly prioritising sustainability, resilience, and innovation across all sectors of its economy<sup>10</sup>. The transition to a greener future is being pursued through a series of national strategies, policy frameworks, and multi-stakeholder collaborations<sup>11</sup>.

In particular, *Malta's Sustainable Development Strategy for 2050 (SDS)*, explicitly recognises digitalisation as a key enabler of sustainable development. It highlights how digital technologies can accelerate economic growth, safeguard the environment, enhance service delivery, and provide new opportunities for social and personal development. The SDS also outlines government support for businesses adopting digital tools that not only improve productivity and competitiveness but also actively contribute to the green transition.

In 2024, 35.78% of people in Malta considered energy efficiency an important factor when purchasing ICT devices, significantly higher than the EU average of 19.35%. Similarly, 28.51% of Maltese consumers valued the eco-design of devices, well above the EU average of 12.04%. However, despite these elevated figures, eco-friendly criteria remain secondary to more dominant factors such as price, performance, and overall design when making purchasing decisions.

When it comes to recycling, people in Malta appear more proactive with laptops/tablets (9.29%) and desktop computers (11.17%) compared to the EU averages of 11.31% and 14.66%, respectively. Conversely, mobile phone recycling in Malta (8.97%) falls below the EU average of 10.93%, indicating a potential area for improvement.

**Reflecting a growing private sector commitment, the Malta Environmental, Social and Governance Alliance (MESGA) was established in July 2022** by 13 founding organisations, including major telecom operators. MESGA acts as a collaborative platform for Maltese businesses to lead on national ESG

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<sup>9</sup> [Media literacy needed in school curriculum to combat misinformation. The Malta independent, March 2025](#)

<sup>10</sup> [The European Green Deal \(Section 2.1.3\).](#)

<sup>11</sup> [The contribution of the Communications Sector and the MCA's potential role towards achieving Malta's environmental sustainability goals. Discussion paper, Malta Communication Authority, October 2023.](#)



goals, promote responsible corporate practices, and drive forward sustainable development by example.

According to the Digital Decade Eurobarometer 2025, 83% of Maltese consider digital technologies important to help fight climate change, while 86% of Slovenian respondents think that ensuring that digital technologies serve the green transition should be an important action for public authorities. To further encourage investments, support mechanisms are in place. These include grants and Feed-in Tariffs administered by the Regulator for Energy and Water Services (REWS). These schemes, [together with others, are published on the REWS website](#), and are available to both domestic and commercial consumers. These offer the digital sector opportunities to power their operations in a more sustainable way.

Overall, the green transition is not only a clear political and economic priority for Malta, but it is also deeply intertwined with the country's digital transformation.

## Annex I – National roadmap analysis

### Malta's national Digital Decade strategic roadmap

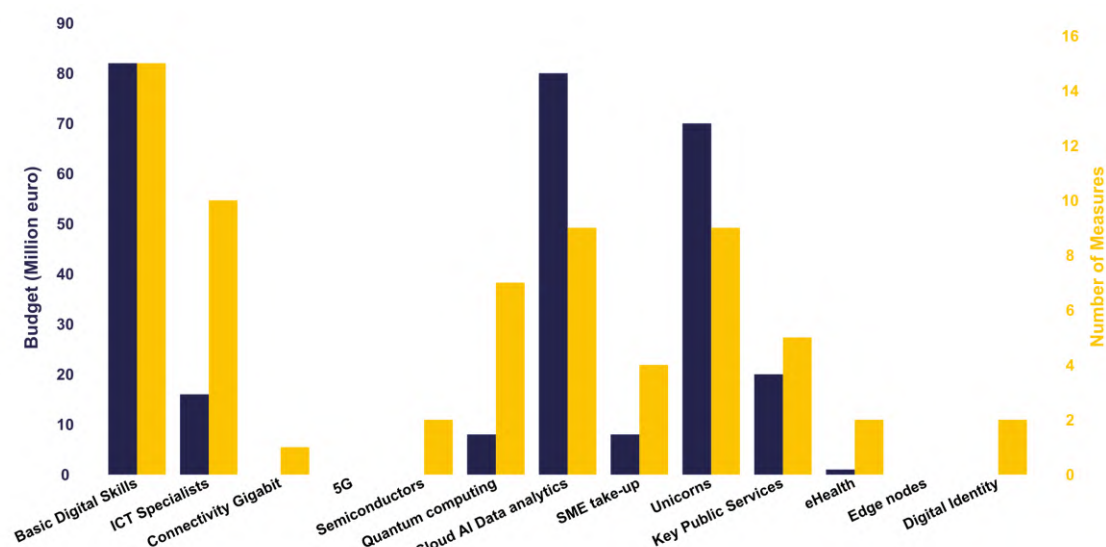
Malta did not submit a fully updated national Digital Decade roadmap in 2025. Therefore, the measures and targets for 2030 remain unchanged from those outlined in the initial 2023 roadmap, which was published in January 2024, following a comprehensive consultation process. A programme of ongoing monitoring and evaluation is in place to proactively identify potential areas for future improvement.

In 2024, Malta continued to implement existing measures but did not take any new ones. In total three targets (VHCN, 5G and Digital public service for citizens) have already been reached. The targets generally align with the EU-level goals for 2030, except for three national targets (basic digital skills, number of ICT specialists and SMEs with at least a basic level of digital intensity) which fall below the EU targets. This seems to be related to the estimation algorithm used to project historical values up to 2030.

Trajectories for edge nodes, e-health and unicorns are missing. Although the roadmap covers nearly all objectives of the Digital Decade, some aspects may require more effort, such as elements related to the green and digital activities.

The roadmap is coherent overall with the efforts needed in all the digitalisation dimensions. It consists of 66 measures with a total budget of EUR 284.9 million (equivalent to 1.27% of GDP) covering most of the targets. It still covers all objectives of the Digital Decade such as a human-centred digital space, resilience and security, sovereignty, green, and protection of the society.

**Measures and budget in national roadmap<sup>12</sup>**



<sup>12</sup> When referring to national roadmaps, data used in this report are those declared by the Member States in their national roadmaps, on the basis of the Commission's guidance (C(2023) 4025 final). Data might reflect possible variations in reporting practices and methodological choices across Member States. No systematic assessment of the extent to which Member States followed the guidance was carried out.

## Annex II – Factsheet on multi-country projects (MCPs) and funding

### Multi-country projects and best practices

Malta is an observer to the Alliance for Language Technologies EDIC. Malta is directly participating in the IPCEI on Microelectronics and Communication Technologies (IPCEI-ME/CT). It is also a participating state of the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking (JU) and of the Chips JU.

Malta has not yet presented any project in the framework of Digital Decade's Best Practice Accelerator<sup>13</sup>

### EU funding for digital policies in Malta

Malta allocates 26% of its total recovery and resilience plan to digital (EUR 68 million)<sup>14</sup>. In addition, under cohesion policy, EUR 129 million (representing 17% of the country's total cohesion policy funding), is dedicated to advancing Malta's digital transformation<sup>15</sup>. According to JRC estimates, EUR 120 million directly contribute to achieving Digital Decade targets (of which EUR 62 million comes from the RRF and EUR 58 million from cohesion policy funding)<sup>16</sup>.

In its Recovery and Resilience Plan Malta focuses on digital public services, and to a lesser extent on digital skills, and digitalisation of businesses. Additional funding is provided under the EU cohesion policy and national strategies to support the digitalisation of SMEs, public administrations, and education systems.

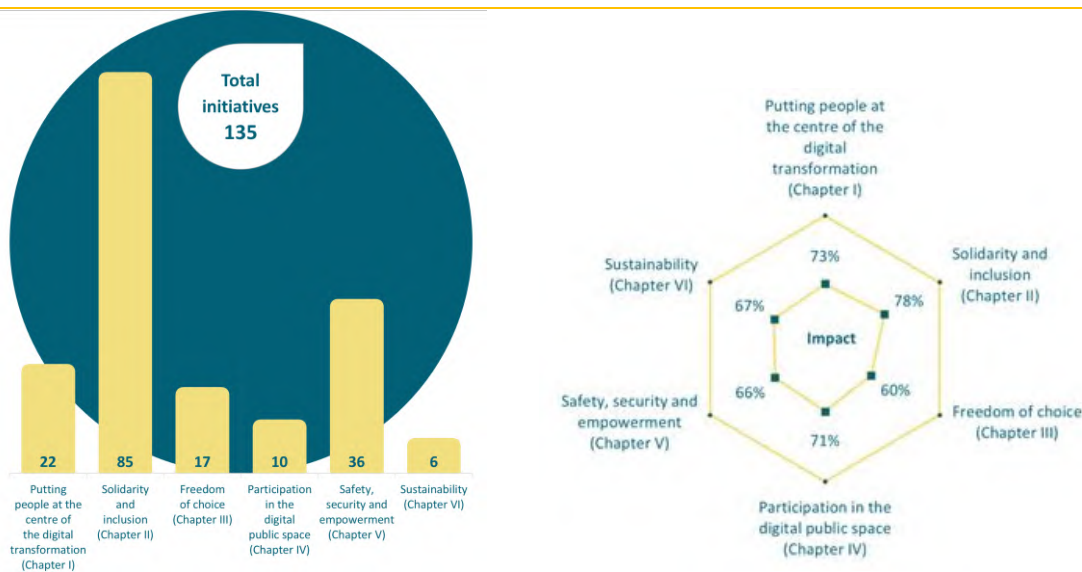
<sup>13</sup> The Best Practice Accelerator (BPA) is a platform that enables Member States to share successful measures and challenges encountered in their efforts to meet their Digital Decade targets and objectives. Best practices are made available to Member States via the BPA Repository and showcased in regular workshops, currently focused on three thematic clusters: Digital Skills, Green IT, and the Uptake of Digital Technologies.

<sup>14</sup> The share of financial allocations that contribute to digital objectives has been calculated using Annex VII to the Recovery and Resilience Facility Regulation. Last data update: 16 May 2025.

<sup>15</sup> This amount includes all investment specifically aimed at or substantially contributing to digital transformation in the 2021-2027 Cohesion policy programming period. The source funds are the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, and the Just Transition Fund.

<sup>16</sup> Joint Research Centre, Nepelski, D. and Torrecillas, J. Mapping EU level funding instruments 2021-2027 to Digital Decade targets – 2025 update, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2025, JRC141966. Last data update: 10 March 2025.

## Annex III – Digital Rights and Principles<sup>17</sup>



**Activity on Digital Rights and Principles** (figure 1)

Malta has been one of the most active Member States in implementing digital rights and principles, with over 100 initiatives overall and 35 new initiatives launched in 2024, showing significant progress towards its commitments. Malta is most active in the area of Solidarity and inclusion (II) and Digital education, training and skills (II). There is room for improvement, especially with regards to Connectivity (II) and Sustainability (VI) where less activity has been identified.

**Impact of Digital Rights Initiatives** (figure 2)

Quantitative impact indicators developed by the support study illustrate the level of implementation of digital rights initiatives on the ground. Based on available data, they estimate the impact of measures implemented by key stakeholders in Malta (mainly national government) and how these are perceived by citizens.

The indicators suggest that Malta is most successful in implementing commitments related to Solidarity and inclusion (II). Malta should review and strengthen efforts in areas where the impact of digital rights initiatives appears to be limited despite relative activity, notably on Freedom of choice (III).

According to the Special Eurobarometer 'Digital Decade 2025', 66% of citizens in Malta think that the EU protects their digital rights well (a 17% increase since 2024). This is above the EU average of 44%. Citizens are particularly confident about getting basic and advanced digital education, training and skills (79%, above the EU average of 60%). They are most worried that their right to a safe digital environment and content for children and young people is not well protected (47%, corresponding to the EU average).

<sup>17</sup> Based on a study to support the Monitoring of the Implementation of the Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles, available [here](#). For a more detailed country factsheet accompanying the study, click [here](#).