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COVER NOTE

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Delegations will find attached document SWD(2026) 155 annex.

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PART 19/27

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

Digital Decade 2026 country report

Accompanying the document

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

State of the Digital Decade 2026: Closing structural gaps and mobilising investments for 2030 and beyond

{COM(2026) 288 final} - {SWD(2026) 154 final} - {SWD(2026) 156 final} - {SWD(2026) 157 final}

European Commission

DIGITAL DECADE COUNTRY REPORT 2026

Malta

Malta

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Executive summary

Overall, Malta has strong assets in digitalisation, notably in the connectivity infrastructure and the availability of digital public services. At the same time structural weaknesses persist, particularly in relation to the shortage of ICT specialists (including low Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) uptake and the representation of women in ICT), the digital skills gap among older people and people with lower levels of educational attainment and the development of cybersecurity capabilities.

The identified weaknesses in ICT specialists and digital skills constrain Malta's **competitiveness**. The scarcity of specialised talent forces high-growth sectors like Fintech, Gaming and Interactive Entertainment to rely on foreign labour, which discourages long-term domestic R&D investment. Also, the significant divide in digital literacy among older people and people with lower levels of educational attainment hampers Malta's transition to a fully inclusive knowledge-based economy. Simultaneously, high cybersecurity incident rates undermine trust in Malta as a secure digital hub, discouraging international investment in its critical tech sectors.

Regarding **digital leadership** assets, Malta will be launching the CALYPSO AI Factory Antenna, which provides start-ups and Small and Medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with direct access to EuroHPC supercomputing. Also, the Malta Semiconductor Competence Centre (MSCC) supports start-ups in chip design, and Malta's quantum landscape, through the PRISM project, aims to build a large-scale quantum-secured network in Malta, spanning the entire country. Furthermore, the Digital Innovation Hub, hosting Malta's first High Performance Computer, grants SMEs and start-ups complimentary access to advanced AI capabilities, cloud-based tools, and data resources.

Malta in the Digital Decade

Malta shows a moderate level of ambition in its contribution to the Digital Decade having set 12 national targets (out of 14 possible), 58% of which aligned with the EU 2030 targets. In its national roadmap, Malta provided 8 trajectory points for 2025 (out of 13 analysed). The country is following them moderately well with 63% considered on track. Malta addressed 33% of the 6 recommendations issued by the Commission in 2025 by making some changes through new measures.

Malta submitted an updated national Digital Decade roadmap in January 2026. The roadmap contains 90 measures, of which 24 are new measures. The total budget is EUR 336 million (mostly coming from public budgets), corresponding to approximately 1.37% of Malta's GDP in 2025. According to the national roadmap, by the end of 2026, 62% of the measures will come to an end. The total public budget associated to these measures is EUR 308 million, representing 91% of the total public budget outlined in the roadmap.

According to the special Eurobarometer on 'the Digital Decade' 2026, 91% of Maltese consider that digital policy should have a very high/high priority for the EU in shaping our future in Europe. They also think that, in the next ten years, the EU should cooperate with Member States to reinforce cybersecurity and protection from online threats (97%), promote digital education and skills programmes (95%) and strengthen the regulation of online platforms (e.g. online social networks, marketplaces, app stores, etc.) (93%). In addition, 66% of Maltese respondents think that the EU

should reduce its dependencies on digital from third countries, and 88% that EU should prioritise investments in digital infrastructure and services that are developed and controlled in Europe. Meanwhile, 57% would be willing to switch to an EU-based digital service provider even if it means slightly higher costs.

Funding for digital and multi-country projects

Malta allocates 27% of its total recovery and resilience plan to digital (EUR 0.07 billion). In addition, under cohesion policy, EUR 0.1 billion, representing 14% of the country's total cohesion policy funding, is dedicated to advancing Malta's digital transformation.

Malta is directly participating in the IPCEI on Microelectronics and Communication Technologies (IPCEI-ME/CT) through a total capital investment of EUR 250 million. Malta is a participating state of the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking (JU) and of the Chips JU.

Digital Decade KPI (1)	Malta				EU		Digital Decade target by 2030	
	Last available data (2)	DESI 2026 (year 2025)	Annual progress	National trajectory 2025 (3)	DESI 2026	Annual progress	MT	EU
Fixed Very High-Capacity Network (VHCN) coverage	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	-	85.5%	3.7%	100.0%	100%
Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) coverage	86.2%	90.4%	4.8%	-	74.1%	7.1%	100.0%	-
Overall 5G coverage	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	96.8%	2.6%	100.0%	100%
Edge Nodes (estimate)	-	13	-	-	7451	-	-	10000
SMEs with at least a basic level of digital intensity *	76.5%	83.5%	4.5%	80.3%	71.4%	11.0%	85.0%	90%
Cloud *	58.2%	65.1%	5.7%	73.6%	46.7%	9.5%	80.0%	75%
Artificial Intelligence	17.3%	21.5%	24.3%	20.7%	20.0%	48.0%	27.2%	75%
Data analytics *	35.6%	38.9%	4.5%	44.6%	39.9%	9.5%	51.1%	75%
AI or Cloud or Data analytics *	68.3%	73.3%	3.6%	-	63.2%	7.5%	-	75%
Unicorns	5	5	0.0%	-	324	10.2%	-	500
At least basic digital skills *	62.8%	66.8%	3.2%	66.1%	60.4%	4.3%	75.0%	80%
ICT specialists	5.3%	4.8%	-9.4%	5.7%	5.0%	2.0%	8.0%	~10%
e-ID scheme notification		Yes						
Digital public services for citizens	99.7	99.1	-0.6%	100.0	84.6	2.8%	100.0	100
Digital public services for businesses	100.0	100.0	0.0%	-	88.6	2.7%	100.0	100
Access to electronic health records	93.7	94.5	0.8%	-	86.5	4.6%	100.0	100

(1) Indicators full description, metadata and sources in the DESI 2026 methodological note
(2) Last available data is DESI2025 (reference year 2024) except for indicators marked with a star * for which it is DESI2024 (reference year 2023)
(3) National trajectory value for 2025, if set by the country in its Digital Decade national roadmap

A competitive, sovereign and resilient EU based on technological leadership

In **connectivity**, progress has been supported by ongoing fibre deployment and resilience improvements. Yet, Malta lags behind in rural fibre deployment and shows stagnation in terms of 5G coverage in the 3.4-3.8GHz band. In **quantum**, Malta's quantum landscape is driven towards practical infrastructure deployment, particularly through the PRISM project. Malta's **semiconductor** ecosystem has been enhanced through the launch of the Malta Semiconductor Competence Centre (MSCC).

SMEs face difficulties in digitalisation, mostly derived from the shortage and limited access to specialised talent. The same applies to the **uptake of advanced technologies** by businesses. Despite new initiatives, like the AI Factory Antenna, and targeted incentives for SMEs, there are still challenges in the adoption of AI and data analytics from SMEs. Malta's **start-up** ecosystem has been supported through targeted national initiatives. However, challenges, like limited scale-up capital and the constraints of Malta's small domestic market, persist.

In terms of **cybersecurity**, the high rates of ICT security incidents, compounded by the shortage of qualified cybersecurity professionals, highlights the country's vulnerability to cyberattacks and undermines its resilience.

Protecting and empowering EU people and society

Despite the fact that the level of basic **digital skills** of the population is above the EU average, persistent bottlenecks endure due to digital skills gap among older people and people with lower levels of educational attainment. Furthermore, the share of **ICT specialists** is below the EU average, with under-representation of women in ICT. This leads to a shortage of specialised talent, affecting Malta's progress in digital transformation. On **digital public services**, Malta is improving user-centric delivery through the redevelopment of the servizz.gov portal, the planned roll-out of Business Portal and the Malta Business Wallet, and preparations for the EUDI Wallet procurement, focusing on, trust and streamlined service journeys. Nevertheless, Malta faces several critical hurdles in the full-scale digitalisation and AI integration of its healthcare system.

Recommendations

- **ICT specialists:** Enhance the attractiveness of ICT careers, by implementing more effective strategies to increase participation in ICT professions, especially from women. Strengthen and expand STEM-focused educational curricula to foster greater engagement in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines.
- **Basic digital skills:** Strengthen the development of basic digital skills, targeting vulnerable groups, including people with no or low formal education.
- **Cybersecurity:** Support the cybersecurity posture and preparedness of enterprises by promoting regular risk assessments, improving incident handling, and providing cybersecurity staff training. Focus on (i) implementing the National Cybersecurity Strategy and strengthening the technical and operational readiness of the National Coordination Centre for improved cyber incident response; (ii) expanding capacity development notably on Network and Information Systems Directive (NIS2) essential entities e.g. integrate AI into public services in line with the Malta's Cyber and AI initiative; and (iii) intensifying international cooperation and participation in cyber exercises.
- **Digitalisation of SMEs:** Facilitate the digitalisation of SMEs and uptake of advanced technologies, such as AI and data analytics, also by providing support to ensure that digital intensive SMEs can scale their activities.
- **Connectivity infrastructure:** Promote the deployment of fibre optics in rural areas. Accelerate 5G rollout in the 3.4-3.8 GHz band. Promote the deployment of 5G SA networks while enabling advanced use cases.

A competitive, sovereign and resilient EU based on technological leadership

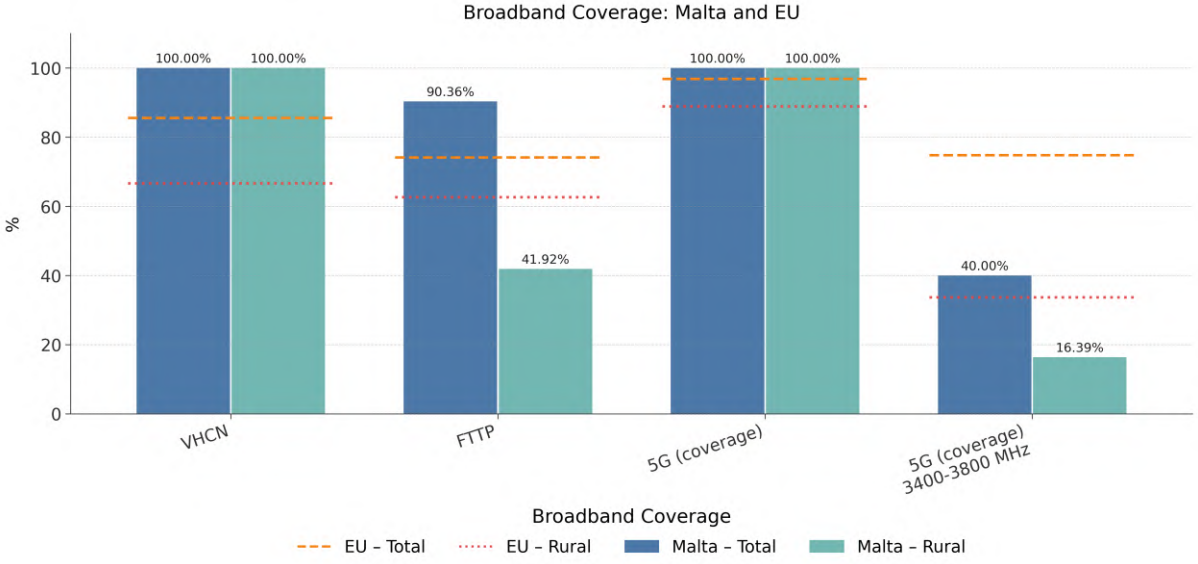
Building technological leadership: digital infrastructure and technologies

Connectivity infrastructure

Performance assessment

In 2025 Malta was at 100% of Very High-Capacity Networks (VHCN) coverage, **above the EU average of 85.54%.** The country did not provide a national trajectory point for 2025 in the Digital Decade national roadmap because Malta already achieved 100% coverage in VHCN in 2019.

In terms of Fibre-to-the-Premises (FTTP), 90.36% of the Maltese households were covered by FTTP in 2025 (+4.8% since 2024), standing above the EU average of 74.13%. In 2024, Malta's FTTP coverage was 86.2%, which was higher than the EU average of 69.24%. The annual growth rate for Malta is slightly lower than the EU's annual growth rate of 7.1%. For households living in sparsely populated areas, Malta's FTTP coverage in 2025 was 41.92%, which is below the EU average of 62.61%. In 2024, Malta's coverage was 26.63%, lower than the EU average of 58.76%. However, Malta's annual growth rate in this category is 57.4%, significantly higher than the EU's annual growth rate of 6.5%. The country did not provide a national trajectory point for 2025 in the Digital Decade national roadmap.



In 2025, Malta was at 100% of 5G coverage, in line with its national target, which is already reached in 2022, and stood above the EU average of 96.79%. The country is on track according to its trajectory presented in the Digital Decade national roadmap.

Malta's 5G coverage in the 3.4-3.8 GHz band of 40.00% was below the EU average of 74.75% in 2025, and showed no improvement compared with 2024, when the EU average was 67.6%. The annual growth rate for Malta is 0.0%, while the EU's annual growth rate is 10.6%. Similarly, 5G coverage in the 3.4-3.8 GHz band in sparsely populated areas reached 16.39% in 2025, compared with 33.71% of the EU average. In 2024, Malta's coverage was 10.05%, lower than the EU average of 25.36%. However, Malta's growth rate in these areas is 63.0%, far exceeding the EU's 32.9%, demonstrating a

committed focus on expediting 5G infrastructure to improve connectivity and service availability in rural areas.

Malta demonstrates a robust digital infrastructure in 5G coverage and Fixed Very High-Capacity Network (VHCN) coverage, where it has reached already the target of 100%. However, there are areas for improvement, notably in 5G coverage in the 3.4-3.8 GHz band, where Malta lags behind the EU average. The growth rates in sparsely populated areas for FTTP and 5G coverage in the 3.4-3.8 GHz band are encouraging, indicating significant progress in these domains.

The table showing VHCN, FTTP and 5G coverage across NUTS-2 regions has been omitted for Malta, as the country has no administrative subdivisions classified under NUTS levels.

Malta was at 45.42% of 5G SIM cards as share of the population, after an increase of 70.8% in 2025 yet remained below the EU average of 55.55%. In 2024, Malta's share was 26.6%, which was also below the EU average of 35.56%. The annual growth rate for Malta in 2025 was 70.8%, outpacing the EU's growth rate of 56.2%.

Malta was at 23.26% of fixed broadband subscriptions >= 1 Gbps after an increase of 36.9% in 2025, standing below the EU average of 26.97%. In 2024, Malta's share was 16.99%, which was also below the EU average of 22.25%. The annual growth rate for Malta in 2025 was 36.9%, exceeding the EU's growth rate of 21.2%.

Malta has shown significant improvements in its broadband take-up indicators from 2024 to 2025. In terms of 5G SIM cards share of population, Malta's growth rate of 70.8% in 2025 is notably higher than the EU average growth rate of 56.2%. Similarly, for fixed broadband subscriptions >= 1 Gbps, Malta's growth rate of 36.9% in 2025 exceeds the EU average growth rate of 21.2%. However, despite these positive growth rates, Malta's overall shares in both indicators remain below the EU averages.

Policy context and assessment of recommendations

Malta has consolidated its position as one of Europe's leading digital hubs. As of early 2026, Malta continues to hold its position as a digital leader in the EU, having effectively met its 'Digital Decade' targets for 5G and Very High-Capacity Networks (VHCN) coverage ahead of schedule. Malta achieved 100% VHCN in 2019 and 5G coverage as early as 2022.

Fibre-to-the-Premises (FTTP) is nearing full nationwide completion. The legacy fixed telephony and broadband provider, GO, reached nationwide fibre network coverage in 2025, following a EUR 100 million investment over recent years. The provider continued with the migration of copper subscribers to fibre in 2025, with the process nearing completion. By September 2025, FTTH connections accounted for 48.1% of the market, overtaking cable as the primary transmission technology.

Malta has initiated the legislative process to align its national framework with the EU's Gigabit Infrastructure Act (GIA). Malta published a draft Bill on 31 October 2025 to amend the Utilities and Services (Regulation of Certain Works) Act and related legislation previously implementing the Broadband Cost Reduction Directive (BCRD), with the public consultation having closed on 27 November 2025. The main public entities involved in GIA implementation include (i) the Authority for Transport in Malta, acting as the designated competent infrastructure regulator; (ii) the Malta Communications Authority, serving as the competent utility regulator for electronic communications; and (iii) the Building Construction Authority, overseeing in-building physical infrastructure. The

ongoing legislative alignment and multi-coordination indicate that Malta is actively structuring itself to ensure efficient FTTP roll-out under the GIA framework.

Malta has continued to strengthen its international resilience through incremental upgrades to submarine cable infrastructure, expanding available capacity and improving redundancy for cross-border connectivity. The agreement between Medusa Submarine Cable PLC and the Ministry for Economy, Enterprise and Strategic Projects (MEEP) was signed on 13 October 2025. It provides for the construction and delivery of a submarine cable branch, starting at a (Malta) branching unit on the main Medusa trunk, and ending in a Cable Landing Station situated within the Park tal-Majjistral, located in Mellieha, Malta. The project completion date is scheduled for the end of 2026. GO also received approval for Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) funding in November 2025 for a project entitled MOGOSC – The Modernisation of the GO-1 Submarine Cable. The MOGOSC project aims to modernise and secure Malta's GO-1 submarine cable by upgrading its land-based infrastructure with EU-compliant technology, doubling capacity from 200G to 400G while improving reliability, cybersecurity, and resilience. This infrastructure strengthens Malta's position as a preferred data gateway in the region, facilitating improved connectivity and data transmission capabilities.

In relation to the deployment of 5G Standalone, Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) have no concrete plans on 5G SA investments. Current efforts are focused in the 3.4-3.8GHz pioneer bands to support ultra-low latency for industrial and fintech applications. Malta's Communication Authority (MCA) new three-year strategy emphasises the transition to 5G Standalone (SA). However, currently there is lack of market interest in the unassigned spectrum within the 5G pioneer bands. At end of February 2026, 3.6GHz coverage stood at 43%. This is due to the fact that Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) have deployed 5G using non-pioneer bands, primarily through 5G dynamic spectrum sharing technology and that the wireless broadband electronic communications ('WBB') services provided by the MNOs are available on a nationwide basis and effectively meet the needs of the Maltese market. The MCA plans to engage once again with the national companies in the course of 2026 in relation to the plans of stakeholders for the adoption of newer technologies (including 5G SA).

Regarding the copper switch off, the decommissioning of older networks (fixed copper and mobile 2G and 3G) is underway. One of Malta's operators, GO, informed the MCA of its intention to switch off its copper network in 2026. GO has passed over 371000 homes with fibre and, as of early 2026, the vast majority of its fixed-line customers have access to the fibre network. Migration efforts are now concentrated on a small residual group of legacy users who continue to rely on copper access. The transition from legacy 2G and 3G networks to 4G and 5G in Malta is currently ongoing, driven primarily by the three main mobile network operators (MNOs) (i) Epic; (ii) GO; and (iii) Melita. As of early 2026, Malta's strategy largely mirrors the broader EU trend: 3G is being switched off first to allow spectrum for 5G, while 2G is being retained as a temporary 'safety net' for basic voice calls and legacy M2M (Machine-to-Machine) devices.

2025 recommendation on the connectivity infrastructure: Continue efforts to deploy fibre networks and 5G pioneer bands and promote uptake.
In 2025, Malta continued the implementation of existing measures but did not take any new measure. Malta has progressed in the deployment of fibre networks, nearing full completion. In turn, there seems to be lack of market interest in the unassigned spectrum within the 5G pioneer bands and MNOs have no concrete plans for 5G SA investments.

Malta

Semiconductors

Malta's semiconductor ecosystem is in an early scaling phase. Malta is implementing its responsibilities under the EU Chips Act, primarily through the establishment and growth of the Malta Semiconductor Competence Centre (MSCC). The MSCC was officially launched in September 2025. One of its key priorities is skills development, in collaboration with the University of Malta and the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) and Malta Digital Innovation Hub. The MSCC aims to achieve this goal through targeted training programmes and micro-credential courses to meet the evolving needs of the semiconductor industry. Also, the MSCC is leading and operating the ChipStart EU programme, which is open to early-stage semiconductor start-ups based anywhere in the EU (and European Economic Area (EEA) member countries). The programme's goal is to support start-ups in chip design. More than 40 companies have already applied, with 12 selected for the first cohort. Furthermore, in November 2025, there was an announcement by the Maltese government of a significant expansion of STMicroelectronics' facility in Malta, to be upgraded into a 'Smart Factory', with a EUR 250 million investment under the IPCEI framework.

Edge nodes

Performance assessment

In 2025 the Edge Node Observatory estimated a potential number of 13 deployed edge nodes for Malta. This places Malta at the end, having the lowest number of deployed edge nodes, among the EU-27 Member States of the EU. This number though cannot be compared to previous estimations due to a change in the methodology.

Policy context and assessment of recommendations

As part of its digital transformation strategy, the Maltese government has allocated a significant investment of EUR 100 million in its 2026 budget to further boost the adoption of emerging technologies reliant on edge infrastructure. This architecture is specifically designed to provide SMEs and start-ups with complimentary access to advanced cloud-based tools and data resources. Current infrastructure planning emphasises 'edge-focused network resilience', incorporating backup power strategies and autonomous maintenance models for unmanned sites. Ultimately, the robust deployment of edge nodes serves as the backbone of Malta's Vision 2050, aiming for long-term economic resilience and digital sovereignty. Given the country's size and the fact that nationwide latencies already remain well below 20ms, the current number of edge nodes seems sufficient.

Quantum technologies

Malta's quantum landscape is driven by practical infrastructure deployment, particularly through the PRISM project. The PRISM (Physical Security for Public Infrastructure in Malta) project aims to build a large-scale quantum-secured network in Malta, spanning the entire country, as part of the EuroQCI (European Quantum Communication Infrastructure) initiative. As of February 2026, the network design under the PRISM initiative has been finalised. This involves finalising the installation of

Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) devices across the fibre networks provided by Melita, one of Malta's Mobile Network Operators (MNOs). Malta's Digital Innovation Authority (MDIA) has signed an agreement with PRISM to host a quantum node, and a node is hosted at the MDIA.

In the area of research, Malta shows significant progress. The University of Malta runs 'The Quantum Communications Research Group', which performs research in the area of quantum communications, specifically Quantum Key Distribution (QKD). Furthermore, the innovative research programme 'Advancing Quantum Computing in Malta: Quantum Algorithms and Machine Learning' is led by a collaboration between the Ministry of Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation (MEYR) and the University of Malta. The programme focuses on three main pillars (i) Quantum Algorithms; (ii) Quantum Machine Learning (QML); and (iii)Real-World Applications, and includes collaborations with major tech corporations.

However, on advancements in research and commercial initiatives, the limited number of undergraduates in relevant fields is emerging as a significant constraint. Malta has taken some measures, by enriching the educational programme, primarily at the University of Malta, with quantum courses for ICT students.

Supporting EU-wide digital ecosystems and scaling up innovative enterprises

SMEs with at least basic digital intensity

Performance assessment

Malta was at 83.5% of SMEs with at least a basic level of digital intensity index, in 2025, after a progression of +4.5% annually between 2023 and 2025, placing Malta above the EU average of 71.39%. In 2023, the figure for Malta was 76.49%, which was also higher than the EU average of 57.9%. Despite Malta's higher starting point, its annual growth rate of 4.5% is significantly lower than the EU's growth rate of 11.0%. This indicates that while Malta's SMEs are more digitally intense, compared to the EU average, the pace of digitalisation is slower. The country is on track according to its trajectory presented in the Digital Decade national roadmap.

When examining SMEs with a very high digital intensity index, Malta was at 16.05% in 2025, a 22.2% annual increase between 2023 and 2025, placing Malta above the EU average of 9.07%. In 2023, Malta's figure was 10.74%, also higher than the EU average of 4.38%. However, Malta's annual growth rate of 22.2% is lower than the EU's growth rate of 43.9%. This suggests that although Malta has a higher proportion of highly digitalised SMEs, it is not keeping up with the EU's rapid pace of advanced digitalisation.

Policy context and assessment of recommendations

Malta continues to prioritise the digitalisation of SMEs as a core pillar of its digital transformation agenda. The Micro Invest Scheme initiative, which has been strengthened and extended until 2030, encourages businesses, including start-ups, to invest in their operations and innovate, with assistance provided in the form of tax credits. Furthermore, the Business Development Scheme, which supports the adoption of digital solutions by local businesses, extends beyond financial incentives by incorporating proactive outreach, based on the fact that many SMEs demonstrate persistent inertia

in adopting new technologies. Digital readiness is further strengthened through the Digital Innovation Hub (DiHubMT), which boosts Malta's broader innovation ecosystem. By expanding access to digital innovation facilities, providing training for founders and teams, and fostering collaboration between government, academia, and industry, the hub delivers indirect yet significant benefits for SMEs.

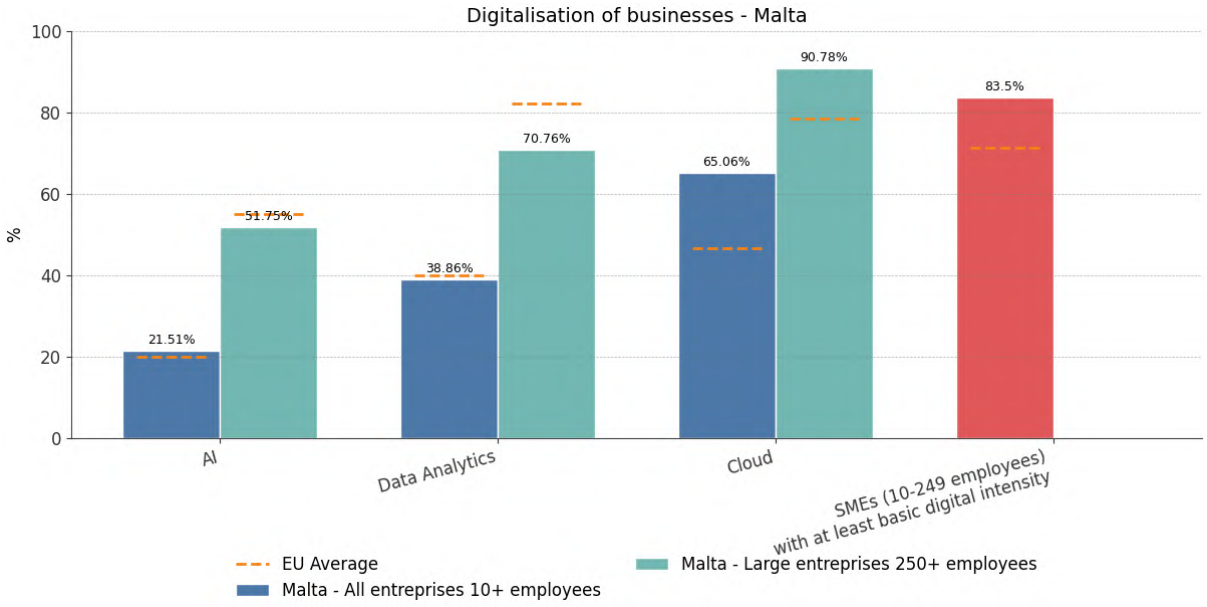
Notwithstanding the measures and the progress made, structural constraints continue to affect the of SMEs digitalisation. A primary barrier is the acute shortage of ICT specialists, with many SMEs unable to compete with the high salaries offered by the iGaming and FinTech sectors. Moreover, since most local businesses are micro-enterprises, they often lack the dedicate R&D departments, needed to move beyond basic digital tools towards advanced technologies. Furthermore, a significant training deficit exists with over 65% of businesses reporting no formal digital upskilling of their staff.

Digital intensive SMEs face challenges in scaling their operations. These SMEs often hit a 'domestic ceiling' within Malta's small market. Access to multi-million financing remains limited locally. Furthermore, the scarcity of high-end technical talent, such as data scientists and DevOps architects, is even more pronounced at this level, as scaling requires specialised experts, who are in short supply.

2025 recommendation on the digitalisation of SMEs: Enhance efforts to close the digitalisation gap between SMEs and large enterprises, in order to maximise the economic potential of SMEs.
In 2025, Malta continued the implementation of existing measures but did not take any new measure. Malta's measures didn't address the recruitment gap problem between SMEs and large enterprises, which weakens the economic potential of SMEs and maintains their digitalisation gap.

Take up of advanced technologies

Performance assessment



Malta was at 38.86% of enterprises adopting data analytics, after an annual increase of +4.5% between 2023 and 2025, slightly below the EU average of 39.85%. In 2023, Malta's figure was 35.59%, which was higher than the EU average of 33.25%. However, Malta's annual growth rate of 4.5% was less than half the EU's growth rate of 9.5%. Focusing on SMEs, Malta was at 37.6% after an annual increase of 4.2%, which is lower than the EU average of 38.59%. In 2023, Malta's figure was

34.6%, higher than the EU average of 32.09%. Again, Malta's annual growth rate of 4.2% is less than half the EU's growth rate of 9.7%. For large enterprises, Malta was at 70.76% after an annual increase of +2.4%, considerably lower than the EU average of 82.03%. In 2023, Malta's figure was 67.47%, which was lower than the EU average of 71.81%. Malta's annual growth rate of 2.4% was also lower than the EU's growth rate of 6.9%. The country is lagging behind compared to its trajectory presented in the Digital Decade national roadmap.

Malta was at 65.06% of enterprises adopting cloud technologies, after an annual increase of 5.7% between 2023 and 2025, which is higher than the EU average of 46.69%. In 2023, Malta's figure was 58.19%, also higher than the EU average of 38.97%. However, Malta's annual growth rate of 5.7% was lower than the EU's growth rate of 9.5%. For SMEs, Malta was at 64.05% after an annual increase of 5.5%, higher than the EU average of 45.74%. In 2023, Malta's figure was 57.56%, also higher than the EU average of 38.04%. Nevertheless, Malta's annual growth rate of 5.5% was lower than the EU's growth rate of 9.7%. For large enterprises, Malta was at 90.78% after an annual increase of 7.7%, higher than the EU average of 78.32%. In 2023, Malta's figure was 78.31%, also higher than the EU average of 69.72%. Moreover, Malta's annual growth rate of 7.7% was higher than the EU's growth rate of 6.0%. The country is lagging behind compared to its trajectory presented in the Digital Decade national roadmap.

Malta was at 21.51% of enterprises adopting artificial intelligence, after an annual increase of 24.3% between 2023 and 2025, which is higher than the EU average of 19.95%. In 2024, Malta's figure was 17.3%, also higher than the EU average of 13.48%. However, Malta's annual growth rate of 24.3% was lower than the EU's growth rate of 48.0%. For SMEs, Malta was at 20.31% after an annual increase of 24.8%, higher than the EU average of 18.9%. In 2024, Malta's figure was 16.28%, also higher than the EU average of 12.64%. Nevertheless, Malta's annual growth rate of 24.8% was lower than the EU's growth rate of 49.5%. For large enterprises, Malta was at 51.75% after an annual increase of 10.7%, which was lower than the EU average of 55.03%. In 2024, Malta's figure was 46.74%, higher than the EU average of 41.17%. However, Malta's annual growth rate of 10.7% was lower than the EU's growth rate of 33.7%. The country is on track according to its trajectory presented in the Digital Decade national roadmap.

When taking the adoption of AI, cloud, or data analytics technologies together, Malta was at 73.27% after an annual increase of 3.6% between 2023 and 2025, which is higher than the EU average of 63.2%. In 2023, Malta's figure was 68.25%, also higher than the EU average of 54.7%. However, Malta's annual growth rate of 3.6% was lower than the EU's growth rate of 7.5%. For SMEs, Malta was at 72.39% after an annual increase of 3.4%, higher than the EU average of 62.32%. In 2023, Malta's figure was 67.67%, also higher than the EU average of 53.74%. Nevertheless, Malta's annual growth rate of 3.4% was lower than the EU's growth rate of 7.7%. For large enterprises, Malta was at 95.65% after an annual increase of 5.0%, higher than the EU average of 92.78%. In 2023, Malta's figure was 86.75%, also higher than the EU average of 86.71%. Moreover, Malta's annual growth rate of 5.0% is higher than the EU's growth rate of 3.4%.

In conclusion, Malta's digitalisation levels and technology adoption rates are generally above EU averages, indicating a robust digital ecosystem. However, the growth rates in most areas are lower than the EU averages, suggesting a slower pace of digitalisation. This trend is evident across SMEs and large enterprises, as well as in specific technologies such as data analytics, cloud, and AI.

Policy context and assessment of recommendations

Malta has significantly strengthened its AI ecosystem through the launch of the AI Factory Antenna, alongside a strategic realignment of its National AI Strategy to enhance ethical governance, business adoption, and public-sector digital transformation. In late 2025, it was announced that Malta has been officially selected by the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking (EuroHPC JU) to host one of Europe's

13 soon to be established AI Factory Antennas, named CALYPSO (Computational AI factory Link Yielding Performance, Services, and Outreach). This marked another significant step in the country's digital transformation journey and strengthened its role within Europe's AI and high-performance computing network. Also, the National AI Strategy of Malta was updated in late 2025, moving away from a technology-first approach, and placing societal well-being and sustainability at its core. Malta's vision is to create a trusted AI ecosystem that promotes societal well-being, inclusive social and economic progress, and sustainability.

For SMEs, the focus shifted towards direct financial support and specialised training through the 100 million Digital Investment Fund announced in late 2025, to support AI, among other technologies. The primary objective is to foster a more resilient and competitive economic landscape in Malta. Furthermore, the **Digital Innovation Hub**, hosting Malta's first High Performance Computer, grants SMEs and start-ups complimentary access to advanced AI capabilities, cloud-based tools, and data resources. This initiative provides critical infrastructure and tailored support, in turn facilitating the establishment and scaling of business operations in Malta. Furthermore, several initiatives, like the Digitalise Your SME scheme, Digitalise your Business scheme, SME Enhance (RSO 1.2), aim to assist SMEs, through non-repayable Grants to part- finance investment to digitalise their operations, and therefore improve their resilience, efficiency, productivity and customer experience.

SMEs are however facing difficulties in adopting AI. As of 2025, 65.9% of businesses reported that they had not participated in any formal AI training. Furthermore, the shortage of ICT specialists constitutes a great obstacle for SMEs, which struggle to compete with large FinTech and Gaming businesses to fill their positions with AI experts.

Despite the initiatives taken in data analytics, Malta's performance is below the EU average. Malta is taking active measures to strengthen the uptake of data analytics across the private sector through a combination of infrastructure development and targeted support instruments. A dedicated private-sector data platform is being proposed under the AI Factory Antenna to complement existing public-sector infrastructure and to broaden access to open data and analytics capabilities for wider range of stakeholders. Also, Malta is promoting investment in data-driven solutions through a range of funding schemes, including the Digitalise Your SME initiative, the SME Digitalisation Grant Scheme, the Digital Intensification Grant Scheme, and the Digitalise Large Business measure. Additionally, hands-on capability programmes for SMEs, such as short-applied courses, and improving access to talent and expertise, have been introduced. These include the University of Malta Data Science Summer School 2025 and the Fundamentals of Python Programming for SMEs Round 2 .However, several solutions could also be taken to enhance the uptake of data analytics. For example, having targeted financial support for analytics outcomes, e.g. higher grant intensities or specifically for hiring data specialists.

2025 recommendation on the adoption of 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.
In 2025, Malta made some efforts to address the recommendation through new policy actions. Malta has made notable progress in enterprise adoption of AI and cloud technologies, with new initiatives, like the AI Factory Antenna, and incentives specifically for SMEs, which have facilitated access to advanced tools and infrastructure. However, challenges remain in the adoption of AI by SMEs, mainly deriving from the lack of access to specialised talent.

Unicorns, scale-ups and start-ups

Performance assessment

At the beginning of 2026, Malta had five unicorns, showing no improvement in comparison with 2024. The country did not provide a national trajectory point for 2025 in the Digital Decade national roadmap.

Policy context and assessment of recommendations

Malta's capacity to generate additional unicorns remains structurally constrained by the limited scale of its domestic market, the scarcity of large-ticket private capital and persistent shortages of specialised talent in advanced technology domains. While national measures have established solid baseline, with initiatives that enhance international visibility, the ecosystem continues to depend substantially on external investment conditions. Consequently, although Malta has strong start-ups, expanding the pipeline of companies able to scale to this level will require deeper capital pools, stronger cross-border investment flows and continued ecosystem maturation.

Malta's start-up ecosystem has been supported through targeted national initiatives emphasising internationalisation, visibility, and founder support. The inMalta initiative serves as a key platform, for Maltese start-ups to showcase their innovations at international technology conferences and summits. The Strategic Partnership Initiative by Tech.mt further bolsters growth by offering mentorship, industry connections, and expert guidance, while financial tools like the Start-up Residence Programme, B.Start, MicroInvest, and Start-up Finance help early-stage ventures transition from idea to execution. Malta Enterprise also provides financial support for start-ups to join Accelerator programmes through the Accelerate scheme. The Basecamp incubator by GamingMalta, besides providing subsidised office space, will run an accelerator programme with game business knowledge workshops, networking events and give participants access to an ever-expanding network of industry professionals and investors based both locally and overseas. Also, a new initiative, the Game Prototype Funding Incentive tackles early funding challenges. On the talent front, GamingMalta runs a Unity Centre of Excellence programme, targeting industry related game engine certifications, whereby to date over 400 students have benefitted from this programme. Additionally, the Academy of Interactive Media, another educational and industry related initiative by GamingMalta provides guru-led Masterclasses across the various gaming disciplines including the digital entrepreneurship.

Despite progress, challenges persist, including limited scale-up capital, talent shortages, and the constraints of Malta's small domestic market. Malta reinforces the ecosystem with schemes like Start-up Finance, aiding innovation in product development and scaling. A forthcoming National Start-up Framework aims to streamline support through simplified regulations and addressing structural gaps in the ecosystem.

Strengthening Cybersecurity & Resilience

Maltese enterprises stood above EU peers concerning the implementation of cybersecurity measures. In 2024, 70.39% of enterprises applies at least 5 cybersecurity measures (out of 11 measures as measured by Eurostat), higher than the EU average of 56.85%. The gap with the EU is particularly pronounced in the use of ICT security tests (52.94% in Malta, 34.64% in the EU), maintaining log files for analysis after security incidents (61.72%, EU:45.16%) and VPN (Virtual

Private Network extends a private network across a public network to enable secure exchange of data over public network) (64.56%, EU:49.64%).

Malta has taken initiatives aiming to strengthen the cybersecurity of public sector and enterprises. Malta is making steady progress in implementing the National Cybersecurity Strategy 2023–2026, with most actions either completed or underway across its strategic domains. The Network and Information Systems Directive (NIS2 Directive) has been turned into Malta's national law in April 2025 and entered into force in January 2026. In May 2025, Malta participated for the first time in Locked Shields, the world's largest cyber defence exercise, bringing together cyber defence professionals from around the world to test their capabilities in real-time scenarios involving systems such as power grids, military networks, financial services, and other essential sectors. In relation to the enterprises, Malta continued to work on Cyber Assess Scheme in 2025. The scheme is funded by the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility, providing the private sector with specialised cybersecurity expertise and risk assessments. Also, the SECURE Project, a European initiative under the Digital Europe Programme, with the first open call for funding in Malta launched in early 2026, aims to enhance the cyber resilience of SMEs in Malta by providing direct financial support to SMEs to co-finance projects that improve cybersecurity practices and comply with the Cyber Resilience Act (CRA).

Malta has significantly increased its cybersecurity awareness efforts for employees and citizens under the National Cybersecurity Strategy 2023-2026. Measures like the Cybersecurity Skilling Programme, and the Mind the Gap initiative, targeting e-commerce businesses, are among the continued initiatives taken to foster a collective culture of digital resilience. Furthermore, Malta's national cybersecurity initiatives include train-the-trainer programmes for education officers, TV campaigns on cybercrime, and webinars/conferences to educate employees on risks. The national cybersecurity community also provides structured training for both ICT and non-ICT staff, ensuring broad skill development. Moreover, SME-focused upskilling courses offer hands-on training in threat detection, network security, and incident response for IT professionals. Malta's Ministry for Education integrates digital citizenship, e-safety, and cyber ethics into the national education curriculum via structured programmes on safe browsing, data protection, and cyberbullying prevention. Parents and guardians receive workshops on home cyber-safety and initiatives like "Let's Talk Digital Skills" of Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) and 'Smart Citizens, Safe Clicks' deliver practical training for young adults, parents, and educators on navigating digital threats responsibly.

Both Maltese enterprises and the public sector are vulnerable to cyberattacks. Malta has one of the highest rates of ICT security incidents among enterprises in the EU**,** leading to unavailability of ICT services, destruction or corruption of data, or disclosure of confidential data (for any reason). Information on the threat landscape for Malta in 2025 was not available. However, in 2024, 28.71% of Maltese enterprises reported ICT security incidents, compared with the EU average of 21.54%. Malta's financial services, gaming and cryptocurrency industries attract a lot of attention from cyber criminals. The gaming sector faced 26% of cyberattacks in 2024-2025, while the financial sector faced 16%. Moreover, a third of cyberattacks against Malta during the same period were aimed at government administration infrastructure and the public sector.

Malta faces a shortage of qualified cybersecurity professionals, who could contribute to the strengthening of the country's resilience by proactively defending critical infrastructure and rapidly detecting and mitigating threats. Based on ENISA's NIS2 investments report for 2025, Maltese organisations had only two estimated number of Information Security FTEs for 2024, including internal

staff and contractors. In terms of challenges to attract cybersecurity talent, 26% of the respondent organisations said that they face difficulty in finding workers with the required skills. In addition, when it came to retaining cybersecurity staff, 21% of respondents in Malta said that there were unable to offer competitive salaries and benefits. It is estimated that Malta needs 1 200 cybersecurity professionals by 2026, and currently only 700 are employed. The shortage of cybersecurity professionals is likely to affect incident detection and response and limits participation in critical cybersecurity exercises.

2025 recommendation on the cybersecurity: Implement targeted initiatives to strengthen internet security and enhance DNSSEC adoption, and support the development and deployment of cybersecurity capabilities.
Malta made some efforts to address the recommendation through new policy actions in 2025. The strengthening of internet security and Domain Name System Security Extensions (DNSSEC) adoption was largely driven by the implementation of the NIS2 directive. Under this framework, DNS service providers are required to adopt technical measures that ensure the integrity of their data. In March 2026, Certificate Authorities (CAs) started verifying DNSSEC signatures during domain control validation and CAA checks. Furthermore, the CYBER+ALT grant scheme, active through 2025, provided financial support for Maltese SMEs to invest in critical security solutions. However, in terms of the development of cybersecurity capabilities, Malta faces an increasing number of cyberattacks, indicating the need for additional measures in this domain.

Protecting and empowering EU people and society

Empowering people and bringing the digital transformation closer to their needs

Equipping people with digital skills

Basic digital skills

Performance assessment

Malta was at 66.8% of individuals aged 16-74 with at least basic digital skills in 2025, an annual increase of 3.2% since 2023, standing above the EU average of 60.40%. In 2023, Malta's figure was 62.78%, also higher than the EU's 55.56%. Despite this, Malta's annual growth rate of 3.2% lags behind the EU's 4.3%, indicating a slower pace of improvement. The country is on track according to its trajectory presented in the Digital Decade national roadmap.

Malta exhibited a **gender gap** of 2.43 percentage points in favour of men, with 67.91% of men and 65.48% of women possessing at least basic digital skills. This gap is slightly smaller than the EU average of 2.75 percentage points.

Education remains a critical factor in digital proficiency in Malta. Individuals with no or low formal education had a significantly lower digital skills rate of 26.98%, which is 39.82 percentage points below the national average and also lower than the EU average of 37.56% for this group. This gap is larger than the EU average gap of 22.84 percentage points between all individuals and those with low education.

In terms of **living areas**, Malta's urban population showed a higher proficiency rate than its rural counterparts, with 65.37% of individuals in cities possessing at least basic digital skills, compared with the EU average of 66.50%. In rural areas, 63.64% of individuals in Malta had at least basic digital skills, compared with the EU average of 52.83%. The urban-rural gap is 1.73 percentage points in favour of urban areas, smaller than the EU's 13.67 percentage point gap.

Age is another key factor. Young adults aged 16 to 24 demonstrated strong digital skills, with a proficiency rate of 91.52%, significantly higher than the EU average of 74.55%. For older adults aged 55 to 74, Malta's proficiency rate was 34.14%, lower than the EU average of 42.6%.

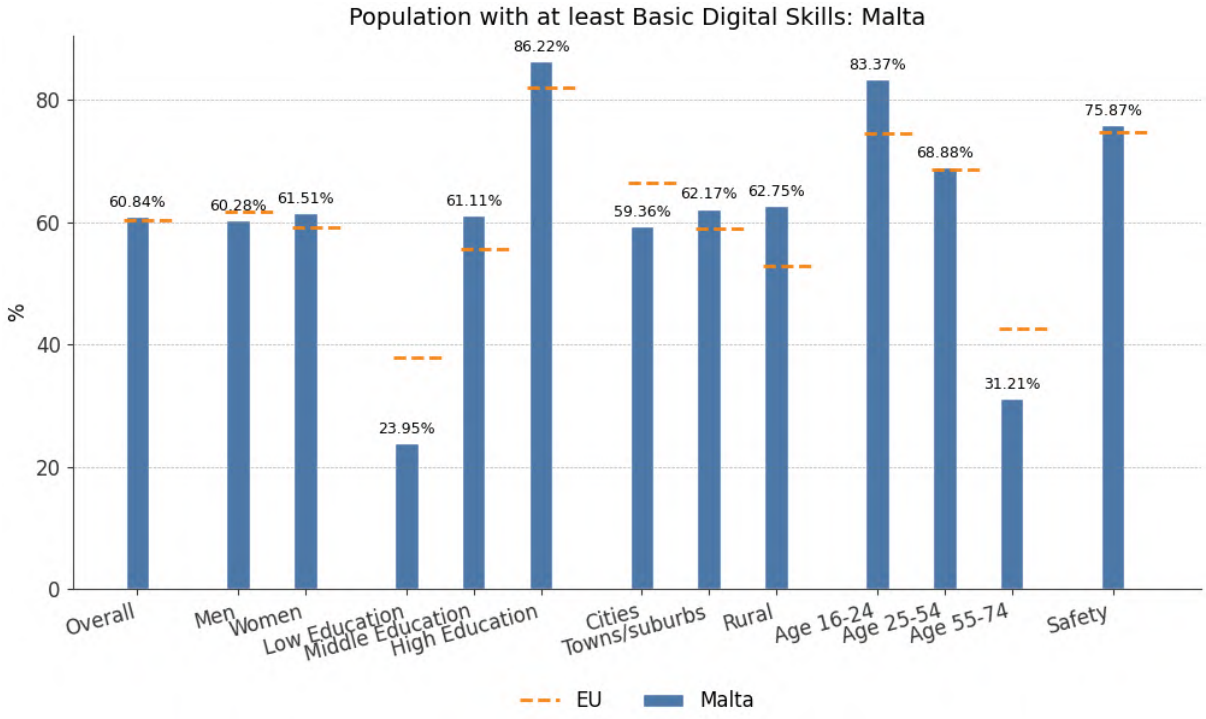
In terms of **digital safety skills**, 77.59% of individuals in Malta had at least basic digital safety skills, exceeding the EU average of 74.63%.

Regarding the **use of generative AI**, 46.46% of people in Malta used this technology in 2025, which is higher than the EU average of 32.66%. Additionally, 29.52% of Maltese individuals used generative AI for professional purposes, exceeding the EU average of 15.36%.

In summary, Malta's digital skills profile reveals equal progress across genders, alongside a comparatively modest disparity in skills between urban and rural areas. However, the significant disparities based on education level and age, particularly for older adults and those with low formal

education, require urgent attention. Despite the fact that overall, Malta's performance is above the EU average. Also, Malta's higher uptake of generative AI is a notable strength.

According to the Digital Decade Eurobarometer 2026, among the most significant barriers to wider adoption of generative AI tools include concerns over privacy or data protection (44%), concerns over accuracy or incorrect information (35%), and a lack of training or relevant skills to use generative AI tools (32%).



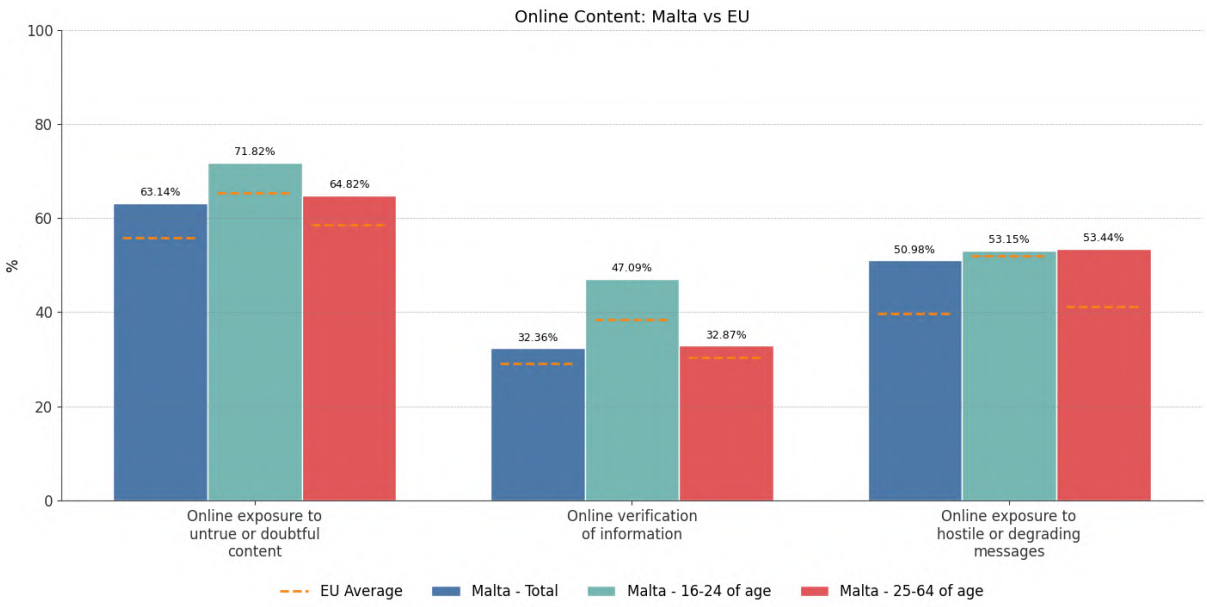
Malta was at 63.19% of **individuals exposed to untrue or doubtful content online** in 2025, marking an annual increase of 8.1% annually since 2023, when the figure stood at 54.06%. This places Malta above the EU average, which rose from 49.25% in 2023 to 55.9% in 2025, representing an annual growth rate of 6.5%. The annual growth rate for Malta (8.1%) is higher than that of the EU (6.5%). Focusing on the age group 16-24, 72.31% of individuals in Malta were exposed to such content in 2025, compared with 66.34% in the EU. For adults aged 25-64, the figure was 64.8% in Malta and 58.57% in the EU. The gap between the age group 16-24 and those aged 25-64 in Malta was 7.51 percentage points, which stood marginally below the EU average gap of 7.77.

Malta was at 32.62% of **individuals who verify the truthfulness of online content** in 2025, following an annual increase of 4.7% from 29.77% in 2023. This was above the EU average, which rose from 24.29% in 2023 to 29.16% in 2025, an annual growth rate of 9.6%. The EU's annual growth rate was higher. Among the 16-24 age group, 47.31% in Malta verified online content in 2025, compared with 39.49% in the EU. For the 25-64 age group, the figures were 33.16% in Malta and 30.4% in the EU. The gap between the 16-24 age group and those aged 25-64 in Malta was 14.15 percentage points and 9.09 in the EU.

Malta

Malta was at 51.04% of **individuals exposed to hostile or degrading messages online** in 2025, reflecting an annual increase of 8.0% from 43.76% in 2023. This was higher than the EU average, which rose from 33.5% in 2023 to 39.72% in 2025, an annual growth rate of 8.9%. For the 16-24 age group, exposure in Malta slightly decreased from 55.09% in 2023 to 53.41% in 2025, while the EU saw an increase from 47.54% to 52.99%. For the 25-64 age group, exposure was 53.53% in Malta and 41.14% in the EU. This results in a gap favouring core working-age individuals in Malta by 0.12 percentage points, contrasting with the EU's gap of 11.85 percentage points in favour of younger individuals.

Malta consistently shows higher exposure to untrue or doubtful content, hostile or degrading messages, and a greater tendency to verify online information compared with the EU average. In terms of age groups, younger individuals (16-24) in Malta are more exposed to untrue or doubtful content, but also more likely to verify information than older adults (25-64), though the gaps vary compared with EU averages. The data highlights the need for targeted interventions, particularly for the younger population, to address the challenges posed by online misinformation and hostile content. These initiatives should include the integration of critical digital literacy into the school curricula and the relevant training of the teachers on misinformation trends.



According to the Digital Decade Eurobarometer 2026, 89% of Maltese citizens agree that online manipulation (such as disinformation, foreign interference, AI-generated content, deepfakes) poses a threat to the democratic processes. In addition, when asked about online issues with the biggest personal impact on them, Maltese citizens highlighted fake news and disinformation (55%, an increase of 13 pp compared with 2024), misuse of personal data (44%) and insufficient protections for minors (36%). Furthermore, 97% think strengthening the protection of children and young people online should be a priority for the EU.

Policy context and assessment of the recommendations

Malta's above EU average performance in basic digital skills may be attributed to the prioritisation of early digital literacy and digital awareness initiatives. Malta is actively pursuing a strategic approach to enhance digital literacy from an early age through the provision of digital tools and

resources to students for learning, the implementation of structured programmes centred on coding and computational thinking and the promotion of online safety initiatives to foster responsible and secure digital citizenship among young learners. Based on the Digital Education Strategy 2025-2030, a new measure was introduced in early 2026 and involves teaching basic AI concepts to primary and secondary school students, focusing on the applications and ethical use of AI. Also, a primary pillar of the Strategy is the support of educators with tailored training and professional development in digital education. The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) co-funded initiative 'One Device Per Child' is implementing the Strategy by providing students and educators with the skills necessary to use innovative and digitally-enabled classroom management systems. Also, although not adopted yet, the National Skills Strategy 2026-2035, developed by the National Skills Council with support from the OECD and funding from the European Commission's Technical Support Instrument, sets out a roadmap to strengthen skills in Malta.

However, Malta continues to confront the substantial challenge of mitigating disparities from variations in educational attainment and age-related differences. While certain targeted digital inclusion programmes do exist, the disparities persist. Despite the fact that sector specific digital skills are planned to be addressed through elective modules of ai4all initiative, expanding digital vocational training through the systematic integration of sector-specific digital skills (e.g. retail, construction or transport) into apprenticeships and adult education could promote equitable access. Complementary measures, such as incentives to employer-led training and the promotion of a digital retirement planning (embedded in pension services and framed as vital for independent living), could effectively reduce disparities.

Malta prioritises the safeguarding of children in digital environments through ongoing awareness measures designed to educate and support children, parents, teachers, and families. From an early age, primary school students learn safe browsing practices, password security, and the identification of misinformation. In February 2026, Malta expanded Safer Internet Day (SID) into a month-long campaign under the theme "Putting well-being at the Centre". This initiative aimed to promote to public and schools the digital well-being, balanced screen use, and critical thinking, to support the educators through toolkit resources to embed SID themes into curricula, and by using AI-focused awareness videos, to encourage critical evaluation of online content by children and young people. Furthermore, the 'BeSmartOnline' initiative aims to act as a Safer Internet Centre and is implemented via a partnership, which includes the Commissioner for Children, the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS), and also brings together the Ministry for Education and the Cyber Crime Unit. Through this collaboration, ongoing awareness-raising activities are carried out among children, educators, and parents/guardians, while ensuring that children's voices and lived experiences actively shape the implementation of the work.

2025 recommendation on 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.
In 2025, Malta continued the implementation of existing measures but did not take any new measure. The primary focus of Malta's measures is on fostering digital literacy in early education and enhancing teacher training. While digital inclusion measures, including specialised, accessibility-driven training for older adults, and community-based basic digital skills programmes for people with low-levels of education have been implemented, significant gaps persist in engaging

older people and people with lower levels of education attainment. Consequently, digital engagement remains inconsistent.

ICT specialists

Performance assessment

Malta was at 4.8% of ICT specialists in total employment in 2025, after a decrease of 9.4% compared with 2024, standing below the EU average of 5.0%. In 2024 the share of ICT specialists in total employment was 5.3%. The country is lagging behind compared to its trajectory presented in the Digital Decade national roadmap.

The representation of women in Malta's ICT specialist workforce remains below the EU average. In 2025, Malta's share of women ICT specialists reached 17.10%, up 17.1% from 14.60% in 2024, though still below the EU average of 19.50%.

Malta also ranks among the lowest-performing countries in the share of ICT graduates, with 4.40% in 2024, after a decline of 15.4% since 2023, when the figure stood at 5.20%. This low performance raises significant concerns, as a low share of ICT graduates further diminishes the prospects of addressing the skills shortfall in training an adequate number of future ICT specialists.

In 2024, 18.72% of Maltese enterprises recruited or tried to recruit staff with ICT specialists' skills with the EU average being 9.55%.

Policy context and assessment of the recommendations

Malta is trying to address shortages of ICT specialists through a broad strategy. The ongoing initiative of Get Qualified Scheme (supported by Malta Enterprise, with 4 995 applications approved in 2025), provides financial support to individuals who wish to further their studies, including certifications in the ICT field. Several initiatives aim to reskill and upskill the workforce, like the Skills Development Scheme and Investing in Skills Scheme, as well as ESF+ co-funded projects like the Youth Guarantee 3.0 and Training for Employment. Furthermore, new initiatives like the Code.Sprint and the Robo.Sprint aim to promote coding proficiency and problem-solving among students. Moreover, the AIM (Academy of Interactive Media) broadens access to Malta's interactive entertainment sector by supporting individuals who are self-taught in game development, provides dedicated SOC training, helping to build a pipeline of talent for careers in cybersecurity. Furthermore, the Faculty of ICT at the University of Malta has introduced a Certificate Programme to support students, who do not possess the prerequisites, to enter the undergraduate programmes to study Mathematics, Physics and Computing. Successful candidates can then join any of the Faculty's undergraduate programmes. Security Operations Centre (SOC) Analyst Training Programme provides dedicated SOC training, helping to build a pipeline of talent for careers in cybersecurity. Furthermore, the Faculty of ICT at the University of Malta has introduced a Certificate Programme to support students, who do not possess the prerequisites, to enter the undergraduate programmes to study Mathematics, Physics and Computing. Successful candidates can then join any of the Faculty's undergraduate programmes.

Despite these measures, continued effort is still needed to address persistently low STEM uptake and competition from alternative employment opportunities, in order to expand the ICT workforce.

The above international average performance of the Maltese children in maths and science, does not translate into a higher participation in STEM in tertiary education compared with EU peers. Based on the data from the National Statistics Office of Malta, in 2024, the most popular field of study was Business, Administration and Law accounting for 33.8% of all tertiary-level graduates. The limited practical exposure to programming, cybersecurity, data, cloud computing, and real-world applications may be making ICT career paths less appealing.

Women remain under-represented in ICT studies and careers in Malta resulting in a comparatively narrow talent pipeline. Despite the fact that out of 6 210 total tertiary-level graduates in 2024, more than half were women (57.3%), there is a STEM imbalance, as only 33% of STEM graduates were women. Several reasons, like the limited early exposure to computing as a viable and attractive option, the late appearance of targeted tech engagement, and not as early as in primary and secondary school, and a shortage of visible female role models and mentors in technical fields, could have contributed to the low participation of women in pursuing ICT careers.

Possible additional measures could be taken so as to address the shortage of ICT specialists. The strengthening of the early pipeline (primary to secondary), through compulsory computing and digital literacy (such as computational thinking), as well as the increase of teacher training in computing, and embedded practical (coding, robotics, cybersecurity) to turn aptitude in maths/science into ICT, could be one solution. Additional initiatives could include the improvement of ICT career guidance and employer engagement. Moreover, to support the women participation, gender-sensitive career guidance should be included, strengthened mentoring and networking, and employer measures that support inclusive recruitment, progression and retention.

2025 recommendation on ICT specialists: Promote ICT and STEM career opportunities and related education programmes, especially among women.
In 2025, Malta continued the implementation of existing measures but did not take any new measure. Malta has tried to address the gender balance in ICT and STEM careers, through ongoing initiatives aiming at early intervention (e.g. Girls4STEM camps, AI literacy in schools) and visibility campaigns (e.g. Women in Tech Malta, She Can exhibitions). In October 2025, the project Net Zero Heroes was launched, which is an Erasmus initiative bringing together seven European partners including Malta, and aims to attract more women to Green Tech and STEM careers. Furthermore, through the ongoing campaign like 'Girls in Digital week', MDIA aims to foster a more inclusive digital ecosystem and empower women to contribute meaningfully to technological advancement. However, Malta did not take any new measures to promote the attractiveness of ICT careers among women.

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

Performance assessment

In 2025, Malta's total digital public services score for citizens (which covers both national and cross-border users) reached 99.11/100 points. This represents a 0.6% decrease compared with 2024. As such, Malta is above the EU average of 84.64/100 points. The country is on track according to its trajectory presented in the Digital Decade national roadmap. When looking specifically at digital public

services for national citizens, Malta reached 98.81/100 points in 2025. This is above the EU average of 94.01/100 points, and it marks a 1.2% decrease from 2024. For cross-border digital public services for citizens, Malta's 2025 score was 99.40/100 points, which is above the EU average of 75.28/100 points. This reflects no change compared with 2024.

While five Citizen-related life events (Health, Moving, Starting a small claims procedure, Family, Studying) score a full 100 points, life events Transport (95.83) and Career (97.91) show the most room for improvement. Across levels of government for national citizens' digital public services, central government services scored 89.73/100 points, and local government services scored 100.0/100 points. No regionally provided government services were landscaped for Malta.

Malta's total digital public services score for businesses (covering both national and cross-border businesses) was 100.0/100 points in 2025, standing above the EU average of 88.59/100 points. This represents no change from 2024. The country did not provide a national trajectory point for 2025 in the Digital Decade national roadmap as it already reached the maximum score. Both Business-related life events, Business Start-Up and Regular Business Operations, score a full 100 points. Malta's cross-border digital public services score for businesses reached 100.0/100 points in 2025, reflecting no change compared with 2024. These results are above the EU average of 78.37/100 points. Also, digital public services for businesses available to national users in Malta scored 100.0/100 points. This represents no change since 2024 and places the country above the EU average of 98.81/100 points.

In terms of auxiliary e-Government indicators, Malta performs well above the EU average in all auxiliary e-Government indicators, with score 100.0 in the mobile friendliness, transparency of service delivery, design and personal data and user support.

Malta's access to e-Health records reached in 2025 a score of 94.47 after a growth of 0.8% since 2024, above the EU average of 86.51. The country did not provide a national trajectory point for 2025 in the Digital Decade national roadmap.

Policy context and assessment of the recommendations

Malta has an established national electronic identification framework and is currently focusing alignment with the EU's evolving eIDAS requirements, particularly the forthcoming European Identity (EUDI) Wallet. The Malta Digital Innovation Authority (MDIA) is finalising the public procurement process for the wallet ecosystem components, with a tender for eIDAS-compliant EUDI Wallet expected to be issued in in the first quarter of 2026 following internal technical reviews.

Digital public services for citizens remain intuitive and accessible. A new personalised web portal and regular focus groups are among the measures to feature in three-year strategy for the Servizz.gov service. The new service would use artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies to deliver more personalised, people-centred services. Furthermore, a new digital platform bringing together all services offered by local councils across Malta and Gozo is set to be developed. The project is expected to involve an investment of around EUR 800 000 and is intended to strengthen the way local councils operate, placing citizens at the centre of their work, by improving communication with residents and simplifying councils' administrative processes.

Malta's Business Portal is a flagship digital transformation initiative designed to streamline business-to-government interactions. Built on the 'once-only' principle, the portal will reuse data already held by government to reduce repetitive form-filling administrative burden, while also supporting compliance through automated reminders for renewals and payments and on relevant regulatory updates and incentives. In September 2025, the Malta Business Registry fully transitioned to Business Automation Registry Online System (BAROS) making digital submission mandatory for various notifications, such as change of registered office.

Despite the progress made, Malta faces some challenges in the access to e-Health records. Citizens can access the data through an online portal, yet a mobile application is not available. Furthermore, public providers, as well as pharmacies, supply data to the access service. Although the supply of data by private providers is limited, with only private primary care physicians and community care centres providing data. This remains the main gap in Malta's e-Health maturity. The main barriers are connecting IT systems and ensuring they are interoperable. In 2026, Malta is initiating discussions with private hospitals to support their integration into the National Electronic Health Record, aiming for full connectivity by 2029, in line with European Health Data Space (EHDS) Regulation requirements.

Leveraging digital transformation for a smart greening

In Malta, air emissions of the ICT sector stood above the EU average, but Malta demonstrated a high recycling rate for electronic and electrical equipment. Sectorial data on the air emissions show that the ICT sector in Malta emitted 45.6 kg CO_2 eq per capita, which is above the EU average of 22.8 kg CO_2 eq (data from 2022). Most of these emissions come from the ICT services activities (71.7%). The ICT sector represented 0.69% of air emissions in the total economy, above the EU average (0.35%). 85.69% of ICT-related waste collected (corresponding to two categories of waste electrical and electronic equipment) are recycled or prepared for reuse, above the EU average of 80.23%.

According to the Digital Decade Eurobarometer 2026, **86% of Maltese citizens think AI should be developed as a priority in an environmentally sustainable way** (e.g. using renewable and clean energy). In addition, 48% consider green digital technologies (e.g. energy-saving tech) as the technology with the most positive impact in the next ten years.

Malta is strengthening the monitoring of ICT-enabled emission reductions through commitments under its Sustainable Development Strategy for 2050, which prioritises the deployment of digital technologies to facilitate the transition toward a climate-neutral, resource-efficient, and competitive economy. In parallel, Malta has launched the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Platform to foster transparency and enhance awareness of ESG reporting at the business level. In 2025, the platform was enhanced through digitalisation of reporting, making it easier for businesses to submit and update information related to their sustainability performance. Participation in the platform has progressively increased, with the number of engaged organisations rising from 16 to 50 by the end of 2025.

Malta

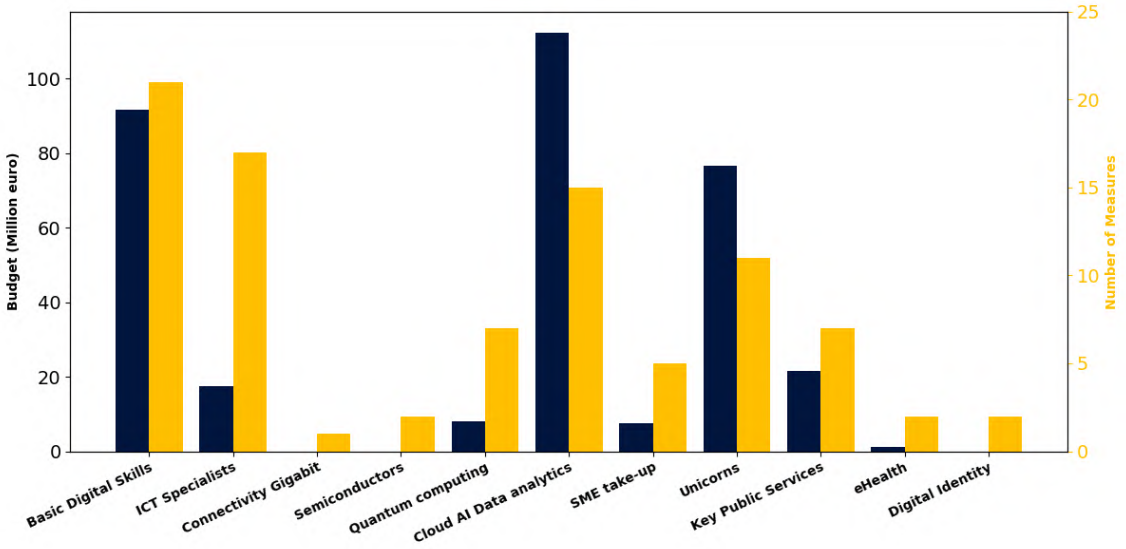
Malta has established a structured regulatory framework to ensure the sustainable operation of data centres in line with EU obligations. These require that facilities, meeting defined thresholds, must monitor and report a series of key performance indicators, including energy consumption and efficiency, and renewable energy share, to the Commission. Complementing the regulatory approach, the Malta Digital Innovation Authority (MDIA) and Xjenza Malta launched the Digital Technologies Programme 2025, which considers Technology for Sustainability and ESG as one of its key priority areas.

Annex I: National roadmap analysis

Malta's national Digital Decade strategic roadmap

Malta submitted a revised national Digital Decade Roadmap in January 2026. The update does not introduce new trajectories. It includes **a total of 90 measures**, of which 24 are new. These new measures focus on digital skills, ICT specialists, uptake of advanced technologies, digitalisation of SMEs, unicorns and key digital public services for citizens and businesses. **The total budget for all the measures is EUR 336 million** (mostly coming from public budgets), corresponding to approximately 1.37% of Malta's GDP in 2025.

Measures and budget in national roadmap[1]



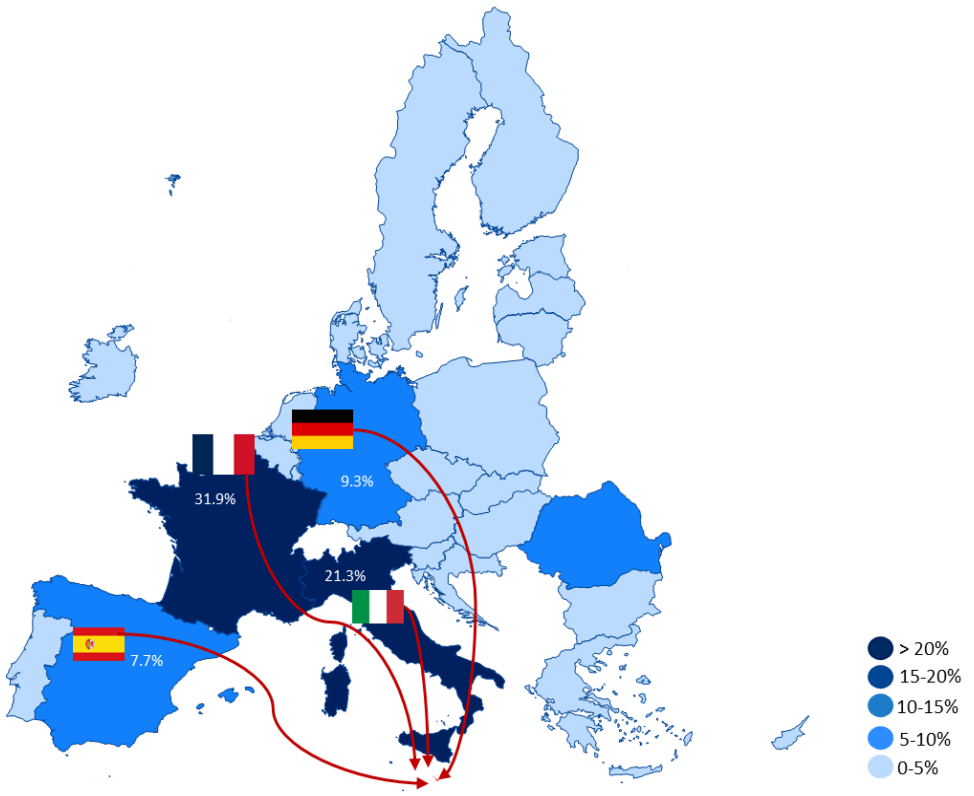
1 When referring to national roadmaps, data used in this report are those declared by the Member States in their national roadmaps, on the basis of the Commission's guidance (C(2023) 4025 final). Data might reflect possible variations in reporting practices and methodological choices across Member States.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

Annex II: Funding and economic impacts

Country results from the study 'Assessing the Economic Impact of Digital Investments under the Recovery and Resilience Facility'

A modelling study conducted by the European Commission services, with the FIDELIO model, assesses the economic impact of the digital component of the RRF. As of November 2025, the digital part of the Recovery and Resilience Plan of Malta was evaluated to EUR 68 million with EUR 3 million for digital skills, EUR 15 million for the digitalisation of businesses, EUR 44 million for the digitalisation of public services, and EUR 6 million for other digital priorities.

The total economic impact of RRF digital measures is estimated to EUR 83 million for the national economy. Of this, EUR 35 million stems from the direct effects of Malta's own RRP and EUR 48 million corresponds to spillover effects from the implementation of other EU Member States' plans. Malta benefited the most from spillover effects from RRPs of France (EUR 15 million), Italy (EUR 10 million), Germany (EUR 4.5 million). The most impacted sectors are ICT Services (EUR 31 million), Arts & Recreation (EUR 14 million), and Professional Services (EUR 7.7 million).



RRF spillover effects to Malta

Malta

Funding from the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) & Cohesion Policy

Malta allocates 27% of its total recovery and resilience plan to digital (EUR 0.07 billion)[1]. In addition, under cohesion policy, EUR 0.1 billion, representing 14% of the country's total cohesion policy funding, is dedicated to advancing Malta's digital transformation[2].

Multi-Country Projects

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). Malta is a participating state of the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking (JU) and of the Chips JU.