



Malta Council for Science and Technology

Introduction to the National R&I Ecosystem

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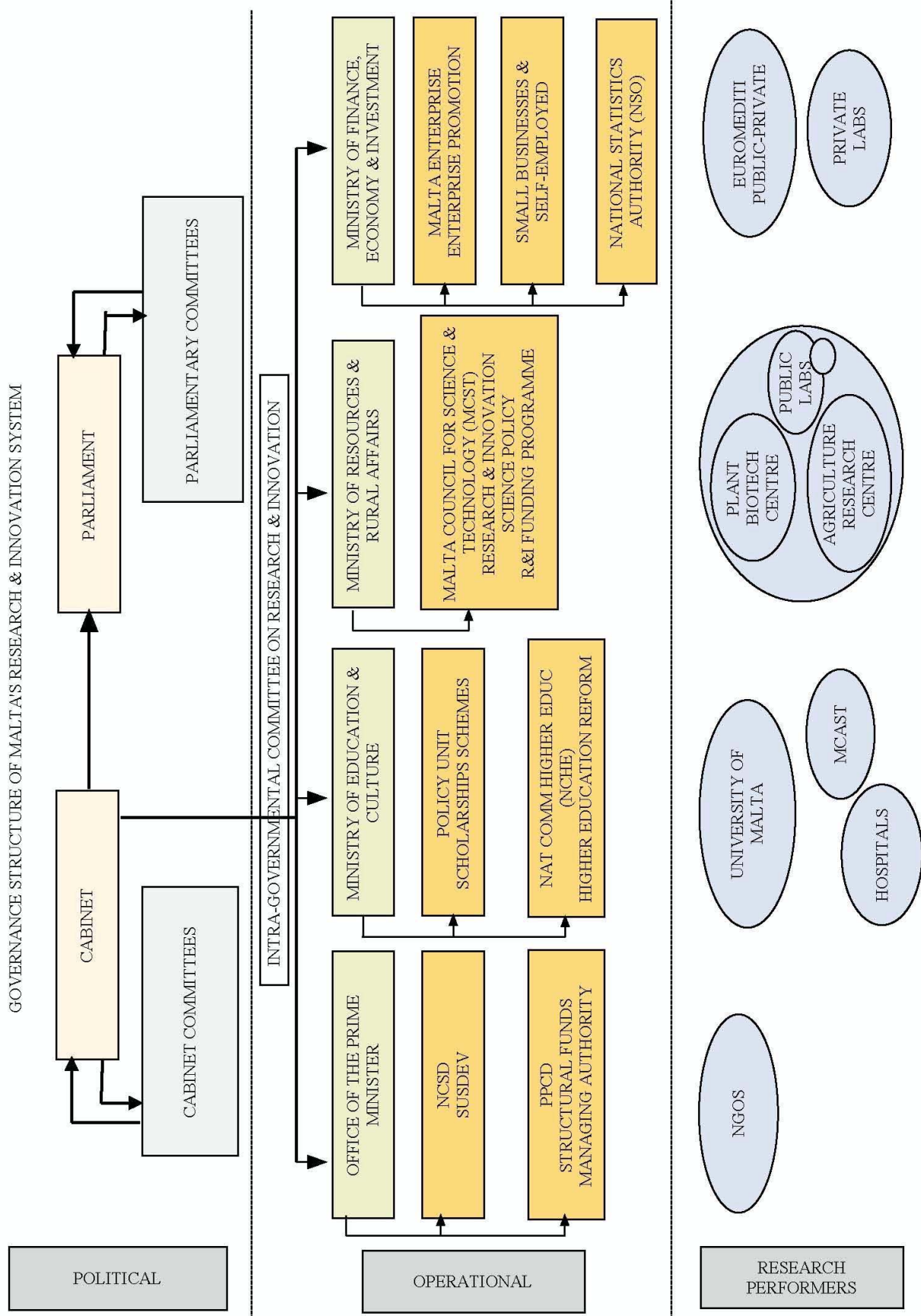
Background on Malta

- Archipelago of three inhabited islands and several small uninhabited islands.
- Total area of 316 sq. km.
- Total population of approx. 413,000 in 2008
- 2008 GDP (at market prices) - €5,758.8 million
- Economic activity characterised by small enterprises, with micro-enterprises constituting approx. 94% of all firms (2004 figure), operating predominantly in the manufacturing and tourism sectors.
- Economic activity also characterized by a small number of relatively large foreign-owned export-oriented subsidiaries of multinational companies.

Main features of national R&I ecosystem

- Small but relatively agile system which is developing rapidly
- Public funds are largely allocated through direct (non-competitive) funding
- Largest public R&D performer is the University of Malta
- National R&I Strategic Plan 2007-2010 as the main guiding instrument

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF MALTA'S RESEARCH & INNOVATION SYSTEM



Malta Council for Science and Technology

Remit and Function

- Responsibility for policy design and advice in the area of Research and Innovation. Represents Government in EU fora related to R&I including CREST and its dedicated groups.
- Owner of the National R&I Strategic Plan – approved by Cabinet in 2006
- Administers the National R&I Fund.
- National Contact Organisation for creating awareness and providing support for FP7.
- Science Popularisation

National R&I Strategic Plan 2007-2010

- Developed through wide stakeholder consultation
- Aims to build and sustain a R&I enabling framework for Malta
- 66 recommendations
- Highly business-driven with a clear emphasis on applied research and development
- Outlines priority areas for Malta - Biotechnology and Health, ICT, Value Added Manufacturing, Energy and Environment
- Has served as a reference for the alignment of policies and initiatives of other public entities

Lisbon Goals and Measures

- In its 2008 NRP, Malta reiterated its commitment towards achieving the 0.75% R&D expenditure target, while acknowledging that it will not be easy to achieve.
- A number of measures are being implemented to this effect, including bursaries for post-graduate studies, strengthening of research infrastructure facilities at the UoM, incentives for industry, among others – strong emphasis of cohesion funding to R&I.

National R&I Programme

- The Programme has evolved over time to feature a strong industry orientation
- In 2004 projects were mainly academic
- Since 2006, large projects with industry participation and a clearer emphasis on the four priority areas identified in the national R&I strategic plan
- Since 2008 large projects – requirement for collaboration lead to high industry participation
- Request for funding regularly exceeds funding available (factor 10 in 2008)

Key Programme Outcomes and Impacts

- New products and services with significant commercialization potential
- Improving existing products, services, processes
- New commercial start-ups
- Attract and retain foreign investment/clients.
- Enable participation in international funded projects
- Enriching and supporting the educational system

Performance in FP7

Preliminary indications for Malta's participation in FP7 are positive from the following aspects:

- In the first two years of FP7, Malta has already secured **64** funded projects as compared to a total of 112 for FP6.
- Malta has secured over **€6 million** to date as compared to a total of **€10 million** in FP6.
- A number of **new entrants** are participating in FP7 including a substantial number of Malta-based public and private sector participants which have already been successful in FP6.

Malta and the European Research Area

- Malta is eager to be an active player in shaping an ERA which facilitates the achievement of the fifth freedom for all countries.
- Aware of its constraints as a small MS with limited resources, capacity and critical mass, main efforts at present focus on building capacity as well as honing in on specific areas of specialization, such as digital game production in ICT and the national human genome databank.
- Malta is seeking to address the concerns of small countries in playing an active role in the ERA through the ERA-PRISM project.

Challenges ahead of us

- Strong drive towards having sustainable multi-annual programme funding.
- Shaping a clearer career path for researchers through the introduction of a post-doc stream at the University of Malta.
- Greater focus on demand-side aspects of innovation policy.
- Proactive approaches to international cooperation and FP participation.
- Addressing grand societal challenges of our time.
- Sensitizing MS and CION that ‘one size does not fit all’. ERA governance, ERA indicators, post 2010 Lisbon Strategy, future innovation policy (amongst others) all need to take into greater account the different starting points and national circumstances of different countries.

Thank you

