



Malta's National Implementation Plan (NIP) 2022
-Osnabrück Declaration 2020



Annex 1 - Template and guidelines for National implementation plans

Please fill in the information in English.

1. Brief information on the national context and baseline

National Context

The socio-economic and educational challenges faced by the national and international contexts within which education is developing. The scale of current economic turmoil, social changes, increased globalisation, and demographic changes leading to an ageing population, all require a future workforce with a different portfolio of knowledge and skills and a new approach to education policy as an integral part of medium to long term planning to respond to these changes.

The Maltese Government, sustaining the Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024 beyond its timeframes and re-establishing its support for the Framework, has set a clear objective: to improve the quality and effectiveness of our country and to develop a society that is competent, resourceful, critically conscious, and competitive in a global economy driven by information, knowledge, and innovation. An education policy framework titled Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014 – 2024 is in place and being implemented. The four overarching goals of the Framework will continue to be pursued beyond 2024. The purpose of the Education Excellence exercise was to kick start the renewal, alignment, support and subsequent implementation of the Ministry responsible for Educational strategies and policies. A number of policies have been reviewed and renewed with a life cycle spanning up to 2030. These are underscored by the four broad goals of the Framework for Education Strategy 2014-2024. The broad goals of the Framework for Education Strategy are to provide more opportunities and flexibility in the education system. Malta committed itself to continue to take measures to modernise curricula, improve quality in teaching and assessment and promote digital skills. Therefore, the Ministry has extended the period of the Framework up to 2030.

The National Statistics Office reports a decreasing amount of post-compulsory students from 11,157 in 2014-2015 to 9,620 in 2019-2020. Despite this decrease the proportion of students choosing VET has grown from 46% to 50% over the same years. The government policy to widen the post-compulsory

provision to private training providers has seen 9% of those choosing VET subjects opting for private training providers in 2019-2020.

Table 1: Post-Compulsory students in General and VET institutions

Type of institution	Academic year																	
	2014-2015			2015-2016			2016-2017			2017-2018			2018-2019			2019-2020		
	General	VET	Total	General	VET	Total	General	VET	Total	General	VET	Total	General	VET	Total	General	VET	Total
State	4,792	5,151	9,943	4,468	5,221	9,689	4,221	4,810	9,031	3,818	5,061	8,879	3,705	4,496	8,201	3,640	4,413	8,053
Church	799	-	799	762	-	762	798	-	798	789	-	789	778	-	778	778	-	778
Independent	415	-	415	366	141	507	365	-	365	525	215	740	439	377	816	352	437	789
Total	6,006	5,151	11,157	5,596	5,362	10,958	5,384	4,810	10,194	5,132	5,276	10,408	4,922	4,873	9,795	4,770	4,850	9,620
% of students in vet of total students	46%			49%			47%			51%			50%			50%		
of which % in state	100%			97%			100%			96%			92%			91%		
of which % in independent	0%			3%			0%			4%			8%			9%		

Source: National Statistics Office

In the context of lifelong learning, the Framework supports the modernisation process of vocational education and training and supporting apprenticeship, traineeship, work-based, and work-placed learning initiatives.

The Government has consolidated the quality approach to work-based learning through the enactment of the Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeships Act (2018) which sets out governance structures to protect the rights and obligations of trainees and employers and reframes the centrality of a closer, more structured, and the broader relationship between educational institutions and employers. This legislation informs the College's policies and practices

in this regard.

Additionally, Government has consistently increased the expenditure on IVET year after year. However, data shows that public expenditure on IVET as a percentage of GDP (0.33%) is still considerably below the EU average (0.56%). In 2015, the employment rate of IVET graduates (aged 20 to 34) at ISCED 3-4 (91.7%) was higher than the EU average (77.2%). IVET graduates in Malta have an employment rate of 4.1 percentage points higher than their counterparts from general education. Similarly, IVET graduates in Malta have an employment rate of 23.2 percentage points higher than those with lower-level qualifications.

Employment-related Initiatives

From an employment point of view, Jobsplus, the national Public Employment Service, have taken a number of initiatives in line with the National Employment Policy which have now been further supported with the launch of the updated National Employment Policy 2021 - 2030

Training Courses

Training Courses are provided free of charge by Jobsplus for the purpose of upskilling, reskilling and to enhance employability prospects. Jobsplus offers training courses to all individuals residing in the Maltese territory of working age and given they meet the eligibility criteria. All courses available at the Jobsplus training centre are demand driven and most of the courses are pegged between EQF/MQF level 1 and 4. Training courses are available to both employed and unemployed individuals with the aim to upskill and reskill the labour force. The Training Courses seek to equip individuals with the necessary knowledge and transversal skills needed to enter the labour market and retain gainful employment. Training courses also offer the opportunity for employed individuals to further their skills and advance in their working life. As of 2020 and with the onset of the pandemic, training courses are now being delivered through a mixed method approach, where participants can choose to follow a training course either online or in-class where possible.

While there are no specific targets, training courses are an ongoing initiative which has no timeline. Nonetheless, between the years 2019 and 2021, 13,138 individuals have participated in one of Jobsplus' administered training courses, of which, 9,796 were unique participants.

Training courses are funded through national funds.

Investing in Skills

Through the Investing in Skills scheme, Jobsplus, provides upskilling and reskilling opportunities to employed individuals targeting skills mismatches in the labour market. The Investing in Skills scheme promotes the training of persons actively participating in the Maltese labour market to increase productivity and enhance adaptability through both accredited (MQF/EQF levels 1-5) and non-accredited training. The type of eligible training includes classroom style,

e-learning, and distance learning.

Eligible employers include partnerships, companies, family businesses, associations, individual self-employed or other body of persons, NGOs and Social Partners (whether these carry out an economic activity or otherwise).

The scheme is demand driven; therefore, the Employer can apply whenever a training need is identified within their entity. The implementation period establishes that the scheme should target the training of 36,000 trainees, where 87% should be successful completers, i.e., receive a certification or qualification. At the end of 2021 there were 20,723 trainees of which 11,175 are unique.

The scheme is available until 30th June 2023 and falls under Malta's Operational Programme II of the European Social Fund - 'Investing in human capital to create more opportunities and promote the well-being of society' for the 2014-2020 programming period.

Training Pays

Through the Training Pays Scheme, Jobsplus, aims to assist individuals, who have completed compulsory schooling up to 64 years of age, to develop and/or improve their skills by participating in further off-the-job education and training. The scheme offers assistance in the form of a training grant to aid participants with costs relating to training. The grant is calculated at 75% of the cost of training, capped at €1,000 for courses leading up to MQF/EQF level 4 or capped at €3,000 for courses leading to MQF/EQF level 5, Awards at MQF/EQF levels 6 and 7 or non-accredited courses as described below. This grant will be awarded to the individual (trainee) after successful completion of their training.

Under the Training Pays Scheme a total of 1500 trainees were targeted. However, from March 2017 till December 2021, Jobsplus received received 5017 applications. Out of these applications, 4101 unique individuals were deemed eligible for funding.

The Scheme is open to individuals who completed compulsory schooling to 64 years as per applicable law. In the case of persons aged between 16 and 24, they must not be participating under the Youth Guarantee NEET Activation Scheme II. Persons who are applying for the TEFL and CELTA courses may not be employed as English Language Teachers at the time of application. As from 18th November 2020, persons whose primary employment is self-employment are not eligible.

Prospective participants are to choose their Training Programme from Jobsplus' Catalogue. To be included in the catalogue Training Programmes must fulfil all the below criteria:

- not offered by Jobsplus;
- offered by a licensed Training Institution (provider must be licensed by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA)) or a recognised institution for non-accredited courses;
- pegged between MQF/EQF level 1 to 5, Awards at MQF/EQF level 6 or 7 or non-accredited but industry recognised courses related to ICT, Aviation

and Maritime sectors.

- Applications must be received until the last day of training.
- Minimum cost of training (excluding VAT) is €100.

Training Pays Scheme (TPS) is offered under the ESF.01.001 – Training for Employment Project (under the ESF project the scheme is known as the Developing Skills Scheme), which is co-financed by the European Social Fund 2014-2021 and will run till March 2023 or until funds are exhausted. Jobsplus intends to continue offering a similar scheme under the new programming period.

Work Exposure Scheme

Through the Work Exposure Scheme, Jobsplus, aims to facilitate transition into employment by providing jobseekers with initial hands-on training that would help individuals obtain the knowledge, skills and competences required to find and retain employment while targeting skills shortages and mismatch. The Work Exposure Scheme targets unemployed or inactive individuals where it provides practical (on-the job training) training that would equip participants with the necessary knowledge and transversal skills needed to enter the labour market and retain gainful employment. This scheme is demand driven and it is designed to mirror contemporary labour market demand, whereby the job preferences of the jobseekers are matched with employers' requests. The on-the-job training takes place at the employer's premises. Throughout the scheme, trainees receive a training allowance for every hour attended. The training allowance, which is paid by Jobsplus through an ESF funded project, is calculated on the National Minimum Wage.

The scheme has a duration of 240 hours and the trainees have a maximum of 12 weeks to complete these hours. Trainees have the flexibility to adjust the hours attended as long as they do not exceed 40 hours per week. Trainees who attend at least 80% of the hours receive a certificate of participation.

Under the Work Exposure Scheme between the implementation period 2016 -2023 a total of 1954 trainees are targeted. Since the introduction of the scheme in 2016 till December 2021 3272 individuals have participated, of which 3,128 were unique. This scheme will continue running until end June 2023 or until funds are absorbed.

The Work Exposure Scheme forms part of the Training for Employment project, which is co-financed by the European Social Fund 2014-2020 and national funds. Jobsplus intends to continue offering a similar scheme under the new programming period.

VASTE

As the national PES, Jobsplus also administers the VASTE project. The VASTE Project allows Jobsplus to develop training and different support measures to assist disabled persons and vulnerable individuals to find work and retain it. The VASTE Project is aimed to assist disabled persons and vulnerable inactive individuals, including former substance abusers and those with other types of social challenges to find and retain suitable employment. The Programme

provides a holistic assessment to participants through multiple training options and professional support which might lead to several employment opportunities. Training opportunities include the Headstart programme, the Pre-Employment Training, and the Sheltered Employment Training.

The Headstart programme is a six-month programme offered by the Lino Spiteri Foundation with the scope of increasing work prospects within the labour market. The aim of the programme is to assist individuals in enhancing their competences related to employment. It simulates a work setting and is structured in a manner that helps individuals to improve relationships and social skills, understand work-related skills and procedures and foster workplace ethics.

Sheltered Employment Training (SET) is a one-year programme aimed at preparing individuals with mental, physical and/or intellectual disabilities for employment. Clients are assigned to small groups with job coaches who focus on punctuality, work ethics, independent living, communication, and social skills. It gives the opportunity to receive hands-on training in different tasks such as back office, assembly of products, packaging etc. The SET is provided under the VASTE Project which is aimed to assist disabled persons and vulnerable inactive individuals, including former substance abusers, Migrants, Long Term Unemployed (LTUs) and those with other types of social challenges to find and retain suitable employment. The Programme provides a holistic assessment to participants through multiple training options and professional support which might lead to several employment opportunities.

Pre-Employment Training provided under the VASTE Project is offered to four distinct groups: persons with intellectual difficulties, persons with physical/sensorial difficulties, persons with mental health challenges and other vulnerable individuals. PET courses range from 50 to 100 hours of training depending on the training referred to: from Life and Communication Skills, Basic Clerical and Pre-Employment Training. Basic ICT Training aims to provide clients with practical knowledge, skills and competences required to use ICT, use the Internet, send, and receive emails and the use of Microsoft Word to prepare a Curriculum Vitae and covering letter. Additionally, persons with disability and vulnerable jobseekers may also benefit from occupational therapy, professional support, job carving, job coaching and mentoring.

The project is developed and provided by Jobsplus and its partner the Lino Spiteri Foundation. The source of finance comes from the Operational Programme II – European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020. The co-financing rate is that of 80% ESF funds while the remaining 20% via national funds.

Through the Pre-Employment Training, since the commencement of the scheme till December 2021, Jobsplus has provided training to 1,104 participants, of which 804 were unique participants. Additionally, through the Sheltered Employment Training since implementation till December 2021, Jobsplus has provided its services to 478 individuals, of which, 386 were unique. Moreover, through the Headstart, since the introduction of the scheme till December 2021, 155 participants have benefited from the service, of which 144 were unique.

VET-related Initiatives

The provision of vocational and professional education and training in Malta has increased substantially in the past 20 years, mainly with the opening of the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, and also with the more recent introduction of vocational subjects within compulsory schooling.

Ed-Tech

Implementation of the Ed Tech framework will be started, capitalizing on the recent investments undertaken at MCAST of several state-of-the-art educational equipment providing immersive VET experiences through emerging technologies.

Apprenticeship Degrees

The introduction of the MCAST apprenticeship degrees at MQF Level 6 was an important step in this direction. Reviewing, evaluating and widening this provision would improve the effective cooperation between work-based learning and academic pathways.

Recognition of Prior Learning

In an effort to enrich the community of lifelong learners, the RPL options need to be further strengthened for a more mature cohort of students seeking to reskill or upskill. It is the intention of MCAST to engage experts for the validation of prior learning.

Visibility

In the coming years, MCAST aims to showcase and make more visible the achievement of students and staff members through more events, exhibitions, expositions, open days, press briefings, College news services, and through the use of social media. These initiatives will provide a platform to make more visible the benefits of IVET and CVET. Furthermore, MCAST intends to animate, resource and energise the MCAST alumni network to reach out, facilitate and involve MCAST alumni as role models, ambassadors, and champions of College good practices, particular vocational sectors, and/or services.

Flexible Degree programmes

The introduction of more flexible degree programmes will permit workers to follow programmes outside their working hours. Employers can be involved to provide apprenticeships/internships. Prior learning evaluation is also essential.

Mobility of VET Students

The MCAST international office is resourced to support the participation of students in mobility programmes and to facilitate the sharing of information and guide students in their preparatory measures. It intends to invest further in additional support structures and to give value to, and make available, language learning, also as a support to mobility experiences.

Continuous Development for Professional Staff

A framework which provides academic staff with more opportunities to be able to take industry experience to keep up to date with the labour market will be developed. MCAST should strive to motivate and empower further its staff including the non-lecturing staff so as to ensure that it and its students benefit from all industrial experience of its workforce. It should also strive to reduce bureaucracy which reduces efficiency.

MCAST Strategic Plan 2022-2027

In its Strategic Plan 2022-2027, the College is committed towards focusing its development sustainably by enhancing its growth to better serve the economic needs of the country. The aim is also to safeguard its environment and promote social cohesion and wellbeing. The transversality of sustainability, looks at building a greener workforce, shrinking our carbon footprint, enhance digitalisation, and also at being a source of sound financial management. The College is keen to mainstream sustainable development in its daily operations and decisions. This can be done by bringing to the forefront its economic, social, and environmental goals whilst utilising resources effectively and efficiently.

MCAST is working towards gamification, augmented reality and virtual reality, where appropriate, through a review of curricula in parallel with the development of technical skills whilst taking into consideration different abilities. Develop training with industry focusing on digital skills, AR, AI, VR and new technologies that empower lecturers to teach in innovative learner-friendly ways. In parallel, MCAST will focus on training individuals in the theoretical and practical aspects of designing, setting up, improving and maintaining green infrastructure, as well as offer part-time courses online to make learning more accessible and with less carbon impact

MCAST aims to further structure, mainstream and publish an annual CPD programme for all MCAST staff, and further widen the subject matters including the use of VLEs and online pedagogies. Similarly, it intends to coordinate Institute-specific CPD to focus on the respective professional sectoral needs and make available CPD options to employees of partner organisations, as necessary At MCAST, a course for mentoring is being developed so that academic staff can be equipped with the skills needed in mentoring new recruits.

MCAST is adamant to increase the number of international students, and staff and student mobility. This has been set as one of its smart targets for 2027. One of the main challenges is also to promote and support longer apprenticeship international mobility options for students. From lessons learnt during the COVID-19 period, MCAST is also keen to take advantage of our increasing international connections and offer our students the opportunity to participate in virtual international mobility during their studies. The College should strive to have further MOUs with local and foreign entities to facilitate and enhance mobility of students and staff.

MCAST aims to be always relevant and responsive to global industry's needs, particularly with the advent of Industry 4.0, driven by cyber physical systems. This overall objective highlights the significance of preparing our learners to be global learners, specialists in vocational industry areas as required, but also in possession of soft skills, behavioural skills and appropriate attitudes. This scenario motivates MCAST to manage its resources and redirects its efforts into implementing a global culture, to respond to the changing international student and industry requirements, to collaborate with international educational and industrial stakeholders and to embrace an innovative approach to render the students' experience at MCAST truly meaningful

The MCAST Strategic Plan 2022-2027 integrates a transversal theme specifically on directing MCAST to become a more outward-looking institution that can help build a community culture where employers, social partners and other stakeholders are also educators. The College intends to evaluate, review and broaden - as necessary - the College's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme to continue to provide learners with more opportunities for life-enriching experiences that add value to their holistic knowledge base

My Journey: achieving through different paths

The reform, both comprehensive and inclusive, was introduced in the first year of secondary schooling (year 9, age 13) during the school year 2019-20. Although early school leaving has declined significantly since 2010, the proportion of early school leavers from education and training is still above the EU average and the 10% national Europe 2020 target. This is mainly the result of an examination-oriented education system, based on the segregation of learners according to academic ability. For many years this led to disengagement from learning of over half the cohort of learners, and has also affected lifelong learning of low-qualified adults.

Lower secondary learners now have an opportunity to select options/subjects (general/academic, vocational and applied) alongside their compulsory lessons. All these subjects lead up to EQF/MQF level 3 qualification, with no dead-ends. The rationale is that vocational education supports the educational engagement of learners who may struggle with the learning pedagogy of mainstream academic subjects. The progress of learners in the vocational subjects is not assessed through summative examinations but through ongoing assessment by the subject teacher, verified internally by a second subject teacher, and evaluated by an external verifier from the national assessment board.

In its first year of implementation almost 60% of year 9 learners opted to study a vocational subject. The take-up over a 5 year period has shown a steady increase in the popularity of VET subjects as these have been selected by more candidates over the years as follows:

Total Number of Registered Students					
Year 9	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
State	2153	2288	2175	2200	2257
Church	1496	1508	1485	1474	1492
Independent	459	473	455	491	488
Total	4108	4269	4115	4165	4237

Number of students selecting Vocational Subjects in Year 9					
Type of School	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
State	386	579	518	486	1209
Church	17	292	343	381	358
Independent	0	38	70	85	38
Total	403	909	931	952	1605

% of Student population opting to take at least one Vocational Subject in Year 9					
Type of School	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
State	18%	25%	24%	22%	54%
Church	1%	19%	23%	26%	24%
Independent	0%	8%	15%	17%	8%
Total	10%	21%	23%	23%	38%

(1) Especially the components related to education and training and labour market and social protection. National recovery and resilience plans will be available here: https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en

2. Challenges and general objectives of the plan

The main challenges identified against the background provided by numerous policies as listed in the bibliography can be summarized to address the value which VET ideally pays within the national economic context. These challenges are outlined below:

- Esteem and visibility of VET.

Challenges still exist to portray the value which Vocational Education And Training brings to the national context in terms of everyday skills and competences to better address the needs of the economy. The esteem of quality VET still needs to continue being addressed through more comprehensive communication means, closer relationships with stakeholders and broader networks.

- Research

The central role of applied research could address the challenge of perceived continued relevance of VET. Wider research partnerships between VET and Industry coupled with additional research skills within VET institutions could support the undertaking of excellent research and promote innovative professional practice.

- Retention

VET still suffers from limited attractiveness in comparison to low-level employment. This amplifies the challenges of VET institutions to enhance the promotion of the value of learning within its students. This encourages the student to seek support and elongate the learning trajectory in lifelong learning.

- Early leavers from education and training

Whilst still above the EU average, Malta's efforts for a more equitable, quality and inclusive education system have yielded a steady decline in early leavers from education and training (ELET) from 21.4% in 2010 to 11% in 2021. In fact, as from 2017, Malta has registered one of the highest percentage decreases in ELET across all of the EU. This results in duplication of resourcing within different institutions to support and encourage young adults to achieve a minimum of MQF level 3 qualification.

- Skills shortage within the context of a saturation of the labour market

Malta has overcome disadvantages and reconstructed itself into a modern economy through a mix of innovation, modern technology, education and adaptability. Despite a record low unemployment including low youth unemployment, human capital needs additional investment in education, on-the-job training and lifelong learning to match the type of investment attracted by Malta in high value-added sectors.

- Gender

In 2020, Malta's employment rate between 20 to 64 years stood at 77.3%, thus higher than the EU-27 average (71.7%) and the Euro area average (71.2%).¹ Furthermore, during the third quarter of 2021, the total number of persons in employment was 268,987, accounting for 60.7% of the population aged 15 and over, and 3.6% higher when compared to the previous year.² The employment rate has increased for both men and women. In fact, in 2020, the female employment rate between 20 to 64 years stood at 67.8%, an increase of 2.0% when compared to 2019, and higher than the EU-27 average (66.2%) and the Euro area average (66.1%).³ Moreover, during Q3/2021, on average, out of every 100 persons aged between 15 and 64 years, 75 were employed. The male employment rate for this age bracket was 83.0% while that for females stood at 66.2%.⁴ In Q3 2021, the unemployment rate between 20 to 64 years was of 3.5%, one of the lowest in the EU and well below the EU-27 average (6.7%) and the Euro area average (7.4%).⁵ The employment context is a reflection of the VET scenario.

- Mobility

Malta welcomes that the European Commission is emphatically considering 'pupil mobility' in the Erasmus+ programme as a high priority. Malta also positively observes that the French Presidency has chosen "mobility for all" as part of its key priorities. Malta supports fostering opportunities for and encouraging the mobility of young adults and employees, for the benefits it will bring to their own careers and their education and training institutions.

¹ Eurostat, EU Labour Force Survey. Online data code: [LFSI_EMP_A].

² Malta National Statistics Office, News release 232/2021.

³ Eurostat, EU Labour Force Survey. Online data code: [LFSI_EMP_A].

⁴ Malta National Statistics Office, News release 232/2021.

⁵ Eurostat, unemployment by sex and age – quarterly data. Online data code: [UNE_RT_Q]

In order to motivate pupils and teachers to engage in mobility projects, one needs to look towards solutions deriving from Erasmus+ potential applicants and beneficiaries, together with initiatives from colleges and schools to allow for such mobilities. In this regard, Malta recognises the relevance of facilitating, where appropriate, the formal recognition of outcomes of mobility periods, particularly of teaching and training periods abroad. In general, barriers to mobility could include: lack of financial support and the bureaucratic processes linked to application, monitoring and reporting of such activities.

Objectives

- The widening of the provision of quality VET that is relevant to the labour market;
- The improvement of retention rates and promotion of lifelong learning specifically through reskilling and upskilling in various economic groups and or within vulnerable audiences;
- The promotion of VET for female candidates;
- The improvement of mobility for VET staff, learners and professionals to gain experience in the relevant economic sectors.

(2) A detailed description of those measures will be done in Section 3.

(3) E.g. national recovery and resilience plans, national reform programmes.

3a. Detailed description of main measures and/or their packages ⁽¹⁾

One table to be developed for each measure that forms the core of the plan

Title

Set up a National Advisory Committee for VET in Malta

¹ A package (of measures) is a coherent set of measures that address a particular challenge, one or several priorities and principles of the VET recommendation and/or objectives of the Osnabrück Declaration.

Rationale/background, challenges addressed

Further to recommended action 1.1, explore the possibility of setting up a network of voluntary experts and executives, retired or on sabbatical, to support their peers in the fields of VET and apprenticeships as part of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA) (osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 7), Malta will set up an advisory committee that will support the National Skills Council through the expertise provided by the members of such committee.

Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan

- Review national implementation activities on VET and apprenticeships as well as other forms of work-based learning
- Act as peer reviewers in order to provide the council with feedback on such activities
- Assist the Council in reviewing the implementation of Council initiatives
- Exchange views and suggest improvements as necessary
- Assist the Council as peer reviewer of policy and procedure proposals.
- Assist government for the revision and updating of the National VET Policy.

Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline

The measure aims to address the following actions:
Action 1.1 (Osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 7)

Explore the possibility of setting up a network of voluntary experts and executives, retired or on sabbatical, to support their peers in the fields of VET and apprenticeships as part of the EAfA.

The Advisory Committee will be set up following an expression of interest issued to all stakeholders for the nomination of experts to sit on the committee. The statutory composition of the committee will be established by government after consultation with the stakeholders. It is being recommended that the Committee have representatives of VET providers, employers and employees.

Milestones:

- A statute and remit of the committee will be drawn up by end 2022.
- Expression of interest will be published to all stakeholders by Q1 2023
- The committee will be set up by Q2 2023
- Committee will be operational starting Q3 2023
- Propose changes for the revision and updating of the National VET Policy – by Q1 2024
- Committee will serve for the duration of the tenure as per statute and a new nomination/selection process will take place after every cycle ends.

EU policy priorities addressed

Council Recommendation on VET

- A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges.
- B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET.
- C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand.
- D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills.
- E. VET promotes equality of opportunities.
- F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.

Osnabrück Declaration

- 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET.
- 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation.
- 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET.
- 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.

VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)

initial VET (IVET) continuing VET (CVET)

Scope (national, regional, local)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> regional <input type="checkbox"/> local
Beneficiaries/target groups
<input type="checkbox"/> (List to be provided) Target groups include retired or voluntary nominees from industry. This measure will benefit the National Skills Council as the main body that will implement most of the measures of the National implementation Plan, VET Institutions and policy makers as well and Learners and the industrial community that will benefit from more training opportunities and skilled employees respectively.
Responsible ministries/bodies
MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION, SPORT, YOUTH, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)
No remuneration is envisaged for members serving on the committee. Any honoraria or support funds for meetings and operations will be funded through national funds in accordance with the statute that will be drafted an in line with general government practices in similar circumstances.

3b. Detailed description of main measures and/or their packages ⁽¹⁾

One table to be developed for each measure that forms the core of the plan

Title

Reconstitute the National Skills Council (NSC)

Rationale/background, challenges addressed

The National Skills Council, which was proposed in the Malta National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020, was setup by means of Subsidiary Legislation 327.547 (now to be transposed to SL 605.10) of the Laws of Malta with the aim was to first review the past and present available skills within our labour work force and evaluate the changes required to meet current and future needs. The main aim being to minimise the skills gaps that exist in some of the most demanding and rewarding sectors such as the digital, technical and financial sectors where Malta is, and can maintain, excellence. It is the council's task to recommend policy changes to the government that would reduce these gaps and prepare the labour force with the right skills, to meet the future challenges.

Current composition of the National Skills Council (NSC):

Representative from the University of Malta;

Representative from the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology;

Representative from the Jobsplus Corporation;

Representative from the Institute for Tourism Studies;

Representative from the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry;

Representative from the Malta Enterprise;

Representative of civil society;

Representative from amongst lifelong learning specialists;

Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for Education;

Other four persons who possess leadership qualities, and have an understanding of education and the labour market within the context of an open, democratic, fair, prosperous and inclusive society.

¹ A package (of measures) is a coherent set of measures that address a particular challenge, one or several priorities and principles of the VET recommendation and/or objectives of the Osnabrück Declaration.

Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan

The current remit of the National Skills Council (NSC) is to:

- Create systems which acknowledge other forms of learning,
- Expose students to the world of work,
- Motivate the workforce towards a commitment of continuous education.

The remit of the NSC will be revised to address also the targets of the Osnabrueck declaration as follows:

Action 1.3 (Osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 7)

- Reinforce work-based learning and apprenticeships by implementing the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships and making use of the on-demand support services, and policy learning initiatives.
- Strengthen the use of quality and inclusive apprenticeships as a tool to support school/training-to-work transitions of vulnerable groups and to improve citizens' qualification levels

Action 1.5 (Osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 7)

- Develop national and regional skills intelligence systems including skills anticipation and graduate tracking;
- Enable social partners, decision-makers, stakeholders and providers to adapt and update VET programmes, curricula and guidelines in a timely and effective manner

Action 2.1 (Osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 9)

- Develop national skills strategies for quality and inclusive lifelong learning with all relevant national, regional, sectoral stakeholders and social partners.
- Besides education and training provision, the national skills strategies may include guidance, incentives for improved skills provision by employers, increased participation by employees, validation of prior learning and targeted public approaches for reaching out to inactive and unemployed individuals, NEETs or individuals at risk of unemployment

Action 2.2 (Osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 9)

- Develop targeted information measures on the benefits of CVET and ensure user-friendly access to information on IVET and CVET offers at national and regional levels addressing gender and other stereotypes for an equal, fair and diverse society

Action 2.3 (Osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 9)

- Work with respective stakeholders to develop digital learning solutions supporting access to CVET opportunities and the awarding of CVET credentials and certificates, thereby opening the possibility to obtain full qualifications without neglecting on-the-job CVET and the positive effects of learning conducive work environments

Action 3.2 (Osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 10)

- Define labour-market-relevant skills for the green transition that are to be incorporated in curricula and VET provision, including basic skills across all sectors and occupations and sector-specific skills in cooperation with the social partners

Action 4.4 (Osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 12)

- Promote intercultural knowledge, skills and competences as part of qualification and curricula requirements in VET qualifications in line with the Key Competence Framework

The composition of the National Skills Council may need to be revised in order to include a representative from the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority, a representative from the Trade Unions and other Social Partners.

Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline

The main actions of this initiative will be:

- Hold a discussion within the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research And Innovation in order to review the remit of the NSC
- Make the necessary changes to subsidiary legislation to enact such changes
- Submit the revised SL to Cabinet
- Set up the new council

Milestones:

- Discussion will take place by Q4 2022
- Changes to Subsidiary legislation will be made and submitted to Cabinet for approval by end Q1 2023
- New council will be set up by end Q2 2023

Once the Council is set up:

- Review the current national legislation on apprenticeships in the light of the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships and make recommendations for the updating of such legislation- by end Q4 2023
- Create a plan for the promotion of Apprenticeships and quality and inclusive lifelong learning in conjunction with Employers' constituted bodies in order to make apprenticeship opportunities grow and become more visible – by Q1 2024
- Develop national skills intelligence systems including skills anticipation and graduate tracking in collaboration with MFHEA and NSO– by Q2 2024
- Coordinate with relevant authorities for the screening and upskilling of migrants for their continuous professional development so that they can integrate better in the local labour market and contribute to the local economy, particularly in view of the quasi-full employment situation which is making it difficult for employers to find employees in various sectors.
- Discuss with the MFHEA to create a framework for stronger implementation of validation of prior learning – by Q2 2024
- Discuss with the MFHEA to introduce new digital and intercultural knowledge skills and competences as part of a holistic review of the national Key Competences– by Q2 2024
- Set up consultative thematic networks overseen by the Council in order to enable social partners, decision-makers, stakeholders and providers to adapt and update VET programmes, curricula and guidelines in a timely and effective manner - by Q3 2024
- Use the consultative thematic networks to define labour-market-relevant skills for the green transition that are to be incorporated in curricula and VET provision, including basic skills across all sectors and occupations and sector-specific skills in cooperation with the social partners - by Q1 2025
- A census will be taken across the whole Maltese Economy- By Q2 2025
- A skills analyses will be performed to identify skills gaps in the Maltese labour force By Q4 2025.

- Use the consultative thematic networks to define labour-market-relevant skills for the green transition that are to be incorporated in curricula and VET provision, including basic skills across all sectors and occupations and sector-specific skills in cooperation with the social partners - by Q1 2025
- Set up an agreement and plan of action with the National Guidance Services Network (to be set up through separate action in this NIP) in order to address guidance, incentives for improved skills provision by employers, increased participation by employees and targeted public approaches for reaching out to inactive and unemployed individuals, NEETs or individuals at risk of unemployment - by Q3 2024
- Contribute to the development of targeted information measures on the benefits of CVET and ensure user-friendly access to information on IVET and CVET offers at national and regional levels addressing gender and other stereotypes for an equal, fair and diverse society - by Q3 2024
- Work with respective stakeholders to develop digital learning solutions supporting access to CVET opportunities and the awarding of CVET micro-credentials and certificates, thereby opening the possibility to obtain full qualifications without neglecting on-the-job CVET and the positive effects of learning-conducive work environments - by Q4 2024

EU policy priorities addressed

Council Recommendation on VET

- A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges.
- B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET.
- C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand.
- D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills.
- E. VET promotes equality of opportunities.
- F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.

Osnabrück Declaration

- 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET.
- 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation.
- 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET.
- 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.

VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> initial VET (IVET) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> continuing VET (CVET)
Scope (national, regional, local)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> regional <input type="checkbox"/> local
Beneficiaries/target groups
<input type="checkbox"/> (List to be provided) Target groups shall include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEETs • IVET and CVET students • Apprentices • Adults learners <p>This measure will benefit VET Institutions and policy makers through better synergies and access to information as well and Learners and the industrial community wo will benefit from a stronger platform for validation of prior learning, upskilling as well as reskilling required by the green economy.</p>
Responsible ministries/bodies
MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION, SPORT, YOUTH, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)
Funding for the National Skills Council will come from national Funds.

3c. Detailed description of main measures and/or their packages ⁽¹⁾

One table to be developed for each measure that forms the core of the plan

Title

Setting up of a National Guidance Service Network

Rationale/background, challenges addressed

A National Guidance Service Network will be set up in order to support the proliferation of a lifelong learning culture so that individuals of all ages benefit from career guidance throughout life in order to engage in VET programmes or micro-credentials and acquire the key competences to actively manage their education, training and employment phases.

Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan

Set up a National Guidance Service Network that will comprise the guidance offices of all institutions as to create synergies in the provision of guidance and information securing a seamless experience to clients.

The National Guidance Service Network (NGSN) shall have a statute and be set up at law. It shall have a steering committee that will define the strategic objectives of the network and shall also be responsible for the monitoring and reporting of its activities as well as those of its affiliates. The findings shall be drawn up in an annual report that shall be published. The NGSN shall collaborate closely with the National Skills Council in order to coordinate the provision of services in line with the strategies developed by the Council to promote Vocational Education and Work-Based learning.

The measure aims to address the following actions:

Action 2.1 (Osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 9)

¹ A package (of measures) is a coherent set of measures that address a particular challenge, one or several priorities and principles of the VET recommendation and/or objectives of the Osnabrück Declaration.

Develop national skills strategies for quality and inclusive lifelong learning with all relevant national, regional, sectoral stakeholders and social partners. Besides education and training provision, the national skills strategies may include guidance, incentives for improved skills provision by employers, increased participation by employees, validation of prior learning and targeted public approaches for reaching out to inactive and unemployed individuals, NEETs or individuals at risk of unemployment

Action 2.5 (Osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 9)

Support VET teachers, trainers, guidance counsellors, adult educators and mentors by equipping them with the adequate skills and tools for and through digital technologies; in particular through systematic approaches to, and opportunities for, initial and continuous professional development in both school and work-based settings, as well as distance education and training, enabling them to progress in their careers

The NGSN shall:

- Bring to the forefront the discussion and strategic direction of Guidance counselling services on a national scale
- Coordinate with the respective guidance units for the provision of timely and seamless guidance service to clients of all ages
- Provide the guidance and tailored support to clients in designing their learning and career paths
- Work closely with the National Skills Council in order to promote VET pathways and National Skills Strategies
- Develop targeted information measures on the benefits of CVET and ensure user-friendly access to information on IVET and CVET offers at national level addressing gender and other stereotypes for an equal, fair and diverse society
- Develop an interactive online service to assist clients in selecting career pathways and routing them towards the right affiliates of the NGSN.
- Keep a register of all the guidance units and professionals offering service in the field of VET or its feeding routes
- Ensure the continuous professional development of guidance professionals registered on the network.
- Collaborate with the European Union Programmes Agency (EUPA) to offer personalized support and guidance to each VET and adult learner through a helpline that would be able to inform, guide and support learners along the way on a mobility, from how to apply until they return back after their mobility

Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline	
<p>The main actions and timelines shall be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a discussion within the Ministry For Education, Sport, Youth, Research And Innovation in order to define the remit and statute of the National Guidance Services Network – by Q4 2022 • Draw up any subsidiary legislation if necessary –by Q1 2023 • Submit the revised SL to Cabinet if necessary – by Q2 2023 • Set up the National Guidance Services Network – by Q3 2023 • Ensure regular monitoring and feedback on services rendered as per statute – ongoing as of Q3 2023 • Set up an national register of guidance professionals - by Q1 2024 • Develop an interactive online service - by Q3 2024 • Provide CPD to all registered professional – by Q4 2024 	
EU policy priorities addressed	
Council Recommendation on VET	Osnabrück Declaration
<input type="checkbox"/> A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET. <input type="checkbox"/> C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E. VET promotes equality of opportunities. <input type="checkbox"/> F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation. <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET. <input type="checkbox"/> 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.
VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> initial VET (IVET) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> continuing VET (CVET)	

Scope (national, regional, local)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> regional <input type="checkbox"/> local
Beneficiaries/target groups
<input type="checkbox"/> (List to be provided) Target groups shall include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students in compulsory education • IVET and CVET students • Adult learners • Employees • Guidance Professionals <p>This measure will benefit all categories of students, adult learners and employees as the National Guidance Services network will serve their needs in terms of access to information and guidance for career pathways. This measure will also address the continuous professional development of guidance professionals offering such services.</p>
Responsible ministries/bodies
MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION, SPORT, YOUTH, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)
Funding for the National Guidance Service Network will come from national Funds or perhaps ESF if applicable.

3d. Detailed description of main measures and/or their packages ⁽¹⁾

One table to be developed for each measure that forms the core of the plan

Title

Create a National fund in support of Digital Education, Artificial Intelligence, AR and VR

Rationale/background, challenges addressed

Vocational Education and Training Institutions and providers need to update their provision and explore digital technologies for teaching and learning. The challenge in the VET context is the transfer of the appropriate skills that cannot be fully addressed through the simple adaptation of course material to Online Learning. To address this matter Malta will set up a National Fund to support the transformation of VET programmes in order make CVET, continuous professional development (CPD through micro-credentials) and Lifelong Learning (LLL) more accessible through digital learning technologies.

Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan

Set up a fund that will be administered by the Government of Malta in collaboration with other interested stakeholders such as the Eskills Foundation, the National Skills Council and the MFHEA in order to incentivize and support the transformation of VET curricula.

The activities will be addressing the following Actions:

Action 1.2 (Osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 7)

Support the development of digital infrastructure for learning and teaching purposes in VET including artificial intelligence and AR/VR technologies and develop suitable institutional teaching and training arrangements underpinned by adequate infrastructure, especially in remote and rural areas thus ensuring social inclusion.

Action 2.3 (Osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 9)

¹ A package (of measures) is a coherent set of measures that address a particular challenge, one or several priorities and principles of the VET recommendation and/or objectives of the Osnabrück Declaration.

Work with respective stakeholders to develop digital learning solutions supporting access to CVET opportunities and the awarding of CVET credentials and certificates, thereby opening the possibility to obtain full qualifications without neglecting on-the-job CVET and the positive effects of learning conducive work environments

Action 2.5 (Osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 9)

Support VET teachers, trainers, guidance counsellors, adult educators and mentors by equipping them with the adequate skills and tools for and through digital technologies; in particular through systematic approaches to, and opportunities for, initial and continuous professional development in both school and work-based settings, as well as distance education and training, enabling them to progress in their careers

Action 3.1 (Osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 10)

Create incentives for greening VET programmes, including education and training in green technologies and innovation, in energy efficiency, circular economy, environmental awareness, sustainable use of learning and training material, digitalisation to reduce climate effects

Action 3.1 (osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 10)

Define and support opportunities to enable teaching and training staff, managing teams in VET providers and trainers and mentors in companies to act as multipliers and mediators, in view of increasing digitalisation and sustainability within the provision and management of training programmes

Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline

The main actions and timelines shall be as follows:

- Set up the fund and identify the administrative body – by Q4 2023
- Set up the administrative body and regulate via statute or relevant subsidiary legislation – by Q1 2024
- Draft the conditions of access to the fund, eligibility and selection criteria for funding including greening of VET programmes – by Q1 2024

- Invite VET Institutions and providers to submit VET curricular transformation projects for funding – by Q2 2024
- Select and award funding to projects – by Q3 2024 and ongoing calls throughout funding period
- Selected projects are funded and monitored for effectiveness – as of Q3 2024 and throughout and after funding period
- Determine whether pilot was successful and extend funding if appropriate. – by Q3 2025.

EU policy priorities addressed

Council Recommendation on VET

- A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges.
- B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET.
- C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand.
- D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills.
- E. VET promotes equality of opportunities.
- F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.

Osnabrück Declaration

- 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET.
- 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation.
- 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET.
- 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.

VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)

- initial VET (IVET) continuing VET (CVET)

Scope (national, regional, local)

- national
- regional
- local

Beneficiaries/target groups
<input type="checkbox"/> (List to be provided) Target groups shall include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vet Providers • Students in compulsory education • IVET and CVET students • Adults learners • Employees <p>This measure will benefit all categories of students, adult learners and employees as VET providers will have enhanced curricula and training aids as well as being able to offer more flexible learning pathways.</p>
Responsible ministries/bodies
MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION, SPORT, YOUTH, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)
National Funds or possibly ESF.

3e. Detailed description of main measures and/or their packages ⁽¹⁾

One table to be developed for each measure that forms the core of the plan

Title

Create a National fund in support of CoVEs and EUAs and International Competitions

Rationale/background, challenges addressed

Vocational Education and Training Institutions need specific funds to submit bids and sustain participation in CoVE projects, European University Alliances and international skills competitions. These are important themes and initiatives on the European scene and hence should be encouraged. While some institutions are already participating in CoVEs and International Competitions as well as having submitted EUA projects, such projects require support particularly of a financial nature.

Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan

Set up a fund that will be administered by the Government of Malta in collaboration with other interested stakeholders such as Research and Educational Institutions and Industry partners.

The activities will be addressing the following Actions:

Action 1.4 (Osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 7)

Support Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) and improve permeability between vocational and academic pathways, including work-based learning and enhanced cooperation between VET, HE and research centres, thus establishing quality and effective VET and apprenticeship programmes at EQF level 5 and above

Action 4.3 (Osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 12)

¹ A package (of measures) is a coherent set of measures that address a particular challenge, one or several priorities and principles of the VET recommendation and/or objectives of the Osnabrück Declaration.

<p>Develop VET internationalisation strategies, mobilising partnerships and including commitments for concrete and targeted actions, with all relevant stakeholders in accordance with national or regional regulations (osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 12)</p> <p>Action 4.5 (Osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 12)</p> <p>Cooperate with other EU countries in preparing national teams for international competitions such as WorldSkills and EuroSkills</p>	
<p>Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline</p>	
<p>The main actions and timelines shall be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up the fund that will be administered by the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation and identify source of funding – by Q4 2023 • Set up relevant procedures or subsidiary legislation – by Q1 2024 • Draft the conditions of access to the fund, eligibility and selection criteria for each strand of the funding – by Q1 2024 • Invite VET Institutions to submit CoVE and EUA project proposals for funding – as of Q1 2024 • Issue separate calls for participation in European and World competitions such as Euroskills and Worldskills – as of Q1 2024 • Select and award funding to projects – ongoing calls throughout funding period • Determine whether fund was successful and extend funding if appropriate; – by Q3 2028. • 	
<p>EU policy priorities addressed</p>	
<p>Council Recommendation on VET</p>	<p>Osnabrück Declaration</p>

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges. <input type="checkbox"/> B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E. VET promotes equality of opportunities. <input type="checkbox"/> F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation. <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET. <input type="checkbox"/> 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.
VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> initial VET (IVET) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> continuing VET (CVET)	
Scope (national, regional, local)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> regional <input type="checkbox"/> local	
Beneficiaries/target groups	
<input type="checkbox"/> (List to be provided) Target groups shall include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VET Institutions • IVET and CVET Learners • Researchers 	

This measure will benefit all Vet institutions in enhancing their networking and provision through CoVE and EUA projects. This will directly impact the quality of the VET provision and hence improve the training opportunities available to learners.
Responsible ministries/bodies
MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION, SPORT, YOUTH, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)
National Funds or possibly ESF.

3f. Detailed description of main measures and/or their packages (1)
One table to be developed for each measure that forms the core of the plan
Title
Promote and Enhance the mobility of VET and adult learners, teachers and trainers
Rationale/background, challenges addressed
Malta has effective structures in place to enable mobility of VET and adult learners, teachers and trainers especially through Erasmus+ funding. This can however be improved through more publicity and encouragement for a higher take-up of such opportunities. The national entity responsible for the promotion, implementation and management of the Erasmus+ Programme and European Solidarity Corps at national level for the successful implementation of the programmes in terms of quality and impact.
Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan
The activities will be addressing the following Actions:

¹ A package (of measures) is a coherent set of measures that address a particular challenge, one or several priorities and principles of the VET recommendation and/or objectives of the Osnabrück Declaration.

Action 4.1 (Osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 12)

Support and facilitate the mobility of VET and adult learners, including apprentices, for example by developing support structures and providing information on opportunities in host countries

- EUPA and VET institutions to consolidate cooperation with a view to increase learner and staff mobilities;
- Increase promotion and penetration to the learners' information and social media environment through direct promotion of Erasmus+ mobility opportunities via emails, social media, informative promotional static notices and posters, live events (such as national Erasmus+ days, Fresher's Weeks and other activities within institutions, interventions at student conventions and events)
- Collaborate with the National Guidance Services Network to offer personalized support and guidance to each VET and adult learner through a helpline that would be able to inform, guide and support learners along the way on a mobility, from how to apply until they return back after their mobility.

Action 4.2 (Osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 12)

Increase the rate of mobility of VET learners as well as teachers and trainers, while strengthening measures to ensure the quality and recognition of learning outcomes, as well as adequate support structures. Foster longer periods of mobility for VET learners abroad and ensure that apprentice work placements are in line with the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships, taking into account national regulations and collective agreements, including health and safety provisions

- Identify VET courses that could have mobility included as part of the curricula and support changes to have it implemented
- Discuss the inclusion of international mobility as a formal part of CPD of VET teachers within their respective institutions
- Work further to create national partnerships with other countries to have reciprocal agreements to be able to facilitate the increased number of learner and staff mobilities

Action 4.3 (Osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020, p. 12)

Develop VET internationalisation strategies, mobilising partnerships and including commitments for concrete and targeted actions, with all relevant stakeholders in accordance with national or regional regulations

- Identify more national organizations in other EU and partner countries and set up agreements for mutual support for international mobilities
- Create a national forum of VET institutions that together with the National Agency EUPA discuss tangible ways how VET mobilities of learners and staff can be increased and valorized.

- Promote intercultural knowledge, skills and competences as part of qualification and curricula requirements in VET qualifications in line with the Key Competence Framework

- Encourage International mobility as a means of acquiring intercultural knowledge and acknowledge such mobility in the student's Europass Supplement.

Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline

The main actions and timelines shall be as follows:

- EUPA and VET institutions to consolidate cooperation with a view to increase learner and staff mobilities - by Q4 2022
- Increase promotion and penetration to the learners' information and social media environment through direct promotion of Erasmus+ mobility opportunities via emails, social media, informative promotional static notices and posters, live events (such as national Erasmus+ days, Fresher's Weeks and other activities within institutions, interventions at student conventions and events) – by Q4 2023 and ongoing
- Collaborate with the National Guidance Services Network to offer personalized support and guidance to each VET and adult learner through a helpline that would be able to inform, guide and support learners along the way on a mobility, from how to apply until they return back after their mobility – by Q1 2024
- Identify VET courses that could have mobility included as part of the curricula and support changes to have it implemented – by Q3 2024
- Discuss the inclusion of international mobility as a formal part of CPD of VET teachers within their respective institutions - by Q3 2024
- Work further to create national partnerships with other countries to have reciprocal agreements to be able to facilitate the increased number of learner and staff mobilities - Ongoing
- Identify more national organizations in other EU and partner countries and set up agreements for mutual support for international mobilities – Ongoing

- Create a national forum of VET institutions that together with the National Agency EUPA discuss tangible ways how VET mobilities of learners and staff can be increased and valorized – by Q3 2024
- Encourage International mobility as a means of acquiring intercultural knowledge and acknowledge such mobility in the student's Europass Supplement - by Q3 2025

EU policy priorities addressed

Council Recommendation on VET

- A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges.
- B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET.
- C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand.
- D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills.
- E. VET promotes equality of opportunities.
- F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.

Osnabrück Declaration

- 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET.
- 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation.
- 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET.
- 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.

VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)

- initial VET (IVET) continuing VET (CVET)

Scope (national, regional, local)

- national
- regional
- local

Beneficiaries/target groups

(List to be provided)

Target groups shall include

- VET Institutions
- IVET and CVET Learners
- Researchers

This measure will benefit all Vet institutions in enhancing their networking through mobility projects. This will also directly impact the quality of the VET provision and hence improve the mobility opportunities available to learners.

Responsible ministries/bodies

MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION, SPORT, YOUTH, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)

European funds

4. Governance of the implementation of the plan

Internal consultations are still being carried out on the governance of the implementation of the plan. Recommendations have been made that the governance and implementation of the plan could fall under the responsibility of a National VET Policy Unit. The said Unit could respond to the office of the Permanent Secretary within the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation. The unit could have the remit to report on the implementation of all initiatives of this National Implementation Plan as well as on any other initiative concerning VET on a national level. Malta's ReferNet Committee could be integrated within the same unit.

Furthermore, another recommendation has been that Malta's upskilling pathways committee, which during the past year has also been vested with the responsibility to oversee a basic skills strategy within the Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability, within the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation, could fulfill a consultative function with regard to the national VET policy. To note that the composition of Malta's upskilling pathways committee, which includes representatives from the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), Malta's Public Employment Service - Jobsplus, the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA), Junior College, University of Malta, the industry and the Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability within the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation, will bring to the table expertise and is a good stakeholders assembly which would function well in a consultative capacity.

Quality Assurance

- The MFHEA is developing the External Quality Assurance Audit Manual of Procedures which is targeted to providers and peer reviewers. This includes step-by-step detailed procedures for the implementation of the EQA audits. The manual improves the quality of the audits and ensure consistency, fairness and transparency.
- In order to support internal quality management and quality culture of VET providers, the MFHEA is developing the handbook for VET Providers. The handbook aims to help VET institutions initiate or improve their quality approach. This will enable them continually to improve the education they offer, for their own benefit as well as students and society at large.

Contribute to data collection and analysis based on the EQAVET indicators.

- The MFHEA through its research and policy unit will create and conduct surveys among VET providers to collect detailed information. The data will be analysed by an expert and the results will help to understand about the basis of quality assurance in VET while assisting and supporting developmental thinking.

5. Expected effects of the plan

The participating countries are invited to assess and explain the expected effects of the implementation of the NIPs in the short-, medium and long-term. Benefits and improvements in relevant socio-economic areas, skills and education and training and on various target groups should be considered.

The participating countries should also indicate potential obstacles/risk factors that can hinder the implementation of the NIP and explain how they foresee to overcome those.

Short-Term effects (1 to 2 Years)

In the short term, the effects of the setting up a National Advisory Committee for VET and the reconstitution of the National Skills Council will be minimal, however it is expected that there will be an increased visibility of VET on a national level and a more structured dialogue amongst the key stakeholders in the employment and education sectors.

A more tangible short term effect can be envisaged with the setting up of the National Guidance Service Network. It is envisaged that better guidance services will start to be offered to prospective IVET and CVET students, as well as adults of all ages to improve their knowledge skills and competences towards enhanced and diversified career paths. Indirectly, employees and employers can benefit from such national guidance service that will bring together all the different entities thus providing a seamless approach to career and training guidance to clients.

Another effect achievable on the short term is a marginal increase mobility of VET and adult learners, teachers and trainers through a more concerted effort to make such opportunities visible and more accessible.

Medium-Term effects (2 to 4 Years)

In the medium-term, the actions and measures of the National Advisory Committee for VET and the National Skills Council should start to be rolled out. These can lead to a number of recommendations at policy level and more effective synergies between stakeholders respectively. This will benefit the national VET agenda.

Collectively, the effect should be seen also on a wider variety of learning opportunities in VET targeting different audiences including adult learners and employees. IVET and CVET students are expected to benefit from a higher exposure to work-based learning during their vocational education and training in the forms of apprenticeships, internships and work placements that form an integral part of the training programme. The synergies should also be widened to include further collaboration with the National Guidance Service Network whereby a higher impact of the services offered should be tangible at this stage of implementation. It is expected that the level of employed graduates would be sustained and increased while more adult learners would be attracted to more flexible learning pathways.

The National Fund in support in Digital Education, Artificial Intelligence, AR and VR and the second fund supporting CoVEs and EUAs and International Competitions would start to be operational. Initial proposed activities would have been submitted and approved for funding. Educational activities covering AI, AR and VR are expected to be in development while bids for CoVE and EUA projects are expected to have increased and being supported.

It is envisaged that the mobility of VET and adult learners, teachers and trainers would have been sustained and more international agreements would be in place to enable the mobility of both young students and adult learners as an integral part of the learning pathway.

Long-Term effects (more than 5 years)

The projected long-term effects of this plan are as follows:

- A stronger more-active VET policy that is continuously updated to the evolving needs of the economy.
- Stronger input from employers in the design of curricula and learning pathways through the Malta Skills Council and the thematic networks as well as a higher number of opportunities of work-based learning.
- A higher take-up of VET in terms of IVET, CVET and CPD owing to the higher support and promotion through the National Guidance Services Network

- A more diversified learning scenario that includes micro-credentials and digital forms of delivery that include AI, AR and VR supporting the culture of lifelong learning and building blocks towards full-credentials.
- A strong participation on a per-capita level of VET institutions in CoVE and EUA projects thus increasing the visibility and esteem of VET in Malta
- A strong tie between CoVE and EUA projects and mobility of learners across Europe with the possibility of obtaining micro-credentials that are then redeemed towards full certification by the main hosting VET institution in Malta.

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Annex 2 – National level reforms and actions defined in the VET Recommendation and the Osnabrück Declaration

VET Recommendation priorities	Detailed VET recommendation priorities	Osnabrück Declaration objectives	Specific national level actions by 2025
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VET Recommendation priorities	Detailed VET recommendation priorities	Osnabrück Declaration objectives	Specific national level actions by 2025
the core of vocational education and training	<p>recognition of the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning and open up career and learning progression; continuing vocational training programmes designed to be adaptable to labour market, sectoral or individual up- or reskilling needs; and</p> <p>B.2 VET programmes which are based on modules or units of learning outcomes and validation mechanisms allowing the transfer, recognition and accumulation of individuals' learning outcomes with a view to gaining a qualification, a partial qualification, as relevant in the national context.</p>	C-VET digitalisation and	training provision, the national skills strategies may include guidance, incentives for improved skills provision by employers, increased participation by employees, validation of prior learning and targeted public approaches for reaching out to inactive and unemployed individuals, NEETs or individuals at risk of unemployment

<p>C. Vocational education and training is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for the digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand</p>	<p>C.1 integration of VET into economic, industrial and innovation strategies, including those linked to recovery, green and digital transitions; expansion of the training offer fostering the acquisition of entrepreneurial, digital and green skills;</p> <p>C.2 establishment of Centres of Vocational Excellence, which act as catalysts for local business investment, supporting recovery, green and digital transitions, European and regional innovation and smart specialisation strategies, development of vocational education and training, including at higher qualification levels (EQF levels 5-8), in line with national context and provide innovative services such as clusters and business incubators for start-ups and technology innovation for SMEs, as well as innovative reskilling solutions for workers at risk of redundancy; and</p> <p>C.3 access to state-of-the-art infrastructure,</p>	<p>1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET</p> <p>3. Sustainability – a green link in VET</p>	<p>1.4. Support Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) and improve permeability between vocational and academic pathways, including work-based learning and enhanced cooperation between VET, HE and research centres, thus establishing quality and effective VET and apprenticeship programmes at EQF level 5 and above</p> <p>3.1. Create incentives for greening VET programmes, including education and training in green technologies and innovation, in energy efficiency, circular economy, environmental awareness, sustainable use of learning and training material, digitalisation to reduce climate effects</p> <p>3.2. Define labour-market-relevant skills for the green transition that are to be incorporated in curricula and VET provision, including basic skills across all sectors and occupations and sector-specific skills in cooperation with the social partners</p> <p>3.3. Define and support opportunities to enable teaching and</p>
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VET Recommendation priorities	Detailed VET recommendation priorities	Osnabrück Declaration objectives	Specific national level actions by 2025
	<p>digitalisation strategies in line with national context and environmental and social sustainability in VET programmes and organisational management, thus contributing to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.</p>		<p>training staff, managing teams in VET providers and trainers and mentors in companies to act as multipliers and mediators, in view of increasing digitalisation and sustainability within the provision and management of training programmes</p>

<p>D. Vocational education and training is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills</p>	<p>D.1. permeability between both initial and continuing vocational education and training, general education and higher education;</p> <p>D.2 development of VET at EQF levels 5 to 8;</p> <p>D.3 delivery based on a mix of open, digital and participative learning environments, including learning conducive workplaces supported by state-of-the-art and accessible infrastructure, equipment and technology, and accompanied by versatile pedagogies and tools (e.g. ICT based simulators, virtual and augmented reality);</p> <p>D.4 initial and continuing professional development of VET teachers and trainers to foster technical and digital skills and effective innovative training methods, including teaching in virtual environment, in line with state of the art vocational and digital pedagogy, work with digital learning tools, and in diverse and multicultural environments;</p> <p>D.5 internationalisation strategies supporting a strategic approach to international cooperation in VET;</p> <p>D.6 Opportunities for learning mobility of vocational learners and staff, including virtual mobility, long-</p>	<p>1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET</p> <p>2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of C-VET and digitalisation</p> <p>4. European Education and Training Area and international VET</p>	<p>1.2. Support the development of digital infrastructure for learning and teaching purposes in VET including artificial intelligence and AR/VR technologies and develop suitable institutional teaching and training arrangements underpinned by adequate infrastructure, especially in remote and rural areas thus ensuring social inclusion</p> <p>2.2. Develop targeted information measures on the benefits of CVET and ensure user-friendly access to information on IVET and CVET offers at national and regional levels addressing gender and other stereotypes for an equal, fair and diverse society</p> <p>2.5. Support VET teachers, trainers, guidance counsellors, adult educators and mentors by equipping them with the adequate skills and tools for and through digital technologies; in particular through systematic approaches to, and opportunities for, initial and continuous professional development in both school and work-based settings, as well as distance education and training, enabling them to progress in their careers</p> <p>4.1. Support and facilitate the mobility of VET and adult learners, including apprentices, for example by developing support structures and providing information on opportunities in host countries</p> <p>4.2. Increase the rate of mobility of VET learners as well as</p>
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VET Recommendation priorities	Detailed VET recommendation priorities	Osnabrück Declaration objectives	Specific national level actions by 2025
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	<p>duration mobility and mobility to Partner Countries are in place, facilitated by the use and recognition of units of learning outcomes and of relevant European tools (Memorandum of Understanding and the Learning Agreement); and</p> <p>D.7 high quality lifelong learning and career guidance services, making full use of Europass and other digital services.</p>		<p>teachers and trainers, while strengthening measures to ensure the quality and recognition of learning outcomes, as well as adequate support structures. Foster longer periods of mobility for VET learners abroad and ensure that apprentice work placements are in line with the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships , taking into account national regulations and collective agreements, including health and safety provisions</p> <p>4.3. Develop VET internationalisation strategies, mobilising partnerships and including commitments for concrete and targeted actions, with all relevant stakeholders in accordance with national or regional regulations</p> <p>4.5 Cooperate with other EU countries in preparing national teams for international competitions such as WorldSkills and EuroSkills</p>
<p>E. Vocational education and training promotes equality of opportunities</p>	<p>E.1 inclusive and accessible programmes for vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, low-qualified/skilled persons, minorities, people with migrant background and people with fewer opportunities because of their geographical location and/or their social-economically disadvantaged situation; targeted measures and flexible training formats prevent early leaving from education and training and support the school-to-work transition;</p> <p>E.2. programmes accessible through digital learning platforms, supported by tools, devices and internet connection, in particular for vulnerable groups and people in rural or remote areas; and</p> <p>E.3 targeted measures promoting gender balance in</p>	<p>1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET</p> <p>2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of C-VET and digitalisation</p>	<p>1.2. Support the development of digital infrastructure for learning and teaching purposes in VET including artificial intelligence and AR/VR technologies and develop suitable institutional teaching and training arrangements underpinned by adequate infrastructure, especially in remote and rural areas thus ensuring social inclusion</p> <p>2.2. Develop targeted information measures on the benefits of CVET and ensure user-friendly access to information on IVET and CVET offers at national and regional levels addressing gender and other stereotypes for an equal, fair and diverse society</p>

VET Recommendation priorities	Detailed VET recommendation priorities	Osnabrück Declaration objectives	Specific national level actions by 2025
	traditionally “male” or “female” professions and address gender related and other types of stereotypes together.		

<p>F. Vocational education and training is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance</p>	<p>F.1 further development of national quality assurance systems, for both initial and continuing VET, in all learning environments (such as schoolbased provision and work-based learning, including apprenticeship schemes) and all learning types (digital, face-to-face or blended), delivered by both public and private providers, underpinned by a set of indicative descriptors and common reference indicators for quality assurance in vocational education and training applied both at system and provider level as defined in Annex II of the Council Recommendation on VET.</p> <p>F.2 Quality Assurance National Reference Point for VET to: take concrete initiatives to implement and further develop the EQAVET Framework, inform and mobilise a wide range of stakeholders, including Centres of Vocational Excellence, to contribute to implementing the EQAVET framework, support self-evaluation as a complementary and effective means of quality assurance to allow the measurement of success and the identification of areas for improvement, including with respect to digital readiness of VET systems and institutions, participate actively in the European network for quality assurance in vocational education and training, provide an updated description of the national quality assurance arrangements based on the EQAVET Framework, engage in EU level peer reviews of quality assurance to enhance the</p>		
<p>VET Recommendation priorities</p>	<p>Detailed VET recommendation priorities</p>	<p>Osnabrück Declaration objectives</p>	<p>Specific national level actions by 2025</p>

	transparency and consistency of quality assurance arrangements, and to reinforce trust between the Member States;		
Making best use of the European transparency tools	2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of C-VET and digitalisation	2.3. Work with respective stakeholders to develop digital learning solutions supporting access to CVET opportunities and the awarding of CVET credentials and certificates, thereby opening the possibility to obtain full qualifications without neglecting on-the-job CVET and the positive effects of learning conducive work environments 2.4. Support linking national VET platforms or databases to the Europass in accordance with the Europass decision and the EQF Recommendation where appropriate	
Sustainable partnerships at national, regional and sectoral level, involving all relevant stakeholders			
Best use of European Union funds and instruments such as the Next Generation EU (Recovery and Resilience Facility, REACT-EU), European Social Fund+, SURE, the European Regional Development Fund, InvestEU, Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, Interreg, Digital Europe, the Just Transition Mechanism and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, and the Modernisation Fund			