

The National Skills Council (NSC)

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 MALTA

Timeline



ID number 28424

Background

Malta needs an entity/body dedicated to developing an understanding of current and future skills needs. Several entities do studies and embark on training initiatives but it is important to have one that is building a consolidated picture of the skills scenario and the upskilling processes that the country needs. Also, this same entity must concentrate on synergising the industry-education link through higher quality work- based learning.

Objectives

- (a) to minimise the skill gaps that exist in some of the in-demand sectors such as the digital, technical and financial sectors (main aim);
- (b) to recommend policy changes to the government that would reduce these gaps and equip the labour force with the right skills, to meet the future challenges.

Description

In November 2016, a National Skills Council (NSC) was set up to establish the institutional framework for the anticipation of skills needs in Malta. The NSC is made up of representatives from:

- (a) the Ministry for Education and Employment;
- (b) University of Malta;
- (c) the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST);
- (d) Jobsplus (PES);
- (e) the Institute for Tourism Studies;
- (f) the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry;
- (g) Malta Enterprise;
- (h) lifelong learning entities and the civil society.

One of the initiatives of the NSC is the education-business encounters, where educational professionals and industry are brought together to identify ways and means of working

closer to address the needs of both sectors, promote employability, and to create a smooth transition from one phase of a student's life to another.

2016 Approved/Agreed

2019 Implementation

During 2019, the NSC has undertaken research and established a strategy for 2020 to 2022 that concentrates on the setup and strengthening of the fundamental units and systems required for skills research and skills development as well as a stronger industry-education link for higher quality work-based learning. This will enable a longer term and more focused skills strategy for Malta.

2021 Implementation

The NSC ceased to operate as an advisory council in 2021. Nevertheless, its work was still highly in demand, and remained a recommendation in various national policy documents.

2022 Implementation

In 2022, after consultations at the national level, the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research & Innovation (MEYR) steered the amendment of subsidiary legislation 605.10 and the National Skills Council was re-established as an executive agency, as per Legal Notice 320 of 2022.

2023 Implementation

The National Skills Council (NSC) started operating as an executive agency on 1 March 2023 with the aim of shaping the nation's skills agenda. The NSC's primary objective is to use evidence-based practices to understand and anticipate current and future skills within the work force whilst instigating policy changes to this effect. In its first three-year business plan, the NSC committed to four main areas of work:

- a. spearheading strategic direction;
- b. anticipating industry needs;
- c. nurturing life-wide and lifelong learning;
- d. investing in VET.

The NSC therefore regularly engages with public entities, VET institutions, educators and career guidance professionals, social partners and business representatives, amongst others, towards achieving its mission.

The NSC was the National Coordinator during the European Year of Skills, reaching out to a myriad of stakeholders in this regard (primarily during meetings and via emails/circulars and social media) whilst also liaising with the European Commission. On 7 September 2023 the NSC organised its flagship conference, SkillScape Malta: Towards tomorrow's skills, achieving participation of circa 300 delegates hailing from private enterprises, HR professionals, social partners, public entities and educators from both VET and academia.

2024 Implementation

The National Skills Council continued work in relation to its four pillars of work.

National skills strategy

Further to its successful application to the European Commission's Technical Support Instrument in 2023, the NSC launched the work towards developing Malta's first skills strategy in September 2024. Three themed conferences under the SkillScape Malta

brand were held between the 4th and 6th September 2024:

- (a) empowering Gen Z: aligning aspirations with workplace realities;
- (b) leveraging technology to foster innovation and productivity;
- (c) creativity at the workplace.

These were followed by the OECD stakeholder forum on the 10 September 2024, whereby high-level stakeholders discussed the main pillars and direction of the strategy. The council is collaborating with technical experts from the OECD - Centre for Skills, with financial support from the European Commission to develop this strategy, expected to be completed by 2026.

In July 2024, the NSC published a tender for the provision of services to undertake a feasibility study evaluating the effectiveness of introducing a Skill Card framework in various business sectors and its economic impact. The study aims to assess the benefits and challenges to introduce skills cards for workers in each of Malta's different industries and business sectors. Skill cards refer to a systematic method used in talent management and workforce development, where individual skills, qualifications, and competences are documented on physical or digital cards. These cards serve as a concise representation of an individual's abilities, aiding in the assessment of their strengths and areas for improvement. Such a study is particularly significant in light of Malta's ongoing tight labour market and growing demands for skilled workers.

In 2024, the NSC launched a *Training gap analysis*, by mapping training opportunities for green and digital skills to identify existing gaps in Malta's twin transition. All accredited courses provided by public education and training institutions were reviewed and classified according to the extent that they cover green skills and prepare for green jobs. In October 2024, the exercise is at an advanced stage, and findings are being discussed with stakeholders. The analysis is planned to be concluded in 2025.

Through 2024, the NSC worked to formulate and publish a tendering document, towards a year-long *Parity of esteem* campaign. This campaign aims to promote equal recognition of academic and vocational careers by redefining perceptions around traditional VET pathways, emphasising diverse learning pathways and raising awareness of emerging career opportunities. This work aligns with the NSC's efforts towards the establishment of a National Career Guidance Network. The project's objectives include developing a multi-platform marketing strategy to advocate for the value of both academic and vocational careers and executing a targeted marketing campaign to align with the future of work and evolving career landscapes. This tender was set to be published by the end of 2024, with the implementation taking place through 2025.

2025 Implementation

Skills policy

Throughout 2025, work continued on *Malta's skills strategy* through stakeholder workshops, desk research and bilateral meetings involving government entities, education institutions, employer representatives, social partners, and other stakeholders. The input gathered informed the drafting of around 30 policy recommendations. A first draft of the strategy is expected to be launched for public consultation in January 2026.

In June 2025, the NSC launched a feasibility study on Individual Learning Accounts, intended to provide individuals with portable training budgets to support lifelong learning. The tender closed in July and was awarded in October 2025. Work of the study commenced in November and will be ongoing through 2026.

Throughout 2025, the NSC also coordinated the implementation of a measure under the *National AI strategy* to monitor international developments related to job displacement arising from artificial intelligence and to identify sectors at higher risk of

disruption. As part of this work, the NSC has liaised with the Malta Digital Innovation Authority to draw on international research and evidence to inform forward-looking skills and labour market policies.

Skills intelligence

The *Training gap analysis*, initiated in 2024 to assess Malta's preparedness for the twin transition, progressed further in 2025. The focus shifted to digital and information and communication technology-related training. All accredited programmes were classified according to the extent to which they embed digital competences and prepare learners for ICT-related occupations. Draft policy recommendations are currently being discussed with stakeholders to inform potential revisions to training provision or the development of new courses.

In parallel, the NSC worked on strengthening skills intelligence and labour market evidence. In this context, the NSC initiated a project, in collaboration with the Malta Chamber of Commerce, to develop a Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) tool. The tool was designed to provide timely and granular insights into labour market trends, particularly through the analysis of online job vacancies, supporting education providers, employers, and policymakers in making more informed decisions on skills development.

Skills development

During 2025, amendments to Regulation SL 607.02 governing the Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning were completed and approved by Cabinet, with the revised framework becoming enforceable as of 1 January 2026. The amendments strengthen the NSC's policy role in establishing the Sector Skills Committee and Sector Skills Units, both of which support the development of National Occupational Standards, enhancing the recognition of competences acquired outside formal education and training. To support implementation, the NSC, together with the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, organised the 'Validate to Elevate' event in March 2025, which attracted strong stakeholder engagement.

The feasibility study assessing the potential of introducing Skill Cards across different Maltese industries - excluding hospitality and construction - was conducted during 2025, supported by a SWOT and cost-benefit analysis. The study due to be finalised in early 2026, assessed sectoral readiness and ranked sectors according to priority.

In the field of sustainability, the NSC expanded its pilot initiative on embedding sustainability into school leadership. Four workshops were delivered in 2025 to senior leadership teams from state, church, and independent schools, with 54 school leaders participating in total.

In 2025, NSC continued bridging industry with education in applied VET subjects. Since 2024, it has collaborated with the Directorate for STEM & VET Programmes (DSVP) including VET Education Officers for applied subjects to ensure that vocational education aligns with industry needs, particularly in sectors facing skills shortages. This measure is intended to remain a cyclical exercise, keeping VET provision responsive to labour market evolution. In collaboration with the Malta Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of SMEs, the NSC is supporting the opportunity for educators delivering applied VET subjects in secondary schools to have short micro-placements in relevant industries.

Outreach

The *Parity of Esteem* campaign was officially launched on 22 September 2025, promoting equal recognition of vocational and academic career pathways through a multi-channel media approach and school outreach. In addition, a six-week public awareness campaign on Artificial Intelligence concluded in August 2025, addressing common misconceptions and emphasising the continued importance of human judgement in the use of AI technologies.

Stakeholder dialogue was further supported through the NSC's CareerScape and

SkillScape initiatives. CareerScape was organised in 2025 as a series of thematic workshops, focusing initially on the Education, Health, and Social Care sectors, addressing skills disconnect with the objective to identify the root causes of this disconnect and develop recommendations to better align education and training with evolving workforce needs. In November 2025, the NSC organised its flagship annual SkillScape conference on the future of work, skills, and lifelong learning, themed 'State of Flux', highlighting the impact of global megatrends and the importance of transversal skills in an evolving labour market.

In 2025, the NSC provided non-formal education sessions aimed at highlighting the need to integrate further innovative pedagogies which promote the activation of transversal skills. Sessions included training for educators from middle schools on creative thinking and emotional intelligence, as well as continuous professional development sessions for personal, social and career development PSCD educators (PSCD educators in Malta are teachers specialised in personal, social and career development— a compulsory school subject focused on learners' personal growth, social competences and career awareness. Its aim is to help students develop identity, interpersonal skills, wellbeing awareness, citizenship competences and career planning capacity) in primary, middle, and secondary schools on the work of the NSC and career management skills. Additional sessions were delivered to mathematics educators and to educators from the International Learners' Directorate on critical and creative thinking, and to college lecturers on megatrends and career management skills, reinforcing the link between transversal skills, future employability, and evolving labour market demands.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry for Education (MFED)(until 2022)
- Ministry of Education and Employment (MEDE) (until 2020)
- Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research & Innovation (MEYR)

Target group

Learners

Young people (15-29 years old)
Adult learners

Education professionals

Teachers
Adult educators
Guidance practitioners

Entities providing VET

Companies

Other stakeholders

Social partners (employer organisations and trade unions)
National, regional and local authorities

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies
Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET
Establishing and developing skills intelligence systems

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[National Skills Council website](#)

[S.L. 605.10 National Skills Council \(Establishment\) Order](#)

[National Skills Council Annual report 2023](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

National career guidance network (NCGN)

The National Career Guidance Network (NCGN) seeks to 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 NCGN plans to:

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Type of development

Strategy/Action plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2021 Completed

Development of a skills forecasting model

During 2018, work started on the design of an econometric model to forecast labour market demand and supply in Malta. The development of this model was contracted to the Institute of Economic Studies at the Slovak academy of sciences, whose expertise lies expressly in this area.

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Type of development

Practical measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation**The National quality assurance framework**

The National quality assurance framework for further and higher education was launched in 2015, covering upper secondary and higher VET (IVET) including work-based learning (WBL), CVET as well as other types of further, higher and adult formal education offered by State and private providers.

 MALTA**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). The National Skills Council (NSC): Malta. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2025 update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28424>