

Malta

Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System

October 2006

Title: Malta: overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2006

Published on the web: Oct 2006 (*all website links were valid at this date*).

Author: ReferNet Malta

Abstract:

This is an overview of the VET system in Malta. Information is presented according to the following themes:

1. General policy context - framework for the knowledge society;
2. Policy development - objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities;
3. Institutional framework - provision of learning opportunities;
4. Initial education and training - pathways and transition;
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults;
6. Training VET teachers and trainers;
7. Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy;
8. Validation of learning - recognition and mobility;
9. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment;
10. Financing: investment in human resources;
11. European and international dimensions: towards an open area of lifelong learning.

This overview is part of a series produced for each EU Member State (plus Norway and Iceland). Each report is prepared by Cedefop's national network member (ReferNet) and is updated on an annual basis: this one is valid for 2006. Later editions can be viewed from August 2007 at http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/ where more detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can be found.

Keywords:

training system; training policy, initial training, continuing vocational training, training of trainers, skill development, vocational guidance, recognition of competences, validation of non formal learning; financing of training

Geographic term:

Malta



01 - GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

0101 - POLITICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL/ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Malta is a Democratic Republic with the President as Head of State and an elected House of Representatives of sixty five members led by the Prime Minister who acts as Head of Government. The present government is composed of thirteen separate ministries two of which fall under the portfolio of the Prime Minister. Education and Training together with Employment fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment. Since May 2004, Malta has become a Member State of the European Union.

The Maltese archipelago consists of three islands Malta, Gozo and Comino. The islands are situated in the middle of the Mediterranean sea and the distance between Malta and the nearest point in Sicily is 93 kms. The nearest point on the North African mainland (Tunisia) is 288 kms away. Gibraltar, to the west, is 1826 kms away and Alexandria is 1510 kms to the east. The length of the shoreline around Malta is 136 kms and that around Gozo is 43 kms. The total area of the Maltese Islands is 316 square kilometres.

Malta and Gozo/Comino are considered administratively as two separate regions. Malta is subdivided into five districts each with a number of localities, while Gozo/Comino consist of one district but with different localities. The south eastern region consists of one large urban mass while the west is more agricultural. The northern part of Malta, together with Gozo are more considered as 'leisure' areas although Gozo also contributes considerably to the Islands' agricultural produce.

0102 - POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The Total Population of the Maltese Islands as at November 2005, according to the National Statistics Office, stood at 404,039 of which 200,715 were males and 203,324 were females. Of this number, 392,682 were Maltese and the rest were work and residence permit holders and foreigners residing in Malta. With a population density of about 1,257 per square kilometre, Malta has to cope with about 1600-2000 illegal immigrants during the year. The immigration trend is unfortunately continuing and is proving to be quite a problem due to the small size of the Islands, the very limited natural resources and all sorts of other problems connected with these unfortunate people. So far Malta has obtained little or no help in this regard.

The Maltese population registered an increase of 5,054 persons over the same period from the previous year; this amounts to a growth rate of about 0.6%. Future population trends are usually based on projections which in themselves are neither forecasts nor predictions. These are extensions of past trends, based on the judgement of the future seen at the moment.

Malta's population is still 'young' for the European standards. According to the NSO (National Statistics Office) figures for the year 2004, the 0-14 age group represent 17.4% of the Maltese population whereas the 65+ age group stands at 13.7%. The number of potential workers for each pensioner gives nearly the same results as shown in last year's projections, i.e. 5.3:1 in 2002 declining to 3.1:1 in the year 2005.

0103 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

Statistics published by the National Statistics Office, NSO (Ufficcju Nazzjonali ta' I-Istatistika) for December 2005 show that the Labour supply (defined as full-time gainfully occupied + registered unemployed) consisted of 145,316 persons. This was distributed as follows: the gainfully occupied population stood at 137,937, whereas the registered unemployed amounted to 7,379.

The data on hand indicate that as from ember 2004 to December 2005, jobs within the private sector went up by 1,282 persons or 1.4%. Accordingly the private sector was found to be employing 92,820 persons on a full-time basis in December 2005. Reported growth in full-time employment was in the manufacture of chemicals and chemical products and in the manufacturing of non-metallic mineral products. On the other hand, the main drop occurred in the manufacturing of clothing, textiles, footwear and rubber products. The construction sector reported an increase of 450 jobs in the sector.

In the services activities within the private sector increases in full time employment were reported in the hotels and catering line, wholesale trade, recreational, cultural and sporting activities. On the other hand, a decline in employment occurred in the retail trade. A decline of 214 apprentices/trainees occurred within the private sector over the preceding year.

In December 2005, the public sector had 937 persons less than the figure for the previous year. In all the public sector was providing employment for 45,117 persons.

The Employment and Training Corporation, ETC (Korporazzjoni tat-Tahrig u Impjieg) figures for December 2005 indicate that the total number of persons with a part-time job went up by 3,887 over the same month in the preceding year. This global figure translates into 2,152 persons whose part-time job is their primary occupation and 1,735 whose part-time job is their secondary occupation. In total, there were 41,076 persons who had a job in the peripheral labour market. People holding a part-time job in addition to their full-time employment mainly increased in hotels and restaurants, education and the wholesale trade.

The major objectives of vocational education and training are to prepare people for the world of work. Investments in this area are normally reflected in an increase in jobs, a better workforce and greater job mobility.

In Malta, expenditure on education and training still accounts for nearly 6% of the GDP, about 50 Million Maltese Lira or 115 Million Euros. This represents a substantial proportion of the very limited resources of the nation. The result of this, however, is very encouraging as Malta boasts of a highly educated workforce that offers a high level of mobility and facilitates retraining where necessary. Malta has registered a great improvement in the IT sector and its joint efforts with Microsoft and IBM have placed the nation 2nd in the EU.

0104 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

Compulsory education in Malta is up to the age of 16 when ISCED level 2 is attained. The current situation has the following features:

- A rising proportion of 20-22 year olds with upper secondary education (47.5%)
- A high proportion of the workforce with less than upper secondary education (69%)

- Low participation in Lifelong Learning among the working-age population (3.2%)

According to a Lifestyle Survey conducted by the National Statistics Office of Malta, 51.2% of the population has attained ISCED 2 level, 33.2 % attained ISCED level 3, 7.8% attained level 4 and 6% ISCED levels 5 and 6. In 2005 educational statistics show an increase in attainment in ISCED level 3.

02 - POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

0201 - OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

One of the principles included in the second chapter of the Constitution of Malta states that the Constitution recognises the right of all citizens to work. The same chapter also states that the State shall promote such conditions as will make this right effective. The State shall protect work and shall provide for the professional or vocational training and advancement of workers.

In the light of the above statements, the provision of Vocational Education and Training in Malta is considered as a top priority policy in the National Action Plan for employment. The policy is formulated along the lines of the Guideline that calls on Member States to promote the development of human capital. The Guideline reads as follows:

“Member States will implement lifelong learning strategies, including through improving the quality and efficiency of education and training systems, in order to equip all individuals with the skills required for a modern workforce in a knowledge-based society, to permit their career development and to reduce skills mismatch and bottlenecks in the labour market.

In accordance with national priorities, policies will aim in particular to achieve the following outcomes by 2010:

- At least 85% of 22 year olds in the European Union should have completed upper secondary education.
- The European Union average level of participation in Lifelong Learning should be at least 12.5% of the adult working age population.

Policies will aim in particular to achieve an increase in investment in human resources. In this context, it is important that there is a significant increase in investment by enterprises in the training of adults with a view to promoting productivity, competitiveness and active ageing. Efficient investment in human capital by employers and individuals will be facilitated.

The Ministry of Education Youth and Employment provides the State infrastructure for this guideline. Education in Malta is compulsory until age sixteen, or the completion of the five year lower secondary education course, and is provided in the State, Church and Private sector schools. Compulsory schooling starts at the age of five but kindergarten is available between ages three and four. Primary education runs from age five to ten and lower secondary runs from age eleven to sixteen.

Post Secondary Education is offered in both academic and vocational fields at State, Church and ‘Private’ sixth forms, the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, MCAST (Kulleġġ Malti ta l’Arti, Xjenza u Teknologija) and the Institute for Tourism Studies (ITS). Post Secondary and Adult Education and Training is offered by the

Department of Further Studies and Adult education of the Ministry of Education as well as by MCAST and the Employment and Training Corporation, ETC (Korporazzjoni ta' Tahrig u ta' l-impjeg). A number of private education and training institutions provide a variety of courses too.

Recent years have seen a sharp rise in the number of students taking up post-compulsory secondary and tertiary education. One of the main policies of the government is to increase the use of computers both at work and at home.

Pupils are encouraged to use computers from the age of primary school and these schools are well equipped in this regard. Vast investments are now bearing fruit; a computer is available in primary schools for every two pupils and access to internet now stands at about 40% of all households. Internet can also be accessed from Local Council offices in every district and every person in the population has been provided with an email and internet address. Awareness of the need for Lifelong Learning has risen and opportunities in this regard are multiplying across different providers.

However, Malta still has a high rate of persons without higher secondary education when compared to other EU member States. Participation in Lifelong Learning and on-the-job training is still low and particularly so for low-skilled workers. The female share of post-secondary and tertiary education exceeds that of men. There is also a segregation in the choice of subjects studied; participation in science and technology subjects is still low in Malta and particularly so amongst women.

POLICY RESPONSE

Government policy is to promote lifelong and life-wide education and training both in Malta and in Gozo and to provide the required institutions and programmes in order to offer the widest possible range of opportunities to satisfy the needs of individuals as well as the changing economy. Government is pursuing a motivational strategy to encourage learners continue their studies at higher secondary levels. New areas of lifelong learning will be developed particularly in ICT and education in science and technology will be strengthened and promoted. Government will also improve its incentives to employers to improve training to their employees.

MEASURES

- **National Curriculum.** Government is stepping up its vigorous educational awareness campaign aimed at both parents and students to show that education is the key to a better life. A National Minimum Curriculum has been set up in the year 2000 aimed at providing students with the skill and motivation for autonomous learning in order to facilitate lifelong and lifewide learning.
- **Improved Certification.** The Secondary Education Certificate Examination is to be reviewed by 2005 to provide an incentive for more students to continue their education.

The ETC (Employment and Training Corporation) will in 2005, extend the assessment and trade testing of the unemployed who participate in training programmes and provide the relevant certificates.

The Malta Professional and Vocational Qualifications Awards Council (MPVQAC) will accelerate its work to develop standards of vocational competence and accredit accordingly.

- **Strengthening of Basic Skills:** MCAST (Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology) has developed a Basic Skills Unit to provide basic literacy courses to young and adult students and refugees. Literacy classes are offered by the Education Division, the ETC, the Local Councils and the Paolo Freire Institute to offer a broad programme in literacy and personal skills to disadvantaged youth as well as undertake community development. The Foundation for Education Services runs family literacy programmes to combat illiteracy together with the family and runs a Community Literacy Outreach programme for families in socially challenged areas.. The FES aims to develop child-minding services to encourage participation and to provide child-minding training for this purpose.

The Education Division has significantly stepped up its training in Information Communication Technology to provide students and teachers with the requisite training and tools. Web-based email accounts and web-hosting facilities are available to all state school students and teachers.

The ETC is currently designing a Certificate in Occupational Readiness which will be a six-month course targeted at school-leavers not proceeding to higher education and will offer essential work-related knowledge and skills.

- **Reducing Skills Mismatches:** In 2004-2005, the Government will be evaluating and acting upon the report of the Higher Education Funding Review and the Student Maintenance Grants Review, in order to provide a more sustainable base for the funding of higher educational institutions and also to encourage students to pursue courses that are in greatest labour market demand.

ETC and MCAST have established links and partnerships with employers to assist with workforce development programmes and to reduce skills gaps according to employers' expressed needs.

- **Facilitating Lifelong Learning:** The Further Studies and Adult Education Department within the Education Division provides courses in a wide range of subjects for adults, from Basic Literacy to lower and upper secondary certification including a day course leading to secondary level certification for women returners. MCAST has introduced flexible modular programmes with international recognition and clear progression routes to encourage students to continue to further their vocational qualifications and facilitate lifelong learning. This should eventually lead to the introduction by MCAST of an Accreditation of Prior Learning Framework to encourage adults to return to education.

- Retraining of Workers: This is being achieved through courses offered by the Education Division, ETC, MCAST and the Institute of Tourism Studies.
- Encouraging In-Work Training by Employers Regulation 14 of the Business Protection Act provides for training grants to employers who train certain categories of their employees. Malta Enterprise is currently reviewing the Act to render its provisions more appealing to employers. The ETC is studying the feasibility of introducing an incentive scheme for persons in micro-enterprises to undertake training.
- Strengthening VET: Training under the Apprenticeship Scheme administered by the ETC, MCAST, and ITS, will be formalised in a training plan and will lead to competence based qualifications. The Education Division and the ETC are participating in CEDEFOP's ReferNet and Ttnet.
- Strengthening ICT Competence: The Ministry for Information Technology and Investment has published a National ICT Strategy with a number of strategic objectives and related measures which will be implemented between 2004 and 2010.

Since becoming a full Member State in 2004 the Government has managed to increase its efforts and is being more successful in tapping EU funds to finance its main efforts in the field of VET. As in other countries, Malta has been hit hard by the rising prices of oil which are proving to be very detrimental to our tourist industry. This partly explains the lack of increase in employment in spite of further and improved training supplied. Malta has a very strong workforce in IT and a new investment attracted is expected to provide numerous more jobs in Smartcity, a partnership set up with a company from Dubai.

The government is also trying to strengthen the lower base of education, that is, pre-IVET years. A new initiative introduced is that of Clustering through which the Education Division is now creating College Clusters of combined Primary and Secondary Schools so as to facilitate the transfer between one level and another and smooth out all differences. This has started from October 2005 and three regional cluster schools called 'College' have been introduced. It is hoped that any latent traumas felt by pupils in their transfer from one level or one school to another will be eliminated.

Another initiative is to strengthen the recognition of informal and nonformal learning so that skills and capabilities of uncertified learning can be assessed. This is hoped to facilitate and increase enrolment in VET courses by providing another means of joining the course offered other than the traditional Ordinary Level certificates requested.

03 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

0301 - ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

The Constitution and the Education Act (CAP 327) 1988, provide the legal framework underpinning the provision of education in Malta. The Minister of Education Employment and Youth has the overall responsibility for education in Malta while the Education Division is responsible for leading, co-ordinating, monitoring and providing the

educational services within the sector. VET is also part of the responsibility of the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) which, however, now falls under the same Ministry. Two other institutions, the MCAST (Malta college of Arts, Science and Technology) and the ITS (Institute of Tourism Studies) are VET providers; the latter institution falls under the Ministry of Tourism. The University of Malta itself runs some courses that can be classified as vocational. The Education Division also has the responsibility for monitoring and regulating educational services within the non-state sector.

Due to the small size of the country administration and responsibility for all levels of Education fall under the Ministry. Even though the University and the MCAST are autonomous, these institutions necessarily work in close relation and are influenced by government policy. Some Vocational training is provided by private owned training institutions but these cater for very specific sectoral needs. Some of the bigger firms provide their own in-house training.

0302 - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Legislation regulating Vocational Education and Training was enacted by different Ministries but mainly through that of Education and that of Employment. In this legislature, these two important portfolios have been combined to improve coordination in their responsibilities. The part of Vocational education includes several acts which regulate the educational aspects but these cover not only the vocational but also the academic spheres.

The Constitution itself includes clauses that give citizens the right to education and the conditions under which such education has to be provided. Furthermore, since 1990 more laws and legal notices have been enacted to improve and clarify the conditions. These include:

- The Education Act (Chapter 327) - This was enacted to consolidate and reform the law relating to Education in Malta. Its general provisions include the right of every citizen to receive education and instruction without any distinction of age, sex, belief or economic means. It also incorporates the duties of the state to promote education and instruction, to ensure the existence of a system of schools and institutions accessible to all Maltese citizens catering for the full development of the whole personality including the ability of every person to work and to provide for such schools and institutions where these do not exist.

The Act also stipulates the right of choice of parents and gives the parents the right to decide with regards to any matter concerning the education which the minor is to receive. The Act also gives the state the right to establish a national curriculum of studies for all schools, to establish the national minimum conditions for all schools and to secure compliance with the national minima stipulated previously.

This Act was accompanied by Subsidiary Legislation 327.02 Legal Notice 81, which regulates and establishes the Teachers (Code of Behaviour) Regulations.

- During the same period as that of the enactment of the Education Act, another ministry, that of Social Security and employment, was preparing another act of great importance to VET. This was the Industrial Training Act .

The Industrial Training Act was the first act to formalise the legal requirements of training; It regulated contracts for training and stipulated the conditions under which they were to be carried out.

- The Technician Apprenticeship Scheme (Subsidiary legislation 343.22) was launched on the strength of the previous law. This Scheme set up four year period apprenticeships during which an employer engaging an apprentice under this scheme was bound to undertake to instruct such apprentice or to grant him/her facilities to be instructed in accordance with such schedules of work as the Director of Education may from time to time establish in connection with any particular trade. During the first year of the apprenticeship, the apprentice was required to attend full time at a recognised educational establishment. During the second and subsequent years of apprenticeship, the apprentice shall be required to attend at recognised educational establishments on such days or for such periods as the director of Education may determine and the employer shall release the apprentice for such attendance.
- The Extended Skill Training Regulations (Subsidiary Legislation 343.25) was enacted in 1997 to launch the Extended skills Training Scheme. Under this scheme apprenticeship in a number of varying trades was offered to applicants who had concluded successfully two consecutive years at a Trade school. The trades offered a variety ranging from engineering (mechanical, electronic and electrical) agriculture, building, handicraft, catering and hospitality, tailoring, printing and hairdressing. The period of apprenticeship shall not be less than two years and more than four years
- The Employment and Industrial Relations Act (Chapter 452) was enacted in December 2002 to consolidate, with amendments, the Conditions of Employment (Regulation) Act (Chapt.135) and the Industrial Relations Act (Chapt.266). This act is the most important legal regulation of the conditions of work and the relations in employment. It has a direct bearing on the contracts of work and of apprenticeships.
- Post Secondary and Tertiary Students Maintenance Grants Regulation (subsidiary legislation 327.178). This act states that a maintenance grant shall be paid to full-time students who have been registered and been accepted to a course of studies at post secondary and tertiary level. The provision of a maintenance grant is intended help many students to continue with their studies. It applies to University students too.
- The Employment and Training Services Act (Chapt 343) was enacted to provide for a National Employment

Authority, and for the establishment of an Employment and Training Corporation and for the regulation of employment and training services. The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) has now become a major provider of Vocational Training and the inclusion of the employment and training portfolio under the Ministry of Education and Youth has led to a much better co-ordination of training and educational services.

- Malta Professional and Vocational Qualifications Regulations (Sub. Legis. 343.26) Legal Notice 215 of 2000, was passed to establish and maintain a framework for the development, recognition and award of professional and vocational qualifications based on standards of knowledge, skill or competence to be acquired by learners. Other objectives of the MPVQR are to promote and facilitate life-long learning access, transfer and progression and to foster the recognition abroad of professional and vocational certificates awarded in Malta under these regulations.
- Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Act (Chapt.451) was enacted to enable the recognition of qualifications both academic and vocational obtained from Institutions to facilitate the mobility of labour to and from other EU Member States. Two amendments to this act were made through Legal Notice 160 of 2004 Mutual Recognition of Professional Education and Training (Amendment) Regulations, 2004 and Legal Notice 161 of 2004 Mutual Recognition of Professional Activities (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations, 2004.
- Further Legislation that affects education and training exists but this was enacted by other authorities and ministries than that of Education and Employment. Such Legislation includes Sub.Legis 234.17 Merchant Shipping (Training and Certification) Regulations enacted to regulate Maritime Training and Certification. This act was passed by the Malta Maritime Authority which fall under the Ministry of Transport and Communications.
- A similar legislation, the Malta Travel and Tourism Services Act (Chapt. 409) Tourist Guide Regulations, 2002 was enacted by the Ministry of Tourism. This Act empowers the Malta Tourism Authority to organise courses, seminars and other activities for the continuing professional education of tourist guides licensed for special designated locations.

The above acts do not cover all the training and educational services that exist. Many 'large' firms are making use of their expertise to diffuse knowledge and also raise revenue to afford further training for their own needs. The present scenario is that the Ministry of Education and Employment is making a drive to coordinate and monitor such training courses not only to ensure standards but also to issue recognisable certificates.

In 2005 a very important occurrence took place. The Honourable Minister of Education has presented an Act to amend the Education Act Cap. 327. This is hoped to pass the final stages on the 14th of July. This amendment contains various important innovations but the main changes consist in the separation of the Primary and Lower Secondary Education from the Higher Education. The Education Division will thus be now governed by two Director Generals one for each of the two levels. This will allow the Director General for Higher Education to concentrate fully on this level; this will provide the VET sector with more personnel and resources to help Malta achieve the aims of the Lisbon Targets.

The boards envisaged by the laws enacted for the recognition of qualifications, for certification and for standards have been set up and started their work in earnest. It will now be possible to certify courses according to international standards by these legal bodies and lower reliance on foreign bodies. Certification will be accompanied by the board for the ensuring of standards as in all other EU Member States.

Certification to be thus scrutinised will be up to the level of ISCED 5 in the immediate future and this will cover all new VET courses provided by our major institutions providing training.

0303 - ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

Due to the limited size of Malta and the scarcity of resources, matters relating to education have always been the responsibility of the Education Division. Vocational Education was the responsibility of the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education. Social partners were always consulted and their needs considered as national needs. No real regional division exists as the same educational facilities are offered everywhere. The amalgamation of the educational services provided by the Division of Education and the job provision services provided by The Employment and Training Corporation, ETC into the same Ministry, that of Education, Youth and Employment has furthered their effectiveness and facilitated tasks.

The social partners are consulted as regards their respective educational and training needs. Their ideas and suggestions are seriously treated but the expertise of setting up curricula, teaching and training methods to use and the provision of the appropriate certification are the responsibility of the Ministry. The role of the Ministry, through the Division of Education and the ETC is now steadily changing from one of supplier to one of monitor. At the same time, a good number of private training institutions are being set up but their work is monitored. There are some larger industrial units that have their own training facilities mainly to train their own employees. These are normally very limited and highly specialised. They use staff from parent companies abroad and normally provide their own certification, the recognition of which may depend on the parent company.

The Malta college of Arts, Science and Technology, MCAST is entering into joint public-private ventures by providing courses to suit the requirements of industry. A case in point is the course offered for chemical technicians to satisfy the needs of a growing chemical industry in the country. Other less industrial but important social issues like those of gender, social responsibilities and others are catered for by the Ministry too which makes full use of the Television station it has for the purpose, Channel 22. This channel also runs language courses to help Maltese to learn foreign languages especially those of countries from which most of the tourists visiting our Islands come. Thus courses in French, Spanish, German and other languages are run continually; obviously, English is our second language and Italian is very widely spoken and practiced and has the same importance.

04 - INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

0401 - BACKGROUND TO THE IVET SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM

Successive governments have set targets and launched strategies with the intention of raising the levels of participation and attainment within the Maltese Education System. Raising the status of vocational education and training has been prioritized with a positive resultant effect.

According to a Lifestyle Survey conducted by the National Statistics Office of Malta, 51.2% of the population has attained ISED 2 level, 33.2% attained Isced level 3, 7.8% attained level 4 and 6% Isced levels 5 and 6.

During 2002, 11,501 persons aged between 16 years and over 40 years have received some form of instruction catering for further education and training. 16.7 per cent were in tertiary education while another 10 per cent were in post Secondary Education. An average of 42.9 per cent of 20-24 year olds achieved at least an upper secondary education 52.4 per cent of 18 to 24 year olds achieved lower secondary or less. The highest number of participants fell in the under 20 years age bracket with a total of 3,601 participants while the next highest number of participants, which stood at 3,392, fell in the other extreme end of the scale i.e. in the 40 years and over age group. Female participation accounted for 59.0 per cent of the total participation.

During the year under review there were 53 adult education centres throughout Malta and Gozo. Twenty-three of these centres were run by private enterprise, while the remaining 30 centres were run by government. Apart from the evening centres, these included the schools for drama, art and music as well as the University of the Third Age.

State education is free of charge from pre-primary to tertiary level. The compulsory school age is from 5 to 16 years. Free text books and school transport are provided to children attending state education. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the administration, organization and all decisions concerning the use of financial resources in state schools. Legislation also empowers the Minister of Education or his/her representative to monitor the functioning of schools within the non-state sector. The Education Division is the central government department responsible for the implementation of the policies of the Ministry of Education. The move towards decentralization and autonomy in state schools has seen Heads of Schools take on more responsibility regarding, amongst others, fund management and choice of text books. A recent important development has seen the establishment of Colleges, which comprise clusters of primary and secondary schools which are administratively catered for by a School Principal. Principal Education Officers monitor teaching and learning perform audits and provide support and advice to teachers and school management. Local government, as yet, has not been vested with responsibilities for education although, in some instances, Local Councils organize general literacy and computer literacy courses.

See attached [\(Diagram of the Structures of Education\)](#)

0402 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

There is no provision for IVET within the compulsory education age bracket. Notwithstanding this, a Technology Education course has been introduced for students of 11 to 16 years of age in 2001. This hands on subject demands that students seek needs, wants and opportunities and respond to them by developing a range of ideas and build systems and products. The course combines an understanding of aesthetics, social and environmental issues, function and industrial practices with the practical skills necessary

to realize solutions to needs and opportunities. The students reflect on and evaluate present and past technology, its uses and effects. By means of Technology Education, all students should gain the ability of becoming discriminating and informed users of products and ultimately become dynamic innovators.

Information and Communication Technology in Education has been successfully introduced at all levels. The objectives of Computing Education are firstly to introduce students to the knowledge required to use a computer as an effective tool (Computer Literacy/Proficiency) and secondly to develop the concepts and analytical skills required to understand computational phenomena (Computer Studies Education). At present all students attending State Schools have access to a computer (the ratio in state secondary schools is 3:1). All students in Secondary Schools have access to the Internet and a personal e-mail address. Through the Leonardo mobility project students from all the above establishments are now undergoing training both locally and abroad.

0403 - IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION (SCHOOL-BASED AND ALTERNANCE)

At Upper Secondary / post compulsory level of education the various technical and vocational technical and vocational courses and institutions have been integrated within the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology. The courses reflect the current and future needs of the economy and fill a gap by providing vocational education and training that were not provided by the University. The College also provides night courses for adults requiring re training or upgrading of qualifications

0404 - APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

All apprenticeship work-projects (local and abroad) are coordinated through the Employment and Training Corporation, ETC, the Ministry of Education and the Tourism Industry.

THE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING CORPORATION (ETC)

www.etc.gov.mt

The ETC was established in 1990 under the Employment Training Services Act (Act No XXVIII). It was set up as a corporate body to provide and develop a national public employment service, actively assisting jobseekers in finding employment by mediating information on job vacancies and other services. The E.T.C. is in charge of implementing national employment policy, focusing, in particular, on active labour market measures. Its mission statement is to provide and ensure equitable access to training programmes and employment opportunities and to contribute towards the social and economic development of the community.

The mandate of the ETC comprises:

- The provision of training courses to promote employability, meeting the local demand for labour. And
- Monitoring the development of labour market trends in Malta.

The key clients of the ETC are jobseekers, employers, employed wishing to upgrade their skills, and the government.

The ETC is governed by an independent board of directors composed in total of 12 representatives from Ministries, NGOs and social partners who are nominated by the

government and other social partners. The board approves the Corporation's work programme and ensures its conformity with the national employment policy drawn up by the government. It is also responsible for monitoring work programme implementation. The ETC reports on an annual basis to the Maltese parliament and is audited by the Court of Auditors.

The ETC is run by a Chief Executive Officer together with senior management. In addition to the Chief Executive's Office, there are six Divisions (Employment Services, Training Services, Supported Employment and Administration, Research and Development, Finance and IT, Human Resources and Law). Altogether, the ETC has 150 employees.

Forms of assessment depend on the qualification and the awarding body but generally speaking may include written, oral and practical examinations and/or continuous assessment.

Although the emphasis is on formative assessment and the enhanced quality assurance in summative assessment, the use of portfolio for continuous formative assessment is envisaged to become more widespread.

THE ETC BUSINESS PLAN

In line with the government's EU policy, the ETC started to implement a three year business plan in 2000. This was drawn up with the help of consultants from FAS in Ireland. The business plan takes into account the input received through intensive consultants within and outside the ETC and provides a sound operational framework. It reflects the changing role of the ETC from brokering employment opportunities and provides training to proactive services to various clients and preventive measures.

The business plan clearly expounds the European Employment Strategy based on the four pillars of employability, adaptability, entrepreneurship and equal opportunities. The plan also includes recommendations with regard to the development of Lifelong Learning. In 2001, most of the initiatives described in the business plan were already in place. The ETC has also been assigned the task to draw up a National Human Resources Development Policy.

APPRENTICESHIP SCHEMES

Vocational courses are linked with industry through two apprenticeship schemes. These schemes are intended largely for those who have just completed compulsory education (post 16 year olds). Older trainees are accepted on conditions that they complete their training by their 25th birthday. Apprentices are paid a salary by their employer and also receive a maintenance grant. ETC in collaboration with Malta College of Arts Science and Technology, MCAST and industry offers a wide range of training opportunities to school-leavers to learn a trade or skill, thus enhancing their employability.

The two apprenticeship Schemes are the Extended Skills Training Scheme (ESTS) and the Technician Apprenticeship Scheme (TAS).

ESTS leads to the Journeyman's Certificate at Craftsmanship level in various trades. Trainees usually obtain a certificate comparable to a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3. Trades offered under this scheme are:

- **Mechanical engineering and allied trades**
- **Woodworking trades**

- Electrical Engineering trades
- Handcrafts
- Agricultural trades
- Building trades
- Personal service trades
- Hospitality trades
- Tailoring trades

The TAS Scheme is currently under review. TAS is intended to meet Malta's industrial needs at technician level in a world of rapid technological change and also to provide students in post-compulsory education with the opportunity to take up technical careers. Trainees usually obtain certification comparable to National Vocational Qualification level 4. Courses offered under this scheme are:

- Agricultural technician
- Computer-aided Design technician
- Industrial Design technician
- Mechanical Engineering technician
- Information Technology technician
- Mechanical and Electrical Engineering technician

Both schemes are of four years duration and admission is subject to performance in the Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) examination. Each course has its own specific subject entry requirements. The ratio of on-the-job to in-school training for TAS and ESTS are 2:3 and 3:2 days respectively. During the summer months trainees are usually full-time on-the-job training and a system of vacation leave is also provided.

In post-compulsory vocational training the curriculum is largely determined by the awarding and regulating authorities. In addition to practical sessions in school laboratories and workshops, trainees generally have a minimum of 2 days placement in industry. Besides the compulsory elements of the curriculum, certain courses have both elective and optional subjects. Intake for ESTS and TAS Apprenticeship Schemes for 2002 was: 382 and 273 respectively.

The total number of students for 2002 /2003 (1st, 2nd, and 3rd years) was:

- TAS 698 (89% male and 11% female)
- ESTS 714 (85% male and 15% female)

Source: ETC Statistics Department 2003

0405 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

ADULT LEARNING

www.eveningcourses.gov.mt

The Department of Further Studies and Adult Education (DFSAE) is responsible for promoting Lifelong Learning, for facilitating opportunities and creating possibilities for continuing education. The Department offers a very wide range of basic education, vocational, and leisure courses. During 2005-2006, 3947 persons aged between 16 and 40 have received some form of instruction by one of the institutions catering for further education and training. These institutions comprise the Government Adult Literacy Centre (See Table 1).

The total number of students attending Government Evening Classes was 7323. The total number of students attending vocationally oriented Government Evening Classes was 2282 which constitutes 31% of the total (See Table 2).

Forms of assessment depend on the qualification and the awarding body but generally speaking may include written, oral and practical examinations and/or continuous assessment.

Although the emphasis is on formative assessment and the enhanced quality assurance in summative assessment, the use of portfolio for continuous formative assessment is envisaged to become more widespread.

Table 1: Distribution of students attending MCAST Vocationally Oriented Evening Classes classified by field of study, age group and sex: 2005/2006									
FIELD OF STUDY	16-20		21-24		25+		TOTAL		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	T
ENGINEERING AND ENGINEERING TRADES	124	4	77	2	116	1	317	7	324
PERSONAL CARE, NUTRITION AND FITNESS	5	26	3	13	23	24	31	63	94
TECHNICAL/TRADE/CRAFT COURSES	70	6	60	12	165	31	295	49	344
HANDICRAFT	11	40	15	55	89	138	115	233	348
IT	89	26	59	20	122	54	270	100	370
AGRICULTURE	1	-	1	1	50	2	52	3	55
FINANCIAL SERVICES	33	19	15	20	25	18	73	57	130

The total number of students attending Government Evening Classes was 7323. The total number of students attending vocationally oriented Government Evening Classes was 2282 which constitutes 31% of the total.

Table 2: Distribution of students attending Government Vocational Oriented Evening Classes classified by Field of Study, Age Group and Sex 2005/2006													
FIELD OF STUDY	15-19		20-24		25-39		40-59		60+		TOTAL		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	T
IT	47	51	63	51	64	61	62	48	29	33	265	244	509
TRADE/ TECHNICAL/CRAFT	5	5	5	54	22	136	34	276	24	125	90	596	686
HANDICRAFT	7	26	4	36	19	122	10	435	19	374	59	993	1 052
PERSONAL CARE	-	1	-	14	-	18	-	2	-	-	-	35	35

(Education Statistics. National Statistics Office – Malta)

0406 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL

The total post-secondary (non-university) school population in 2003 was 9568. Of these 5,227 (54%) were male and 4,613 (46%) were female (National Statistics Office – Malta 2003).

The following institutions provide VET at post secondary non tertiary level:

THE INSTITUTE OF TOURISM STUDIES

www.its.gov.mt:

- provides opportunities for work experience in the industry;
- recreates actual working environments on campus;
- provides training in a comprehensive range of practical skills;
- develops and enhances the intellectual ability of its students through a wide range of academic subjects;
- teaches generic skills essential for a smooth transition into the world of work;
- continuously monitors students' progress by tutors, review boards and internal and external examiners.

The Institute offers the following programmes of study:

- Higher Diploma in Hospitality Management
- Diploma/Certificate in Hotel Operations
- Diploma/Certificate in Accommodations Operations

- Certificate in Travel Agency Operations
- Certificate in Tour Guiding
- Restaurant Operations – Level 1
- Food Preparation & Service – Level 1
- Food Preparation, Production & Supervisory Studies – Level 2
- Food & Beverage Service Supervisory Studies – Level 2
- Accommodation Services and Supervisory Studies – Level 2
- Food & Beverage Service Management – Level 3
- Food Preparation & Production Management – Level 3

The Institute of Tourism Studies catered for 771 students (8% of total), 529 (68%) were male and 242(32%) were female. The ESTS (FPS) Malta Course within the Institute accounted for 15% of the students at ITS while the Accommodation Operations Course and the Food Preparation and Service (Foundation) Course accounted for 20% of the total number of students at ITS (10% each). The ITS, which comes under the responsibility of the Ministry of Tourism, provides IVET and VET courses aimed at preparing students for careers in the tourist industry. The Institute caters for students of 16 to 21 years of age and offers them various entry possibilities and pathways through the system. Students can choose from a range of certificate, diploma and higher diploma courses in the hospitality industry.

MALTA COLLEGE OF ARTS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

www.mcast.edu.mt

MCAST provides post-compulsory education 16 to 20 year old students as well as adult learners and currently runs courses up to ISCED 4. It is envisaged that MCAST would be providing Courses at ISCED 5 in the near future.

MCAST has already done much to project a modern image of VET, to attract some of the more able students in the post-16 sector, and to become a credible alternative to the academic higher secondary track and to the University, even though it is not offering degree-level courses as yet. It has established bridges with the university, so that courses offered by the different institutes of the College are given credit equivalence, serving as a basis for topping up courses leading to a degree. At the same time, the College is reaching out to those students who fail to acquire basic certification at the end of their compulsory schooling, offering them a second chance through pre-foundation courses that shore up deficits in literacy and other basic competencies, and giving young people access to further training opportunities. (R.G. Sultana, Lifelong Guidance and the European challenge Issues for Malta Euroguidance, Malta 2003).

For the same year, MCAST had a total of 2857 students, 1836 (64%) of which were males and 1021 (36%) were female. The Institute of Building and Construction was the most popular Course with 18% of the total College population followed by the Institute of Business and Commerce with 17% of the College population.

MCAST accounts for 30% of students attending post-secondary education (non-university).

IVET and VET courses are catered for by the recently established Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology which comprises 9 institutes namely:

- Institute of Agribusiness
- Institute of Art and Design
- Institute of Building and Construction Engineering
- Institute of Business and Commerce
- Institute of Community Services
- Institute of Electronics Engineering
- Institute of Information and Communications Technology
- Institute of Mechanical Engineering
- Maritime Institute

Please see attached for a list of courses offered by [MCAST for 2006/2007](#)

Forms of assessment depend on the qualification and the awarding body but generally speaking may include written, oral and practical examinations and/or continuous assessment.

Although the emphasis is on formative assessment, and the enhanced quality assurance in summative assessment the use of portfolio for continuous formative assessment is envisaged to become more widespread.

0407 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

THE UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

www.um.edu.mt

The University of Malta also has vocationally oriented courses, though these have always been considered as forming part of the academic framework. These are the Teachers Training Course and the Doctors of Medicine Course which both involve a period of on the job training.

For the B.Ed (Hons) course students follow a course by which they qualify as either primary or secondary school teachers. Students must acquire a minimum of 116 credits over four years, 16 of which are allocated to 4 supervised and evaluated field placements (one per year of the course). Students following the secondary option cover 112 credits over the four years and may make up the balance by choosing approved optional/elective credits.

The Doctor of Medicine and Surgery course is divided into two parts: the Institute course (pre-clinical years) of two years duration and the Final Course (clinical years) of three years' duration.

The Pre Clinical Programme comprises modules on anatomy and cell biology, physiology, biochemistry and molecular biology, general pathology (including practical sessions) and microbiology, general pharmacology and behaviour sciences.

The Clinical Years (years III – V) begin with an introductory course in clinical skills during which students are expected to learn the rudiments of physical examinations.

Progress tests are held in January and May/June with a supplementary session in September. Subject tests are held during the final course. Students also undertake clinical assignments. Final examinations are held in May/June of the fifth year.

THE INSTITUTE OF HEALTH CARE (IHC)

www.home.um.edu.mt

The Institute of Health Care within the University of Malta was set up specifically to develop courses in Health Care on an academic level. For many years, the University has provided education for future doctors, dentists and pharmacists. However, today it is recognized that health care involves the efforts of a multi disciplinary team of caring professionals who meet, discuss and plan together the health care needs of individuals and specific client groups.

The Institute of Health Care provides the knowledge and skills for the professional career so that s/he may contribute to effective decision making and policy setting. The Institute is also involved in continual updating exercises, thereby keeping professionals abreast with recent developments in health care.

The Institute of Health Care offers undergraduate courses at Diploma and Bachelor levels.

THE MALTA CENTRE FOR RESTORATION. (MCM.ED.MT)

The Malta Centre for Restoration has been set up with the aim to advise Government on policies related to conservation and restoration, including the identification of priority areas and special needs.

The Centre's premises hold Malta's main diagnostic science and restoration laboratories complemented by a fully-resourced documentation division incorporating photography, photogrammetry and laser scanning facilities for the documentation of artifacts, archaeological sites and historical buildings.

Through its Institute for Conservation and Restoration studies, MCR trains its students on internationally recognized professional standards in various conservation and restoration techniques. Apart from degree programmes carried out together with the University of Malta, MCR also provides post-secondary vocational courses in conservation and preservation of Maltese and cultural property.

These objectives are consistent with the vision of developing and promoting MCR as a centre of excellence with a distinct Euro-Mediterranean dimension and as a hub in the field of teaching and research activity in conservation and restoration at the heart of the Mediterranean region.

05 - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

0501 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Successive governments in the past 10 years have built on existing measures to create and support a wide range of formal and non-formal learning opportunities for all age groups of civil society. Both major political parties have established institutes aimed at continuing education of members. Major NGO's have developed their own package of non-formal and informal learning opportunities for particular categories of citizens at both central and community levels. Government itself is a major provider in the area of lifelong education both through its formal compulsory, post-secondary, vocational and tertiary education institutions as well as through other initiatives such as the Staff Development Organisation (SDO) and on-going adult focused Television programmes and courses run by the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education within the Division of Education. Other Parastatal Corporations and Authorities as well as the private industrial sector have, through the years, established their own training centres contributing to staff development opportunities that have become a management success indicator.

0502 - PUBLICLY PROMOTED CVET FOR ALL

The present Government undertook to ensure that 'Major efforts will be made in the field of education, with special emphasis on those who left school early. This will be incorporated into the concept of lifelong learning. Wider use will be made of distance learning through radio, T.V. and computer'. In its bid to accomplish this commitment, the Ministry of Education has embarked on a series of wide-ranging reforms in the education, training and culture sectors that have led to several outcomes. These included, among others:

- The setting up of a National Steering Committee on the Implementation of the National Curriculum that followed a National Strategic Plan on the implementation of the National Curriculum.
- The setting up through Legal Notice 135 of 2000, of the Institute for Child and Parent Learning Support in order to effectively and efficiently aid the Division of Education to combat school failure and to support the continuing education of parents to enable them to nurture their children's growth and learning.
- The establishment in August 2000 of the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology and the establishment, through Legal Notice 215 of 2000, of a Malta Council for Professional and Vocational Qualifications (MPVQAC).

This brought about new developments in the area of technology education in the compulsory sector to form the basis of upper secondary schooling.

- The MCAST has developed a Literacy Support Unit targeting young post-secondary underachievers that

would enable them to access courses at the Vocational College.

- The setting up of a Foundation for Educational Services to develop services for persons with special learning difficulties and the setting up of a Foundations for Tomorrow's Schools (FTS) that will be responsible both for the construction, refurbishment and maintenance of schools as well as for the development and application of alternative sources of financement. FTS will be involved in the physical alterations of schools to accommodate adult learning activities through the schools as community learning centres initiative.
- The setting up of a Trade School Reform Expert Group that led to a reform in the area of technology education in Malta.

Malta has a long tradition in adult training in the field of vocational education. Medieval guilds existed and had saints as their patrons. Under the protection of the Church, vocational training was provided by these guilds to young and not so young apprentices to help them get employment or set up for themselves in traditional skills and crafts. The church itself was a powerful patron to artists and bought their artistical work to embellish the many churches and cathedrals on the island. The coming of the Knights of St. John to Malta in the year 1530 provided another source of work and introduced new skills required to provide for the building of fortifications and ships. When the British arrived in 1800 shipbuilding and repair became even more important and the Dockyard started its own school to provide for such requirements. Through this school an impetus was given to the teaching of mathematics and sciences. Metallurgy was another area of great importance and new skills like welding and brazing had to be taught.

Tertiary and University education too was provided; the University of Malta was started in the 1700's by the Jesuits and catered for professional training in the fields of Theology, Medicine and Law. After the Second World War the importance of the Dockyard started its decline and with the attainment of Independence in 1964 and changeover from a defence based economy to a competitive market economy new demands were made on education. The introduction of new infrastructural services multiplied the demand for new skills. The Government shouldered the responsibility and provided for these through its State schools during the day and to adults seeking retraining, in the evenings. Thus in the 1950's and 60's one could learn skills such as electrical installation (both domestic and industrial), welding, carpentry and a host of similar skills through evening classes provided by the Education Division. The economic change was accompanied by a 'rundown' of employment with the British services and the pace of provision of such retraining was even more pronounced as the people who lost their jobs had to be retrained to grasp other opportunities mainly in the area of services. Tourism was encouraged and it is now a pillar of the Maltese economy. Jobs related to this service required workers to train in different fields and the School of Catering and Tourism Studies (now the Institute of Tourism Studies) was opened. Parastatal companies like Enemalta and Telemalta were set up to run the provision of electrical power generation and the telephone service thus making new training demands. During the same time commercial banks were set up too including the Mid Med Bank (now HSBC) and the Bank of Valletta. The Institute of Bankers provided evening courses to obtain the Diploma in Banking and other forms of certification required in this line of business, this the Institute did with the help of the Education Division. Similarly the Institute of

Accountants and that of Management started, and now are still running, such certification courses.

The Education Division of the Ministry of Education thus strengthened the section that provides for this adult education. The Department of Further Studies and Adult Education now provides a wide range of courses at different levels ranging from basic literacy and numeracy to courses in engineering subjects leading to the London City and Guilds qualifications. Over 7000 students and adults attend such courses annually. The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), another major provider, strives to provide equitable access to job-related initial and re-training programmes and employment services by targeting, among other, unskilled and under-skilled workers and registered unemployed, youths interest in a vocational route, those who register themselves for the first time on the unemployment register and women returning to the labour market.

Apart from these measures, there are a number of Local Councils, parishes, private enterprises, Church organisations and NGO's that offer a wide range of courses in the areas that fall under the EU definition of basic skills. A number of commercial schools that have proliferated over the past ten years complement the educational role of the ETC that both offers a wide range of short non-formal courses as well as financially sponsors registered unemployed to follow, among others, courses leading to internationally recognised qualifications in computer studies offered by other organisations.

It is recognised that the Government needs to guarantee open access to learning as well as enhanced support provisions for adults such as guidance and counselling to mitigate the complex decisions involved in seeking, holding and changing jobs. Such provisions, including second chance opportunities for school dropouts, should be especially directed towards those with little training and few qualifications.

A survey of stakeholders' opinions and recommendations shows that it is of utmost importance that all students leave school with fluency in the basic skills as literacy, numeracy, intra- and inter-personal communication, problem-solving and decision making and Information Communication Technology. In order to ensure this, both preventive and early intervention programmes need to be strengthened or created as well as supported, assessed and researched. Another recommendation was the use of retired teachers at community level to provide basic skills training opportunities. Training in adult pedagogy should be provided to those providing such courses. A national data-base of public, private and community-based organisations that provide non-formal and informal learning opportunities has been initiated and is being effectively managed but has to be marketed on a wide scale. Stakeholders also feel that non-formal education courses should be harmonised to safeguard standards.

The Department of Further Studies and Adult Education is in the process of submitting a proposal to the Ministry of Education for the setting up of a Lifelong Learning Centre for the provision of skills-based courses on guidance and counselling services and information. The work of this centre would emphasise on-going learning needs identification and encourage dialogue between learners and educators. Courses would include ones on literacy, numeracy, ICT, language and entrepreneurship development. The Centre would act as a national and European hub for the provision of guidance and counselling for youths and adults and would provide a special focus on persons at risk of social exclusion.

0503 - TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHERS VULNERABLE TO EXCLUSION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

The government is striving hard to carry out ongoing education in basic literacy and numeracy so that the adults and early school leavers can then be retrained. Literacy makes possible the use of computers and at present there is a concerted drive to raise computer awareness. The DFSAE of the Education Division is providing space, machinery and teaching staff after normal working hours to carry out a massive programme in this area. This drive is being carried out with the help and cooperation of local councils. The premises of local councils are also equipped with computers and every citizen has been provided with an Email access. People can make use of internet facilities too. The use of computers has made it possible for women who left their jobs to return to work by making it possible for them to serve from home. In itself, this has made it possible for society to recoup the advantages of the training given to such women when they were still single and which would have been otherwise lost.

The education programme in basic literacy and numeracy is also giving some of the 'second chance' members of society who have decided to start afresh. These may wish to follow further studies or vocational training to find new ways of supporting themselves and their families. In today's budget, the government has just announced a scheme to be offered to those registering for employment. This scheme, with the help of EU funds, will make it compulsory to those registering for work to join a training course during which payment or grant will be given. The courses offered will be in line with recognised future job prospects. Failure to attend such courses will result in the removal of such a person from the register of unemployed and the loss of any unemployment benefit.

Maltese Trade Unions, like their European counterparts are today offering courses of vocational training to their members especially when such members need retraining due to frictional unemployment. The two major political parties also have an educational arm which they use to further their respective political philosophies. These institutions offer even vocational training in various fields but mainly in the social context varying from public speaking to typing and computing. NGO's represent another section that provides education and training. Thus the Prison Society tries to reeducate inmates to help their reintegration into society. Practical subjects like carpentry, baking and others are taught so as to help these unfortunates find employment when their period of confinement is finished.

0504 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF ENTERPRISES OR SOCIAL PARTNERS

Access to learning opportunities and programmes was very strictly controlled and applicants had to satisfy requirements such as basic ordinary or advanced level certificates of education to be given access to further learning.

While such requirements are still being enforced, other avenues of access have been provided through the setting up of foundation courses which provide the candidates with the basic skills required to be able to follow further studies and training. Besides this many new programmes are being offered and such new programmes are directed at specific needs to create employment in various areas especially in ICT and personal care. Due to the small size of the country and the limited resources, most of these educational programmes are provided by the State run Institutions and the Employment and Training Corporation. Since the accession of Malta in the European Union as a Member State in 2004, EU funds are being received to help in these efforts. One must also mention the rapid increase of public-private partnerships being set up to provide such training and instruction.

New services are being introduced to facilitate the return of housewives to further studies and eventually to employment. Such services have to do with child minding and are provided through local councils, the church and NGO's (non-government organisations).

This reflects a change in culture as in the not so distant past this was the role of the grandparents in the setting of close knit families. Today, even the elderly are taking up further studies themselves as degree courses offered by the University of the 'Third Age' show. However, women accustomed to work before getting married are usually eager to return to a similar job as they had where they felt confident in the work. This is usually the case especially when the young couple is burdened by mortgage payments on their house or hire purchase payments. If the wife was not qualified enough and may need training to attain certification in certain areas or else just needs to update to new techniques, the need for vocational training will be really felt. Local councils are aware of this societal phenomenon and are providing this service directly or with the help of the DFSAE. This form of 'derived demand' is becoming increasingly felt and provisions are being made to satisfy it. Thus the reentrant to the world of work finds that certificates are now needed so vocational education and training are demanded.

The MCAST is providing much of this vocational training part-time and in the evening through its ten Institutes. It is making entry easier by accepting uncertified people on a maturity basis and by recognising their non-formal education and experience and by providing foundation courses to compensate for the lack of basic certificates normally required. The ETC is also providing such short courses mainly in technical subjects through its NIFTE (Night Institute for Technical Education). At the end of the course

Learners are subjected to the normal trade tests and provided with valid certificates that provide the key to open the world of work for them. Such standard trade tests like that of the journeymen are recognised and accepted abroad. Besides being a member state in the EU, Malta has long been part of the British Commonwealth and as such countries like Australia and Canada have traditionally received thousands of migrants from Malta. Our system of education is similar to that of Britain and the Commonwealth countries. British educational certificates can be attained through studies in Maltese educational institutions and directly through the taking of examinations set by British Universities for foreigners. This is valid not only for certification at the end of lower and upper secondary where Ordinary and Advanced level certificates were obtained for academic subjects and City and Guilds certificates for vocational subjects but also at higher professional levels.

In the year 2005 a new decision was taken by MCAST Authorities.

New Apprentices will now have to spend the first year at the College before being sent to their work placements. The reason for this is to provide better preparation to the students.

0505 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

The small size of our country makes specialisation very difficult. Having such certificates with international recognition allowed Maltese students to carry on their studies in European Universities and other institutions of higher learning. In the past many students used to continue their studies in Sicilian and other Italian Universities and also in France. Malta has long recognised the need of the teaching of European languages so as to allow more mobility and further study and specialisation. In the seventies there was a drive to introduce Arabic too but since the subject was made compulsory it seems to have created feelings of antagonism and as soon as it was no longer compulsory the demand just died. Today the need is being felt again due to trading requirements. Arabic can still be studied through centres provided by the embassies of several Arab countries in Malta, particularly the Libyan centre. Similar courses can be followed in Italian, French and German not only in centres provided by the respective representatives of these countries but also through the Language resource centre located in the Junior College.

The teaching of these languages facilitates not only academic but also vocational further studies.

Professional Institutes run their courses on similar lines to their foreign counterparts. The most active are those institutes for Accounting, Business Management and Banking. Traditional connections with their British counterparts has earned their qualifications recognition throughout the Commonwealth and now in Europe.

Participation rates in such programmes is quite high as they include about 50% of all working population in the 20-40 age cohort according to statistics issued by the Education Division of the Ministry of Education and Employment. Participation is stimulated by the major employers such as banks, insurance companies and other similar institutions. This stimulation consists of paid study leave, bonuses or allowances paid on the acquisition of certificates related to the employee's work and also the payment of examination fees, which sometimes are substantial in relation to the employee's wages.

06 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

0601 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN VET

The table below presents the different types of teachers and trainers and their place of teaching and training.

Table 1. Occupational Classification and place of training for VET teachers and trainers		
OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION	PLACE OF TEACHING	PLACE OF TRAINING
IVET teacher: - assistant lecturer - lecturer - senior lecturer (only MCAST) - facilitators - deputy directors - directors IVET trainer - workplace instructors - ETC trainers	Vocational college: (a) MCAST (b) ITS In companies (mentoring apprentices)	(a) MCAST or University (b) University (a) University of Malta (b) Leicester University (c) ETC
CVET teacher: CVET trainer: - ETC trainer - in-company trainer	Vocational college: (a) MCAST (b) ITS In companies	(a) MCAST or University (b) University (a) University of Malta (b) Leicester University (c) ETC (a) University of Malta (c) ETC (d) Employing company

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

The key difference between VET teachers and VET trainers in Malta lies in the extent of pedagogical training, and in the public status and recognition that they enjoy. VET teachers - as well as learning facilitators - belong to a publicly recognised profession, represented by a strong trade union which also functions as a professional association. They have a code of conduct, and entry into the profession is regulated, with the requirements specified in advance. The knowledge and competence base of VET teachers and learning facilitators has been codified in teacher training programmes, and is also evident in the criteria that are used to evaluate teacher performance (e.g. during supervised teaching practice).

Trainers, on the other hand, do not belong to a 'profession' as such. There are no clearly defined entry routes, no career progression paths, and no established set of standards or codes of conduct. Their interests are not upheld by a specialised union, and an association as well as a network targeting trainers has only recently been set up. There are important differences between general subject and VET teachers in a VET setting in Malta. Most of these differences related to the pedagogical profile of the two categories of teachers, as well as to the training routes they have followed.

BODIES REGULATING TEACHER AND TRAINER TRAINING ARRANGEMENTS

In Malta, there is no VET law yet, and consequently no formal legal framework defining the qualification requirements for 'teachers' and 'trainers' in the different VET settings.

Where there is a regulatory framework determining professional requirements, this is established by the different institutions offering IVET and/or CVET.

IVET is provided mainly by two institutions, both of which are largely dependent on the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment (MoE) for funds. These are:

- The Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS), which was set up in 1987 under the aegis of the Ministry for Tourism, but which is now the responsibility of the MOE. The ITS has 51 staff (of which 35 are full-time) and 704 students (of which 561 are full-time).
- The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), an autonomous foundation set up by deed in August 2000. This brings together under one administrative umbrella and corporate structure different specialised technical institutes that were previously managed by the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education (DFS/AE) of the Education Division at the MoE. MCAST now has 495 staff (of which 299 are full-time) and 7099 students (of which 3716 are full-time) in 10 institutes.

The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) also has a role to play in IVET, given that it is responsible for the apprenticeship systems, and monitors apprentices during their work placements. The ETC's Training Services division, through its Vocational Adult Training Centre, also offers short IVET courses to enhance the employability of under-qualified youths and redundant workers. The ETC's main role is in CVET, and in this report the ETC is mainly considered as a CVET provider.

Adult vocational training is largely offered by:

- the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC);
- industry;
- VET institutes.

The major CVET provider in Malta is the ETC, a public corporation set up under the Employment and Training Services Act (Act Number XXVIII) in 1990. Its mission, as set out in the Industrial Training Act of 1990, is the provision of a national public employment service, actively assisting job seekers in finding employment by mediating information on job vacancies and other services.

Industry offers several opportunities for CVET, but the field is under-researched, and not much is known about the extent, range and reach of provision.

The major investment of the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) and the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) is in the IVET sector. However, their role in CVET is likely to increase in the coming years given that the model they are striving towards is that of becoming 'community colleges'

There is practically no systematised knowledge of the area through research, though there are signs that the situation might be changing, given the establishment of TTnet (affiliated to the Cedefop Training of Trainers network) and a Malta Association for Private Training Providers, both in 2004.

Table 2. Institutions / bodies involved in training for teachers and trainers	
INSTITUTIONS / BODIES	WEBSITE
Adult Education Programme, Faculty of Education, University of Malta Msida MSD 06 - Malta	www.educ.um.edu.mt
Department of Further Studies and Adult Education Education Division, Floriana - Malta	www.education.gov.mt/edu/edu_division/studies_adult.htm
Employment and Training Corporation Training Services Division Head Office - Hal Far BBG 06 - Malta	http://www.etc.org.mt
Faculty of Education, University of Malta, Msida MSD 06 - Malta	http://www.educ.um.edu.mt/home
Foundation for Human Resource Development	http://www.fhrd.org
FHRD House, 1, Kampanella Road San Gwann - Malta	
Institute of Tourism Studies St George's Bay St Julian's - Malta	http://www.its.gov.mt
Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, Vocational Teachers Training Unit, Corradino Hill, Paola PLA 08 - Malta	http://www.mcast.edu.mt

Malta Union of Teachers Teachers' Institute, Republic Street, Valletta - Malta	http://www.mut.org.mt
Training of Trainers Network c/o Employment & Training Corporation Training Services Division Head Office - Hal Far BBG 06 - Malta	http://www.ttnetmalta.com

RECENT REFORMS AND POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

There are no formal policy documents regarding VET teachers and trainers in Malta. However, policy steering in the direction of professionalizing VET teachers in particular can be deduced from the recruitment and career progression strategies adopted by the two leading VET institutions in the education sector, namely the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) and the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST). In both institutions, VET teachers in the vocational subjects can be recruited without any formal pre-service pedagogical training, which in fact is not offered by the teacher training Faculty of the University of Malta. However, promotion to the rank of lecturer at both the ITS and the MCAST is only possible if teachers follow an in-service pedagogical course. This policy was first adopted by the ITS, and was then included in the collective agreement signed between the MCAST and the majority union representing the teaching body there. The pedagogical courses offered at both VET institutions target a range of skills, but give central importance to two specific areas that correspond to the policy objectives established nationally, i.e. that of making the VET route an attractive option for students. Thus, interactive, problem-based, and student-centred pedagogical approaches are given a great deal of importance, as are teaching strategies that take into account the different learning styles of students. This is particularly relevant given the fact that VET institutions are charged with the mission to cater for a wide variety of learners, including those that have difficulties in basic literacy and numeracy. ICT's also feature prominently in the teacher training courses of VET institutions in Malta, ensuring that all teachers are familiar with, and confident in integrating information technology in their teaching in both classrooms and workshops. None of these in-service teacher training courses address the substantive content and skills-development of the area of expertise of teachers, though opportunities to consolidate their knowledge and skills base and to remain up-to-date exist, often on an ad hoc basis that does not lead to any formal certification.

The training of industry-based trainers is unregulated, and little is known about it since there is no register for trainers, and the field is not yet professionalized. Courses in the training of trainers are run by the Employment and Training Corporation's Training Division (ETC - Malta's Public Employment Service), and by a number of private HRD companies. The University of Malta's Faculty of Education also runs a Diploma-level course in Adult Training and Development from time to time.

0602 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

IVET TEACHERS

In Malta, an IVET teacher is any person who is employed on a part-time or full-time basis to teach post-compulsory education students as well as adults in one of the vocational

education institutions on the island. That teaching can be done in one or more settings, including the classroom, work-simulation settings in the educational institution (e.g. workshops, kitchen, restaurant), or in industry where learners are sent on placement.

IVET teachers can be appointed to one of three positions:

- assistant lecturer (has no pedagogical training);
- lecturer (has pedagogical training and at least three years teaching experience);
- senior lecturer (has pedagogical training and at least eight years teaching experience - this position is only relevant to the MCAST).

There used to be also an 'instructor' grade at the ITS, i.e. teachers who are employed on the strength of their professional experience, but who have no professional qualifications or pedagogical training. However, with the introduction of certified teacher training at the respective institute, this grade is now obsolete.

There are also some teachers designated as facilitators working at the MCAST. These are attached to the Inclusive Education Unit, catering for students with developmental delay.

Facilitators can be guidance counsellors who cater for the career and personal guidance needs of students or lecturers at the Basic Skills Unit who cater for students who need assistance to develop literacy and numeracy skills. These have a specialised role and are attached to the Student and Support Services, but enjoy the same status and work conditions of other college teachers. The only other category of staff that are formally involved in teaching at the MCAST are the institute 'directors' and 'deputy directors'. These have light teaching duties that normally do not go beyond 10 hours of contact time (i.e. of interaction with students in a formal teaching-learning context).

The MCAST and the ITS also employ 'laboratory technicians', but while these assist teachers in preparing teaching resources (such as digital trainers), and in monitoring group work during a teaching session, they do not have the status of 'teacher'. However, the idea that they should also receive some form of teacher training has been mooted at the MCAST.

IVET TRAINERS

IVET trainers facilitate learning outside of formal classroom or VET institution-based workshops, by providing learning support to VET students and apprentices during their work placement.

IVET trainers and learning facilitators fall into three groups:

- Workplace instructors: These are appointed by those enterprises that sponsor apprentices. As a rule, these do not receive any pre-service training. Some may receive in-service training through, for instance, the Employment and Training Corporation's (ETC) train-the-trainer course, or through the Diploma in Adult Training course at the University. Others are trained in-house, but this is only true of the larger enterprises.

- Employment and Training Corporation staff: these are expected to monitor apprentices in their work placement, and to supervise the filling in of the 'logbook' or learning diary where apprentices note their learning experiences.
- MCAST and ITS staff: these visit students during their internship or work-placement, and are expected to make the bridge between the on-the-job and the off-the-job aspects of their training.

Table 1. Occupational Classification and place of training for IVET teachers and trainers		
OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION	PLACE OF TEACHING	PLACE OF TRAINING
IVET teacher: - assistant lecturer - lecturer - senior lecturer (only MCAST) - facilitators - deputy directors - directors IVET trainer - workplace instructors - ETC trainers - MCAST and ITS staff	Vocational college: (a) MCAST (b) ITS In companies (mentoring apprentices)	(a) MCAST or University (b) University (a) University of Malta (b) Leicester University (c) ETC

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING FOR IVET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

There is no formal pre-service training for IVET trainers and workplace instructors, i.e. there is no educational pathway leading directly to the IVET teaching profession, as there is for teachers in the primary and secondary education sector. As a result, the profiles of IVET teachers are heterogeneous, in terms of educational backgrounds and levels of schooling. General subject teachers in the IVET sector who have received pedagogical training obtain their professional qualification at the UoM. All other teachers, whether they teach general or vocational subjects, receive their pedagogical training after recruitment, through in-service courses. No distinction is made between 'general subject' and 'vocational subject' teachers, or between those teachers who are mostly or wholly class-based, and those who are mostly or wholly college workshop-based. Neither is there a special official term used to refer to those teachers who mentor students during their placement in work settings.

Those who have some training are most likely to have completed the Diploma in Adult Training and Development at the University of Malta or the University of Leicester, or the train-the-trainer course offered by the Employment and Training Corporation.

CONTINUING TRAINING FOR IVET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

The MCAST introduced its first formal qualification for its teachers in February 2005. Here three key decisions were made by the institution in relation to in-service teacher development:

- Progress from the assistant lecturer to the lecturer grade would only be possible if teachers obtained a formal qualification in pedagogy.
- A special unit co-ordinating in-service training across all the College-the Vocational Teacher Training Unit (VTTU)- would be set up.
- A pedagogy course would be offered in-house, with accreditation being sought from the UK-based BTEC.

The course admits 50 candidates every three semesters, and the plan is to offer the opportunity to all MCAST teachers to acquire the Certificate within three runs of the course. It is envisaged that the training course will then be offered against payment to external customers from industry, in order to encourage the professionalisation of the training-of-trainers field. Monitoring of the course is carried out by a local consulting expert in VET teacher training, by internal verifiers within the College, and by external verifiers from BTEC.

The course programme includes the following elements:

- Communication and the teacher
- Further education in context
- Learning theories
- Teaching techniques
- Curriculum development
- Research methods
- Assessment methods and uses
- Reflective practice
- Teaching resources
- Catering for difference in teaching and learning
- Project

Training is organised in such a way that half of the time is from the teachers' regular school commitments, and the other half from their own free time. In relation to the former, the teachers' non-contact time is time-tabled in such a way that it permits them to attend course-related teaching and tutoring sessions. However, their contact time is not reduced. Teachers are not charged a fee for the course, and neither are they bonded to serve the MCAST for a number of years after they successfully finish the course. The certificate obtained does not qualify VET teachers to teach in the primary or secondary sector.

The VTTU is also in charge of organising short-term in-service training sessions, either on demand, or in areas that the College principal, directors and/or governing board

consider to be relevant to the development goals of the institution. An instrument that enables the identification of learning needs (Training Needs Analysis) has also been developed. Typically, short courses include:

- Induction courses for new assistant lecturers employed by MCAST, and who have no training in pedagogy.
- Training in specific areas, such as the use of ICT in teaching and learning, for teachers who request such a service.
- Training of mentors who assist the VTTU in the supervision of candidates following the BTEC pedagogy course.
- Training in differentiated learning, through the use of the 'Let Me Learn' process, a model that has been developed by Rowan University (USA) in collaboration with the University of Malta and the Education Division at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment.

In the case of short courses, staff are obliged to attend, as these are held in their regular hours of work. Faculty of Education staff contribute to many of the staff development activities, but increasingly the MCAST is building its own capacities and drawing on its own staff resources to facilitate development in pedagogical skills. There are also plans to have annual training workshops where innovative staff or staff teams showcase their pedagogical projects, thus enhancing learning through emulation of good practice.

At the MCAST rather more than at the ITS, one notes a move from individual competence development to organisational competence development, i.e. one where staff development benefits from, and contributes to, an overall plan of institutional development based on the learning organisation model.

The VTTU team have all benefited from EU and other funding in order to develop their own skills in areas related to VET teacher training. This has been largely due to their involvement in:

- the 'Let Me Learn' project, co-ordinated by the Faculty of Education;
- the Malta Training of Trainers Network, which, under the auspices of Cedefop's TTnet, is taking part in such projects as: eTTCampus (the use of e-learning in the training of VET teachers); Quality in Learning Needs Analysis; the Definition of VET professions; and the Accreditation of Prior Learning.

There are no formal in-service training requirements for IVET trainers and workplace instructors, and there is no national system or framework which structures provision. However, ETC staff who have the responsibility to monitor apprentices during their work-placement, and who have been employed without formal pedagogical training, are expected to follow an in-service that provides them with pedagogical skills. The ETC provides support to staff who follow such a course, and offer a basic 30-hour train-the-trainer course in-house. This is not deemed sufficient, and staff are encouraged and sometimes sponsored to take up the Diploma in Adult Training and Development offered

at the University of Malta. This diploma extends over a period of two years of part-time evening studies and consists of the following:

- study-units (15 European Credit Transfer Scheme - ECTS study-units).

Examples of study-units include:

- Perspectives on Work Education
- Approaches to Adult Learning
- Labour Relations
- The Management of Training
- Women and the Labour Market
- Management Function and Labour Relations
- Psychology of Work
- Management
- Development
- Labour Market Training
- The Organisation and its Environment
- Training Procedures
- Needs Analysis
- Programme Design
- Communications Processes
- Learning Aids
- Evaluation
- a project (5 ECTS). Candidates are required to carry out a work-based project or case study. They can work on an individual basis or in groups not exceeding 4 persons. The practical work assignment consists of the candidates being attached to a Maltese adult training agency for a period of 5 weeks during which they work as adult trainees.
- practical work (5 ECTS) - this requires candidates to develop the skills of critical reflection in relation to their place of work, largely through the use of such qualitative strategies as diaries and journals, as well as professional development portfolios.
- a final examination set by the Diploma Board of Studies at the University, consisting of a written paper under examination conditions requesting candidates to

synthesise knowledge from the different courses they have followed.

An alternative to the University of Malta diploma is offered by an outreach campus of the University of Leicester, which offers Certificate, Diploma and MSc in Training and Development.

In some of the larger enterprises in Malta there are training departments which offer training in pedagogy to staff who are involved in organising the induction of new personnel-including apprentices-into the work force. Interviews held with trainers from two such companies-in this case, ST-Microelectronics and at the Intercontinental Hotel Chain-indicated that the training programme is developed by the mother company, and there are specific standard curricula, approaches and strategies that are used wherever the company is represented in the world.

0603 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

CVET TEACHERS

CVET is normally offered by the same teachers offering IVET courses, therefore what has just been said about them in 0602 applies here as well.

CVET TRAINERS

There are two types of CVET trainers:

ETC trainers are employed by the Corporation to provide courses to school-leavers and adults in order to increase their employability. The ETC offers trade and non-trade courses, and runs a Night Institute for Further Technical Education (NIFTE) with social partner involvement. During the year 2003/4, 1467 persons (985 were men and 482 were women) attended one or other of the 129 courses on offer at the Institute. The total number of participants in ETC organised mainstream courses was 5710 (of which 3933 were men and 1777 were women).

In-company trainers are generally only found in large enterprises, and requirements, if any, are set in-house. In-company CVET trainers are not yet an established concept in the Malta context. There are no regulatory frameworks, and there is no professional register. Large state, parastatal and private entities have HR departments with their own training programmes, but given that most of Malta's enterprises are micro-entities with less than 10 workers, it is easy to understand why there is not much of a focus on CVET and on the trainers of CVET providers.

Table 1. Types of CVET teachers and trainers			
	CVET EDUCATION-BASED SETTINGS (MCAST & ITS)	VOCATIONAL ADULT TRAINING CENTRES	ENTERPRISES
Senior Lecturer	X		
Lecturer	X		

Assistant Lecturer	X		
Trainer - ETC		X	
Trainer - enterprises			X

Source: Information provided by the respective organisations in November 2005

Continuing vocational education and training is mainly provided by:

- the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), which is responsible for the labour market training system
- some large firms
- the two VET institutions, i.e. the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) and the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST).

The principal commitment of the MCAST and the ITS is to IVET, and they are best considered in relation to that service.

Since the college teachers who deliver IVET are the same ones that deliver CVET to adults through evening courses, reference is made to the relevant section for details concerning them (see section 0602).

Labour market trainers typically have a VET background and are skilled professionals. As with IVET teachers, there is no educational pathway leading to the CVET profession. CVET trainers are a heterogeneous group with different educational backgrounds. Most are recruited from industry, and their engagement with the ETC is on a part-time basis.

The ETC offers a broad range of training opportunities to both job seekers and persons in employment. These include trade courses (for example, basic electronics, welding, woodwork) and non-trade courses (for example, basic computer skills, literacy, typing). The ETC also runs traineeship schemes which include an element of theoretical training combined with practical, on-the-job training provided by employers. The duration of traineeships varies between thirteen weeks and one year, depending on the contents and level of competence to be achieved by the trainee. They are targeted at new labour market entrants, unemployed persons or employees involved in restructuring exercises. The ETC offers this flexible training to supplement skills shortages. These programmes are developed by ETC together with the employers, employer associations and other professional bodies. The ETC also organises a Night Institute for Further Technical Education (NIFTE) with social partner involvement, offering further technical skills training to employed and unemployed persons. During the year 2003/4, 1467 persons

(985 were men and 482 were women) attended one or other of the 129 courses on offer at the Institute.

The trainers at the ETC are paid depending on the qualification levels they have, and on whether they are engaged to teach day or evening courses. Those part-time teaching/training staff that are employed in the morning (8 am to 3 pm) are normally paid at €9 an hour. Those employed for Night Institute work are normally paid at €23 an hour. Graduates are normally paid at the same rate.

There is no career development in teaching/training with the Corporation.

Whether enterprises have trainers or not varies according to the company policy, but where they do exist, trainers are most often staff attached to the human resource development department or unit. There is no systematic knowledge of in-company CVET trainers in Malta. Thus this will not be elaborated on in the following sections.

In addition to the three providers referred to above (i.e. (a) the ETC, (b) large firms, and (c) the ITS and the MCAST) one can make a brief reference to the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education (DFSAE) at the Education Division. This offers several courses that are non-certified and largely oriented towards liberal studies. Some of these courses teach crafts, but the responsibility for VET-specific courses has been largely adopted by the MCAST.

Several other organisations offer adult education opportunities, either free of charge or against a fee. Some award certification, but very few of the courses on offer can be termed vocational in scope. Many provide training in IT-related skills. In principle, the DFSAE is charged with the overall quality auditing of such adult learning courses. In practice, the department does not yet have the human and other resources that are required to guarantee standards, particularly when standards are not yet defined by a national framework.

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING FOR CVET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

In Malta, there is no pre-service training offered to CVET teachers, trainers and other learning facilitators. As in the case of IVET, VET teachers and trainers develop their pedagogical skills through in-service training, or through experience on-the-job.

As a result, there are no formal qualification requirements for CVET trainers at the admission stage in Malta. The situation of the ETC makes it difficult to generalise about the characteristics of the training staff it employs. Those employed to deliver basic trade skills courses are required to demonstrate the necessary level of experience. Trainers are preferred if they have pedagogical training, but the pool of expertise in Malta is limited, and persons who are competent in the trade and who are willing to teach are taken on, even if they do not have certification in pedagogy. Recruits are however encouraged to follow pedagogical training offered in-house through a 30-hour train-the-trainer programme, or through other courses available at the University of Malta or on the market. Those trainers employed to deliver courses of technician level and above are required to hold at least a first university degree or a higher qualification.

IN-SERVICE, CONTINUING TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR CVET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

CVET training of trainers in Malta is not regulated. In addition, since there is no register or national framework setting standards, little is known about the professional identity, training and educational background of those involved in the CVET training field. Such

training is generally voluntary, and depends very much on the policy and resources of the institution in which the training takes place.

At the MCAST and the ITS, where some CVET takes place, teachers will either have no pedagogical training at all, or will have followed one of the teacher training courses referred to in section 0602.

At the ETC, some of the trainers will have followed a 30-hour train-the-trainers course offered in-house. The declared intention of this course is to 'enable people to pass on new skills and tasks to others to keep in line with developments when new products, processes and technologies are being introduced.' The course also targets persons who are training new employees to perform required tasks in a working environment.

Trainers in companies will have obtained their in-service training either in-house (especially true of the larger enterprises), or through attending the short 'train-the-trainers' course offered by the ETC. Typically this course would include the following topics:

- Why training?
- Training and education
- Learning and behaviour
- How the learner learns
- Role of the trainer
- The training cycle
- Training Needs Analysis
- Training programme
- Learning and training styles
- Adult learners
- Delivery of training
- Evaluation of training
- Individual Presentations

Some CVET trainers will have attended the university-based Diploma in Adult Training and Development. In many cases such participation in courses is voluntary, though some students will have been sponsored by their own companies. Some will have followed courses offered by outreach campuses of foreign universities based in Malta, but the number is limited.

07 - SKILLS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

0701 - MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS

In 2001, a new framework for VET was created on the islands. The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) was set up with the main objectives of incorporating all existing vocational schools and of setting up new ones. The start of MCAST has in

fact marked the opening of the Institute of Communications Technology and the incorporation of the Institute of Building and Construction, The Institute of Art and Design, The Institute of Electronics, The Maritime Institute and The Institute of Business and Commerce. In the subsequent years, the Institute of Agribusiness and the Institute of Community Services and the Institute of Mechanical Engineering were also incorporated within the structure of the college. Another aim in the setting up of MCAST was that of providing and ensuring quality VET on the Islands through standardization of qualifications and through the provision of a high profile image.

MCAST makes use of foreign board syllabi; most commonly City and Guilds and BTEC. Although the content of the syllabi is developed in the United Kingdom, these are flexible in structure to allow for relevance to the Maltese context. Nevertheless, the level is still monitored through the work of external verifiers working for the previously mentioned examination bodies. One should also note that these awarding bodies are regularly monitored by the QCA in the United Kingdom. The use and modification of foreign syllabi to the local context is a system that has worked very well because of the small size of the islands that cannot afford to have a structure that requires the effort of individuals equal to local population. However, some of the courses offered are actually developed by MCAST through the requirements that are presented by the industry concerned. In fact MCAST liaises continuously with the Federation of Industry and the Malta Enterprise with regard to the development of new industries on the Maltese Islands. A case in point would be the running and development of two new courses which commenced in the current academic year. These are the BTEC Certificate in Applied Science and the MCAST National Diploma in Aerospace Engineering. Skill and competence development in these areas are needed due to the development of new pertaining industries on the Maltese Islands.

MCAST is also using funds attained from the ESF in order to reskill and train adults over the age of 26 who want to return to work or who want to increase their employability. Courses offered will be in the morning and are targeted to the cohort of the Maltese population with the highest rate of unemployment.

The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) is also responsible for issuing journeyman certificates in certain areas and for making recommendations when the skills are outdated or not up to the required standard. ETC also examines niches for future employment in Malta and consequently aims to analyze the skills and the training required to satisfy the needs of jobs which are to be created in the future.

The provision of wider consultation with all stakeholders for a sounder preparation of young adults and other workers is greatly needed. A closer liaison between the agencies responsible for on-the-job components of apprenticeship schemes and VET entities is needed for more efficiency. The acknowledgement of VET as a career pathway at par to academic education is a culture change which can be brought about by programmes such as Let Me Learn ® (Johnston, 1994), which promotes a culture of inclusion and celebration of diversity in Learning. The Let Me Learn ® Process, a joint initiative by the University of Malta and the Education Division encourages youngsters and adolescents to assume responsibility for their own learning and to be pro-active in their own development.

0702 - BRIDGING PATHWAYS AND NEW EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The Malta Qualification Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC) is currently working on an upgrade of a system of standards in order to incorporate all local and foreign body qualifications. This is housed under the Department of Adult and Further Education within the Education Division.

Maltese Students are entitled to compulsory education up to age 16. This should lead them to attain a Level 1 or 2 in the NQF. Students who for some reason or other did not gain these levels are entitled to follow Foundation Courses at Malta College of Arts Science and Technology (MCAST). Currently a pilot Link Project between schools and MCAST is taking place. However, some of the schools involved have recently closed down in favour of a more inclusive schooling policy.

The Maltese VET system also operates by means of two apprenticeship schemes namely the Technician Apprenticeship Scheme (TAS) and the Extended Skill Apprenticeship Scheme (ESTS). Apprentices under either one of the schemes are required to attend an educational institution in order to acquire the educational component of the scheme. Courses related to apprenticeship schemes are normally provided by MCAST and the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS). The ETC is then responsible for making the necessary liaison with governmental departments, parastatal organizations and private entities so that these would sponsor students and provide them with the necessary on-the-job training component of the schemes.

There has also been liaison between the Education Division and MCAST with regard to the training of educators. Educators within the Education Division who have not had the opportunity for formal training in pedagogy shall now follow a BTEC Certificate in Teaching at Level 5. These educators shall join MCAST lecturers for formal training sessions and will have minor modifications to their course programme in order to suit their particular needs.

ETC also offers the Employment Training Placement Scheme (ETPS) and Traineeships. The ETPS was created to provide the training to newly recruited persons in order to upgrade their skills and make them more relevant to the current labour market needs, thus facilitating the concept of market re-integration. Traineeship programmes are then developed by both ETC and employee associations and programmes are usually composed of both on-the-job training and off-the-job training components.

Negotiations between the UOM and MCAST are being carried out in favour of recognition of Level 4 Qualifications both in the light of current and prospective job opportunities together with their official recognition as entry routes to University Courses. Such a process would open new learning pathways for students but are still under discussion. The use of complete modularization in both institutions has encountered difficulties due to the lack of resources available and thus, students are unable to attain individual units. Nevertheless students are not only entitled to free education but they are also sponsored when they take up both VET and academic studies. One should also note that the University of Malta has adopted the European Credit Transfer System where any course of studies can be completed in another European University. It is also thought that Vocational Institutions in Malta shall adopt the ECVET namely the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training and MCAST is also currently in the process of acquiring an MIS system for more efficient management.

0703 - RENEWAL OF CURRICULA

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED IN CURRICULA DEVELOPMENT:

- Researchers who are those who shed light on the requirements of the industry.
- Lecturers, Teachers and Trainers who give a local slant to requirements issued by foreign examination bodies and these may be amended through an Internal Verification and an External Verification Process.

- Education Authorities develop syllabi that must be delivered in compulsory schooling.
- Employers who determine the learning outcomes that are needed for the skill requirements in particular industries.
- All of the above stakeholders and students are learners and thus contribute to the learning process. Students in particular help renew the curricula by providing feedback on the use of up-to-date examples.

THE PLACE OF BASIC SKILLS AND KEY COMPETENCIES IN THE LEARNING CULTURE:

Basic English, Maltese, Maths and IT are mandatory in Malta for VET. Personal and Social Education in Vocational Education Settings is not compulsory but may be an Institutional Initiative. Courses which promote inclusive communities and celebration of diversity are currently in the initial stages of implementation in the training of staff at the majority of VET institutions.

INTEGRATION OF NEW METHODS AND TECHNOLOGIES INTO CURRICULA

E-learning or project works are recommended in curricula. MCAST is currently under the process of offering a professional training course in FE Teaching based on the BTEC syllabus where a lot of emphasis is made on the use of these tools in the teaching process. Lecturers are also encouraged to use an on-line discussion forum.

The ITS is also running an e-learning site known as ITSELNET aimed at the use of both staff and students.

The Department of Adult and Further Education as well as ETC and MCAST provide evening courses for the general public who wish to upgrade their personal as well as their employability skills.

Malta being a small island with restricted flexibility creates a “forced” option for Maltese students to follow courses abroad. Network learning can also be an option for the courses that we should offer to our sister island and to others who want to follow courses offered at our institutions. In fact MCAST is in the process of setting up a video conferencing system whereby Gozitan lecturers who want to pursue the BTEC Certificate in Further Education Teaching would be able to pursue their studies from Gozo.

08 - ACCUMULATING, TRANSFERRING AND VALIDATING LEARNING

0801 - VALIDATION OF FORMAL LEARNING: GENERAL CONCEPTS AND SCHEMES

Formal academic and vocational Education was mainly provided by the government through the Ministry Education, by Church schools and by some of the larger industrial institutions like the Dockyard that boasted of a Dockyard school. Entry into the latter was very competitive and standards were very high. Due to the small size of the Islands, Malta could not afford a validation system of its own so it took advantage of the close connection with the British and used British Institutions for this purpose. These Institutions offered examinations for foreign students abroad throughout the British Commonwealth and Maltese students sat for these examinations. Thus validation and certification had full recognition wherever British certificates were recognised especially throughout the British Commonwealth. Since many Maltese emigrated to these countries

in search of work, especially Australia and Canada, their qualifications have automatic recognition. In the field of IVET, our students took examinations offered by City and Guilds of London, the Royal Society of Arts, the London Chamber of Commerce and ScotVEC. Today we have our own institutions but examinations offered by these institutions are still available and made use of.

LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND COMPETENT BODIES

Education and Certification were all regulated by the Ministry of Education either directly through the Education Division, or indirectly through autonomous bodies like the University of Malta. The Ministry was also the authority empowered by law to issue licences to schools and training centres to operate. Professional Institutions also offered teaching and training facilities to prospective practitioners and are responsible for the issue of warrants to practice the profession. In preparation for membership in EU Malta took all necessary steps to prepare for its own systems for validation in line with European requirements.

As part of the Industrial Training Act, Legal Notice 215 of the year 2000, the Malta Professional and Vocational Qualifications Regulations were enacted and through this, provision was made for the establishment of a Council to be called the Malta Professional and Vocational Awards Council. The objectives of this council were to establish and maintain a framework for the development, recognition and award of professional and vocational qualifications based on standards of knowledge, skill or competence to be acquired by learners; to promote and facilitate lifelong learning access, transfer and progression and to foster recognition abroad of professional and vocational certificates awarded in Malta under these regulations.

The council consists of eleven members appointed by the Minister for Education, Youth and Employment. These members include a Chairperson with relevant experience, a person to represent the Employment and Training Corporation, an officer from the Education Division, a person to represent the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (Vocational), and another to represent the University of Malta (Academic), two persons representing employees, two persons responsible for education who adequately represent vocational education and training institutions or professional bodies and two persons representing trade unions.

The functions of the Council include the establishment of policies and criteria on which the framework of qualifications shall be based. The Council shall also approve and publish national standards of knowledge and skills competence and to determine and publish the procedure to be implemented by training agencies offering programmes of education and training for access, transfer and progression. The Council shall also ensure that such standards and procedures as are referred to in these regulations are being implemented. It shall also accredit vocational education and training programmes delivered by training agencies and keep and issue official records of certificates awarded.

The Council was also responsible for the promotion of the National Professional and Vocational Qualifications system, to regulate the procedure of the Boards established by it and to perform such other functions as the minister responsible for education and employment may advise from time to time. The Executive Secretariat of the Malta Professional and Vocational Qualifications Awards Council was set up within the Employment and Training Corporation in the year 2001. In 2002, by means of Chapter 451(ACT XV111 of 2002), the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Act was passed and the Malta Qualifications Recognition and Information Centre (QRIC) was set up. The functions of this Centre include the evaluation of diplomas and the provision of assistance to designated authorities, learning institutions and individuals, counterpart

bodies and other interested parties in the comparative analysis and evaluation of qualifications. Other functions include the collection and dissemination of information related to professional and vocational qualifications and the promotion of recognition of Maltese qualifications abroad. Malta QRIC is also responsible for the enforcement and facilitation of the application of the articles regarding comparability of higher education, professional and vocational qualifications and also the facilitation of academic mobility and the promotion of transparency of qualifications.

To fulfill these functions Malta QRIC set up two separate Boards for the recognition of diplomas, one for the academic and one for vocational; each board is headed by a chairperson. The Act also provides for a Board to cater for Appeals; this board has been set up and is known as the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Appeals Board. The Act states that except where a designated authority does not have its own means of appeal, the Board shall have the jurisdiction to hear and determine all appeals made by an applicant aggrieved by any decision made by any designated authority under this Act or under any enactment in the second Schedule to this Act. As can be seen, Malta is well equipped to carry out its duties in this important sphere; Hundreds of recognition requests have been dealt with since the setting up of the Malta QRIC and a few cases have been presented for appeal too.

The University of Malta has its own recognition unit called the Malta Equivalence Centre that deals with recognition issues for entry into the University itself. The university is also responsible for ECTS, the European Credit Transfer System by means of which mobility of students is facilitated between European Universities. ECTS also plays an important part of the system of Joint Degrees; these are degrees organised and run jointly by two or more different universities in the EU Member States. This has introduced a new concept of standardisation in University teaching levels and content that helps immensely in the eventual recognition of these qualifications. A similar system is being set up in the MCAST called ECVET to introduce transferable credits for vocational education but it is still in its infancy.

During the year 2005 The Ministry of Education, through the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education carried out several important activities which were required to bring Malta in line with other EU Member States. The legal responsibility of the Mutual Recognition Co-ordination has been entrusted to the Director, Further Studies and Adult Education. This position entails the co-ordination of the Designated Authorities and the promotion of uniform application of relative legislation as well as relevant EU Directives. The necessary database of the Maltese Designated Authorities has been compiled and is constantly updated. Meetings regarding recognition were held with the Management and Personnel Organisation of the Office of the Prime Minister, Designated Authorities and Professional Bodies. The Director also acted as the EU General Systems National Co-ordinator, attending relevant meetings and monitoring the development of Directive 2005/36/EC.

The Department of Further Studies and Adult Education also made the necessary preparatory work for the ratification in December 2005, of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Convention) coming into force on 1 January 2006. The text of the Legal Notice has been drafted in Maltese and English for the transposition of the Convention in Maltese Law.

The DFSAE organized the national consultation process on the European Qualifications Framework on behalf of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment. The Commission Staff Working Document entitled 'Toward a European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning' was widely disseminated and a

questionnaire based on the document was circulated to stakeholders who were invited to attend the Consultation Conference held on the 18th November 2005. The Minister of Education, Youth and Employment and Mr. Gordon Clarke, Head of Unit of the European Commission addressed the 160 delegates. Six workshops were given the task to discuss the rationale, the Descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework, the development at sectoral level and the National Qualifications Framework. The Minister then forwarded the General Report of the Consultation Process to the European Commission on 15th December 2005.

The Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Council continued its work programme of establishing criteria and policies on which to base recognition. The Council convened 11 times and during these meetings discussions covered such areas as Mutual Recognition International Obligations, the European Qualifications Framework, Europass, Bergen Ministerial Conference, Mediterranean Convention and the Lisbon Convention.

0802 - VALIDATION AND RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

Validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning now falls legally under the responsibility of the MPVQAC (Malta Professional and Vocational Qualifications Awards Council) established by the Malta Professional and Qualifications Regulations as per Legal Notice 215 of the year 2000. As for formal qualifications, the validation of informal and non-formal learning is carried out either for cases of employment or for continuation of studies. It has become even more important in the area of lifelong learning. All EU Member States are striving to reach the targets set in Lisbon by means of which the European workforce is to become the most educationally advanced workforce in the World by 2010. Lifelong Learning and Continuous training have become the order of the day but many prospective learners and trainees are finding difficulties in being accepted for further education through their lack of formal qualifications. Through validation of their informal/non-formal learning experiences such problems are overcome. The Ministry of Education had the responsibility for the provision of Tertiary education. This responsibility is now being shouldered by the MCAST, the institution that has taken over the vocational institutions formerly run as sixth form school by the Education Division. Within these schools some form of validation of informal and non-formal education had long been used. Even so, the Ministry of Education is now planning to develop a number of schools into Community Learning Centres meant to cater for the education of adult members of the community. Such centres are envisaged to provide communal support and provide opportunities for community participation and development. Initiatives are offered both during and after normal school hours and this ensures maximisation of use of community resources. One specific objective states that non-formal and informal education is given its due recognition and is accorded the place it deserves in the national educational and cultural agenda.

The University of Malta has long provided for the recognition of informal and non-formal experiences through the application of its 'maturity clause' by means of which prospective students are allowed to enroll for degree or diploma courses if they satisfy the administration that they possess enough non-formal and informal education and maturity to enable them to follow the course successfully. The University also offers extracurricular credits to students under which system students are given the chance to engage in an activity which helps them to gain experience outside purely academic limits. On completion of the activity, the student is assessed by both the activity supervisor and by the Extracurricular Credits Board. The university also offers a fieldwork placement of 300 hours to participants of the Youth Studies Programme. The placement is formally recognised, validated and accredited by the University.

The MCAST is doing the same for prospective students and trainees on vocational courses. The MCAST and the University of Malta are also offering Foundation courses to increase access to tertiary education although this form of education is formal. The ETC (Employment and Training Corporation) also plays a part in the validation of non-formal and informal learning through the application of 'trade tests' by means of which this form of learning is validated and certified. Many other learning situations are today being recognised; certain activities, especially voluntary work, may expose the actor to learning situations through which experience, knowledge and techniques are gained. Such education increase the competence of the learner in other tasks too and may be important factors in the required abilities for a job or for continuation of learning. Activity records such as log books, record cards, school student portfolios help in the provision of records of experience. The Institute of Tourism Studies, another major provider of Vocational Education and Training awards credits to candidates with documented and related work experience in the tourism industry, thus recognising informal and non-formal learning experiences.

Informal and non-formal learning has long been recognised and provided by NGO's in Malta. In fact, a Directory of Adult Education Agencies in Malta, edited by Professor Peter Mayo and published by the Education Department in 1990, states in its preface that "People from different sectors of Maltese Society have for years been expressing the need to recognise adult education, in both its formal and non-formal aspects, as part of the Island's educational set up." Prof. Mayo further states that "In an ever changing, information based socio-economic environment, it cannot any longer be rigidly identified with schooling but has to be viewed as an integral component of lifelong development". Professor Mayo then states that responsibility for providing lifelong education should lie solely with formal institutions but with a wide range of potentially educative agencies with which a person constantly comes into contact at different stages in life. He then refers to social organisations and movements, religious and community centres, trade unions and the workplace itself, all of which constitute sites of social practice that can be transformed into sites of learning. He then provides a list of such institutions with contact persons and other data.

In October 2005, an officer of the DFSAE attended a conference in Oslo, Norway, during which the latest experiences relating to the recognition of Informal and Nonformal learning were discussed in the context of the Norwegian experience in this field. The conference was directed by Mr. Jens Bjornvald, the officer responsible for this area in the European Commission. Of particular importance was the length of time and expertise required to assess an individual's informal/nonformal skills. The common European criteria for assessment were finalized and presented to the Commission for adoption.

STUDENT GUIDANCE:

All educational institutions both academic and vocational, at every level are very well provided by trained guidance personnel who do their utmost to help students in their needs. The role of the guidance unit is not just to direct students to means of furthering their education but extends to the satisfaction of the personal needs and requirements of the client. The ETC also provides guidance to prospective employees but this is different as this type of guidance tries to help the client recognise personal aptitudes and abilities which are not formally certified but may be very important characteristics for the job being offered. Many small scale family run business units normally recognise nonformal and informal learning by means of practical tests and observation they subject their prospective employees to. Normally larger employers with proper H.R.units ask for formal certifications but may accept evidence of non-formal learning.

09 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT

0901 - STRATEGY AND PROVISION

Guidance and Counselling in Malta had its inception in 1968 following recommendations made by J.L Lewis, a UNESCO consultant. In 1974 guidance and counselling was entrenched as an integral part of the educational system thanks to an agreement negotiated by the Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) in 1974. In 1985 the University of Malta launched a diploma in Educational Guidance and Counselling.

Personal and Social Education as a time-tabled subject was introduced in the 1990 National Minimum Curriculum for Secondary Schools. Surveys, a yearly Careers Convention, parenting skills programmes and the introduction of a Service Manual in 2000 were important developments which helped to give Guidance and Counselling the status it enjoys today.

Mission Statement. The Mission statement of the Guidance and Counselling Services says that “(Our Mission is) to promote the holistic development of students by providing on going preventive and interventive services and by offering personal, curricular and career guidance and Counselling to pupils and students.”

The main services offered are the following:

- Promoting guidance and counselling in support of the education of students.
- Facilitating the transition of students from primary to secondary, from secondary to post-secondary, from post-secondary educational institutions to other educational institutions and/or work.
- Providing curricular guidance, including subject options; choice of courses, etc.
- Providing personal guidance and counselling.
- Providing information through various activities/materials/seminars both at school and systems level, through the organisation of. Careers` Convention, Career Exhibitions, Career Orientation visits/seminars, Information leaflets etc.
- Facilitating the profiling of students and the keeping of cumulative record cards.
- Referring students to other specialists and agencies according to their needs.
- Promoting staff development in the fields of guidance and counselling.
- Participating in research projects related to guidance, e.g. Tracer study; Espad; Health Promoting Schools` Project.
- Facilitating education-industry-commerce-service links.
- Delivering parenting skills programmes and talks.

- Organising in-service courses and professional development sessions.
- Organising seminars, talks and preventive programmes on guidance related topics. li>Delivering talks and/or contacting parents on personal development, educational achievements, educational issues and developments, and other specific problem.

Currently, the Guidance and Counselling Services form part of the Student Services and International Relations Department. The line of responsibility is drawn from the Director to an Assistant Director (Student Services) and to an Education Officer (Guidance and Counselling). The latter is responsible for the co-ordination of the duties of Counsellors, Guidance Teachers and Personal and Social Development teachers. Guidance and Counselling in Maltese schools exists at all levels – from Primary to Tertiary level.

The Reorganisation Agreement drawn up between the Government and the MUT in 1994 specifies that the State Secondary and Post-Secondary Sector should be allocated one guidance teacher per 300 students. Guidance teachers have a maximum teaching load of 14 lessons and have an opportunity to follow a diploma level course at the University of Malta. This diploma is the minimum qualification required for the appointment of a guidance teacher to the grade of a School Counsellor. The latter must also have not less than ten years teaching experience of which at least the last five in state schools. They must also have served at least five years as Guidance Teachers in State schools.

Guidance teachers are not required to have prior specific training, even though a number have followed a diploma-level course in Guidance and Counselling at the University, and most have followed short, specialised in-service courses. In the State school sector, guidance teachers are chosen by interview after a call for applications from teachers with at least two years` classroom experience. Applicants with a diploma in guidance are automatically appointed to vacancies. Other applicants are chosen on the basis of criteria used by the interviewing board, which include: qualifications, experience, suitability, personality and professional competence. Appointments are renewable every two years. Guidance personnel involved in Career Guidance are new attended a Diploma Course on Vocational Guidance organised by the University of Malta.

To qualify as counsellors, guidance teachers must have at least eight years` teaching experience, five years experience as guidance teachers, and a professional qualification, usually a diploma-level certificate from the University of Malta.

Vocational Guidance – The Careers Convention is one of the highlights of the programme of activities of the Guidance and Counselling Services. All the major enterprises in Malta have an information stand offering students and parents information regarding present and future employment opportunities. A parallel programme of talks, seminars and conferences for students, parents, guidance teachers, educators and employers are also organised during the Careers Convention.

Furthermore, all students who are nearing compulsory school leaving age participate in a one-day seminar at the Permanent Careers Exhibition premises at Floriana. During this one day seminar they are provided with relevant information material and with an overview of the prevailing employment situation in Malta.

An International Career Database has been set up by the main stake holders i.e. Education Division, EUPU, ETC. A booklet in Career Guidance for persons will has been published.

Educational Guidance - The Guidance and Counselling Services also publishes, on an annual basis, a set of information leaflets as well as a prospectus on all post-secondary school courses. A tracer study providing helpful information to educational planners is published on an annual basis. This researches occupational and educational choices made by students who have reached compulsory school leaving age. Research activities also include an annual investigation into the level of parental attendance for talks organised in view of the transition of primary school students to the Secondary school sector and on the career preferences of second form students.

Guidance personnel also organise talks for parents of children in their final year of primary schooling and provide information about secondary schools. A Careers Preference Survey is conducted amongst second form students in order to provide support in the choice of subject options and clusters. Third form students are also offered specialised help prior to the choice of the Technology Education option, while students of Compulsory school leaving age are provided with counselling and guidance as they consider future educational and occupational paths.

Personal Guidance – Guidance personnel participate in several radio and T.V. programmes especially on “Education 22”- the Education Division Channel, discussing subjects directly linked to both vocational and educational issues. One of the priorities of the Guidance and Counselling Services has been to make students, parents and the general public aware of the services that are offered both within schools and at the Centre in Floriana.

0902 - TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

Most career information, guidance and counselling services in Malta are offered in the education sector and are therefore largely addressed towards young people especially at key decision-making points in the flow through the school system. These include the transition from primary to secondary (11+), choice of subject options at the end of form 2 (13+) and choice of further education or work options (16+) and (18+).

Female teenagers – are a target group which are offered special attention to encourage them to think beyond traditional stereotypes in their choice of occupational future.

Students who are at risk – are increasingly being targeted because of socio-psychological and other traumatic experiences.

The Schoolgirl Mothers` Unit (Unit Ghozza) – targets pregnant teenagers who might otherwise give up schooling.

Outside the formal educational system the Employment and Training Corporation largely targets young unemployed who are guided towards employment opportunities or towards training. These include – woman returners, long-term unemployed, disabled clients and those with special needs such as ex-substance abusers, ex-convicts, clients from economically depressed areas, and refugees.

Other guidance - related activities are aimed at those intending to set up their own small business. Such guidance is also provided by the Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprises (IPSE) and the Business Incubation Centre within IPSE.

Occupational Guidance is also offered informally to inmates at the Corradino Correctional Facility where help is provided by the Education Unit. Clients are provided with information as to the likelihood of openings in specific occupational areas and are helped to find work through contacts with employers and through the ETC.

Schools with a higher incidence of at-risk students are provided with a larger number of guidance teachers. Groups that are considered to be at risk are especially targeted by seminars during and after school hours.

ETC has set up a number of special schemes to assist targeted groups in finding employment. These include the Job Start Youth Initiative aimed at unemployed youths between 16 and 24 years of age. The Job Experience Scheme which offers in-house training and work experience to facilitate clients` employability. The Basic Employment Passport Scheme which provides basic employment skills to low achievers just out of school. The Youth Outreach Programme which provides basic life skills and job search skill development.

0903 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

Guidance teachers dedicate half their time to vocational and educational guidance in individual or group settings. They are also responsible for administering a careers and further education information room. They also see to the running of seminars on leadership, relationships, communication and parenting skills. They ensure smooth transitions between primary and secondary schools, between compulsory and post compulsory education and between school and work. They manage a cumulative record card system which profiles the educational and personal development of students. They also organise visits to industries and constituted bodies as well as to educational institutions and career related establishments.

On the otherhand School Counsellors are responsible for a number of schools and focus mainly on personal development issues. They handle cases referred to them by guidance teachers and provide further training to the latter. They do not have any formal teaching responsibilities, although they lead group counselling sessions on a variety of issues related largely to personal development. School Counsellors are complemented by a small group of specialised staff. Other support is provided by psychologists.

Guidance and Counselling in the post-compulsory sector – The Junior College, the Institute of Tourism Studies, MCAST and the university also have a Guidance and Counselling service offered by “Counsellors”. These are expected to cover the whole range of guidance, namely career, educational and personal guidance. They do not have formal teaching responsibilities, though they run seminars on a variety of topics, such as stress management and leadership skills. At the University, a Students Advisory Services Unit has the task of providing information about courses and career opportunities opened up by a long list of different degree and diploma courses. This Unit collaborates closely with the University Counselling Service. The Students` Union also provides students with career oriented information.

At the employment and Training Centre (ETC) there is only one category of guidance personnel. Employment advisors operate from four job Centres and handle requests for manpower from employers, as well as applications for work from job seekers. They advertise vacancies and guide jobseekers to find an occupation. They also inform clients about possible training opportunities.

In compulsory schooling (public and private) there are 23 Counsellors and 129 Guidance teachers for about 28,000 students. In post-compulsory schooling (Junior College, ITS Higher Secondary, Private 6th forms) there is one counsellor and 9 guidance teachers for about 5,000 students.

At University there are 2 counsellors and 2 student advisors for 9,000 students, while there are 13 Employment Advisors in the Public Employment Service (2003).

Parents, alumni and employers are often called upon to address students during career orientation seminars, Career Conventions and on other occasions in order to share their knowledge and career and further education experiences.

Professional Development for Guidance Staff – All teachers – including guidance staff have to attend in-service courses of at least three days` duration every year. Guidance personnel have several other opportunities for professional development although most consist of short-term courses which do not lead to any formal qualification. These courses generally consist of a once monthly in-house general meeting of all guidance personnel to target either specific skill development or to consider issues identified as needing attention. The Faculty of Education of the University of Malta as well as the Psychology Department, offers in-service training opportunities through the organisation of seminars and conferences. The Education Division also occasionally sponsors counsellors to attend conferences and seminars, both locally and abroad.

The Employment and Training Corporation has provided in-house training through an “Employment Advisory Skills” Programme in intrapersonal, interpersonal and helping skills, and in principles of career choice and development.

10 - FINANCING - INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

1001 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING

CURRENT POLICY PRIORITIES:

In November 2004 the Government presented the National Budget for the year 2005, the first for Malta as a full member of the European Union. In the opening speech, the Prime Minister has stated that the budget will rest on three pillars:

- A strong economy that will generate more and better jobs together with a financial position that will allow further development.
- A sustainable social infrastructure that will guarantee the future with the best system of Health and a system of Education of high quality.
- A good environment that will provide space, air and cleanliness fit for the country.

Thus, Education is being looked at as the second pillar upon which our future is to be based. The government has long recognised the fact that Education is the hub around which any development will occur. In this year’s estimate, the government has voted no less than one hundred and three million Maltese liri for recurring and capital expenditure in this sector; thirteen million more than the previous year. This is being carried out so as to delineate Malta with the requirements of the Lisbon Strategy in the area of Education.

The strategy agreed in Lisbon is giving top priority to Education and Training so as to make Europe’s workforce one of the most proficient in the World and so strengthen the European economy. In the area of VET, Malta is far from the targets set for Education by Lisbon and the Government realises the vital need for investment in this area.

1002 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Initial Vocational Education is provided in the lower secondary level through the teaching of Technology Education and other vocational subjects in State schools. As such the funding, is totally centralised and directly provided by the Government. Apart from this there is little or no other form of supply of IVET.

1003 - FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT LEARNING

Vocational education and training has been decentralised and transferred to ten different Institutes which together make up the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST). Previously VET was supplied by six different schools under the control of the Department of Higher Studies and Adult Education of the Education Division.

The MCAST is autonomous and run by a Board of Directors that includes representatives from private industries and public corporations and authorities. Funding is still mainly provided from the State coffers. Recourse is being made to other sources of funds for a temporary period of time but the Government has embarked of a thorough study of the situation and a report has just been presented to the Minister of Education regarding State Higher Education Funding (November 2004). This report was prepared by a highly specialised working group and its recommendations are going to be discussed by all parties concerned and will be put into operation as from the beginning of the next scholastic year in 2005. This report presents a thoroughly comprehensive study of the situation in Malta.

The report starts by recognising the fact that the re-evaluation of all aspects of financing tertiary institutions is an international phenomenon and is not one specific to just Malta. It is a serious long term issue that warrants mature debate. Malta has made significant progress over recent years in stepping up participation rates in Tertiary education; in day courses alone, the student population increased by 67% over the ten years between 1994 and 2004. In the last five years, the growth rate has been 31%. The past decade has also witnessed a marked increase in students attending part-time or evening courses conducted by the University of Malta and the MCAST. See below attached (Tables 1,2,3). Notwithstanding this achievement, continuing investment is required if Malta is to aspire to OECD standards and the Lisbon criteria. The Lisbon benchmarks on education include an 85% target by 2010 for 22 year olds having completed upper secondary education, a 15% increase in Mathematics, science and technology graduates and at least 12.5% of the adult working population participating in lifelong learning.

All the actors who the working group met during the report's consultative phase – academics, the business community, public officers, politicians, students and trade unionists concur that we should continue to invest in further education of Malta's premier resource - its people. There are, however, significant differences on the form this investment should take, and on the question of 'who pays'. It is pertinent to mention at this point the financial characteristics of Maltese education at this level. Tertiary education is not only free but students also receive a 'maintenance grant' to help finance their needs. The report states clearly (on pg.28) that the Government is the (almost) sole provider of finance to the post secondary and technical sectors. Government is also very influential in the 'private' provision of training finance. Private firms look at the state for help in providing these either directly through development funds or through tax 'kicbacks'. The working group formulating the report has posed a series of questions regarding the 'who pays' phenomenon.

Firstly the government will need to determine whether it believes that it can continue in its role as the sole provider of finance to the post secondary and tertiary sector or whether it feels that the needs of the sector are, or will become, such that other sources of funds need to be located. It also asks whether the current students maintenance grants system should continue undisturbed, or should it be amended; in particular, should it continue to have universal application. The report then asks whether tuition or registration fees should be introduced and whether the post secondary and tertiary platform be 'tilted' in any way.

THE CURRENT SYSTEM:

The current system is one whereby well over 95% of sixth form or equivalent places in Malta are free of any tuition charges as are all qualifying full time post secondary vocational and tertiary courses. Furthermore, all eligible students attending full time courses at this level are entitled to receive the Student Maintenance Grant or Stipend. The current entitlements (excluding supplementary entitlements and payments under the Training Apprenticeship Scheme and Extended Skills Training Schemes) are listed in the Table 4 attached below (1 Maltese Lira = 2.34 Euro).

INTERNATIONAL COMPARATORS:

Table 5 attached displays a high level summary of the position that prevails in OECD countries on tuition fees and student support and also the level of participation in Higher Education. It will be seen that the no-fee plus student support regime that is extant in Malta is very generous. On the other hand, it could be argued that the relatively lower participation rate in higher education points to the need for continued encouragement. Attendance at post secondary level is increasingly being seen as a natural extension of secondary school education and the inclination of all is to question the continuing universal application of the Students Maintenance Grant to this category or under specified socio-economic criteria.

Clearly if unlimited financial resources were available, it would be nice to sustain a tuition-free, SMG (Student Maintenance Grant) supported regime. However, it is equally clear that unlimited financial resources are not available and that government has to make difficult choices in their allocation. Essentially, in an economic environment where there are strongly competing demands on Government funds, most parties consulted regarded the continuing universal application of the SMG as being open to question. Most parties favour a system where the SMG would be made available, where needed, on a means tested basis. Similar findings regarding the introduction of tuition fees at this level show that this may lead to a reduction in students taking up post secondary educational training unless alternative support was available.

This leads to the conclusion that the Government, as the greatest source of funds for this training, needs to make choices as to how the limited fund of national resources should be deployed. Recent international trends show that there appears to have been a growing move towards the introduction or increase of tuition fees and to student support being made available on a means tested basis – with student loan support being made available where appropriate. The trend seems to lead towards the introduction of fees in tertiary institutions with a positive tilting towards the vocational sector rather than the academic. Table 6 show Student Support costs in this category. Tables 7 and 8 attached show the share of schemes as part of the recurrent expenditure and the impact of fees on post secondary institutions.

(Please see attached [Tables 1-8](#))

The other question is the 'tilting' of the Tertiary education platform and whether the Government should seek, via positive discrimination or otherwise to 'tilt the system'. Basically the debate on 'tilt' is whether students should be very specifically encouraged to courses that were perceived to be beneficial, or would contribute directly to Malta's future economic prosperity. This can be done through positive financial incentivisation, the introduction of limitations on places available for particular courses, more powerful and effective counselling system for students or a structured use of the formula funding system. The Lisbon agenda is directed towards achieving a highly educated workforce for Europe by 2010 through vocational education investment. Thus a clear need for positive 'tilting' toward VET is obvious if the targets are to be met.

STRATEGIC CO-ORDINATION

The Working Group reporting on Higher Education feels that there is the need for more strategic co-ordination and co-operation between the various institutions in the post-secondary sector. Healthy competition between higher educational institutions serves to raise standards, however, at strategic level it is important to ensure that the appropriate priorities are being addressed and that any undesirable overlaps, or more importantly, lacunae, are being dealt with. Some overlap has already been noted between MCAST and ETC and ITS, the three main VET suppliers. It is important that the institutions are responding adequately to the economic requirements of the Island. It is also important that they respond to the demands for lifelong learning, as the short 'shelf life' of knowledge skills and occupations results in the growing importance of continuing education and of regular updating of individual capacities and qualifications.

Graduates will be increasingly expected to return periodically to tertiary education to acquire, learn to use and relearn the knowledge and skills needed throughout their professional lives. It is important to ensure that such institutions are responding to this change, which will result in their having to organise themselves to accommodate the learning and training needs of a more diverse clientele: working students, more mature students, stay-at-home students, part-time students, day students, night students and so on. The key to all this is going to be flexibility.

EU IMPACT

Some form of action has now to be taken as Educational Institutions are not able to impose tuition fees on foreign students who are nationals of EU member states if they do not impose the same on Maltese nationals. There are a number of EU supported programmes in which Post Secondary Institutions may be entitled to participate. A number of EU structural funds are specifically directed at infrastructural assistance which could embrace education. A number of projects have been proposed and accepted for funding under the European Social fund that aim to train and retrain workers in various industries.

The MCAST will be offering, through ESF projects, a variety of courses. In the engineering industry it will offer three training courses designed to provide candidates with new and transferable skills relating to engineering disciplines including new engineering techniques, entrepreneurship and self-employment in commercial environment. In the electronics industry it will provide another three training courses designed to provide candidates with new and transferable skills relating to electronics, mechatronics and modern technology industrial techniques.

In the building and construction industry, the MCAST project will include three courses designed to provide the students with transferable skills required for the expanding building and construction industry. In the last project MCAST will be offering Foundation

Training for adults with no formal qualifications. This will include courses to provide adults with vocational training that match a trade or profession to which such adult is best suited.

The Department of Further Studies and Adult Education within the Education Division has proposed a project of training the trainers which has been approved for ESF funding. The project consists of training and certification of 250 teachers in European recognised ICT skills courses and the training of selected (15) teachers in using Authoring/Programming software to develop educational software/exercises /resources over the internet and create websites for other teachers and students. The 15 teachers will then train up to 120 teachers in using Authoring Software. Furthermore, the project will finance the setting up of a computer lab for the ICT Learning Centre and a computer lab in the sister island of Gozo. The project will also involve an awareness programme for educators on Child Safety on Internet.

The Foundation for Educational Services will run a project for initiating and managing a community based life-long learning centre. The funds allocated will finance the training of ten unemployed teachers and youth workers as managers/coordinators of experiments that link up Local Councils with School Councils in the transformation of local schools into Life Long Learning Centres.

The Malta Tourism Authority have an ESF project to run a Tourism and Support Services Training Programme for semi- and unskilled workers. Another project is to be run the Malta's major state owned Hospital, ST.Luke's, to train the trainers. This is aimed at medical doctors, with a view to improving retention of specialist staff by developing post-qualification training programmes in collaboration with professional associations and non-governmental organisations. The programme will assist in the recruitment and retaining of training doctors in local employment and to create the appropriate environment for locally based post-graduate and research initiatives.

The Fisheries Conservation and Control Division will run an ESF funded project to provide training courses on the traditional craft of designing and building wooden traditional fishing vessels. This will support the maintenance of this sector of the fleet and ensure the continuation of this craft.

1004 - FUNDING FOR TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHER GROUPS EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

Training for this sector of the population falls wholly under the remit of the ETC (Employment and Training Corporation) which forms part of the Ministry of Education. This Corporation has several schemes to help registered unemployed clients find work. Some of these are the Employment and Training Placement Scheme (ETPS), the Training and Employment Exposure Scheme (TEES) and the Job Experience Scheme (JES).

The objective of the ETPS is to assist employers provide the necessary training to newly recruited persons at the start of their probationary period. The scheme is also an opportunity for these new employees to upgrade their skills or acquire new skills that are relevant to the current labour market needs. The concept of the scheme is to provide hands-on training in the required skills while also facilitating and enabling for the new employee to re-integrate himself or herself in the labour market. The ETC subsidizes 50% of the minimum wage (during the stipulated training period) paid by private employers who recruit eligible registered unemployed persons requiring training.

Another scheme is the Job Experience Scheme (JES). This scheme aims to give new labour market entrants an idea of the world of work and to improve the employability of

the school leavers to eventually integrate into the labour market. Registrants aged 16 and over with no experience and have successfully completed the Job Start Youth Initiative, which comprises the Job Search Plan, Core Skills and Job Club, may be called to follow the JES. However, this should not exclude other participants, deemed as disadvantaged, who have not completed any other initiative. It is the Employment Advisors' prerogative to offer this scheme to young job seekers. The placement can be of maximum duration of 13 consecutive weeks, based on a 20 hour week (4 hours a day). Youth Section Employment Advisors are responsible to find sponsors.

The Training and employment Exposure Scheme is aimed at the other end of the job seekers spectrum those registered unemployed over 40 years of age. About 38% of those registering for work in Malta and Gozo are persons over forty years of age. 88% are males and 12% are females. 26% of the over 40's unemployed are registered as illiterate. Around 36% of the registered unemployed over 40 are registering for unskilled and labouring type of jobs. An official from the Malta Employers Association chairs the TEES Board together with a Managing Company and the ETC. This scheme is funded 75% by the ESF (European Social Fund) and 25% by the Maltese Government. The disadvantaged, unemployed workers over 40 years of age are the eligible end users of this ETC scheme. 70% of all participants are expected to find employment on the start of the second year of the scheme.

1005 - PERSPECTIVES AND ISSUES: FROM FUNDING TO INVESTING IN HUMAN RESOURCES

Employment is fundamental to social inclusion and is the centre of Government's policy. It believes that everyone has the right and duty to contribute to economic life and to enjoy the resulting benefits. The creation of such employment schemes is a marked shift in focus towards active employment measures. Through training and incentives, the employability of persons outside the labour market are thus enhanced. In this way, those who find employment will no longer be dependent on social benefits; they will be integrated as active persons in the labour market contributing to society in the form of productive work and payments of national insurance contributions and income tax.

In the first week of July 2006, the Government has just published a Document called 'Empowering People for more jobs and a better quality of life' as the guideline of its Operational Policy Programme 11 Cohesion Policy 2007-2013. In this document it is stated that human resources are Malta's main resource and Government's priority remains that to encourage and support people to realise their full potential in order to contribute to Malta's socio-economic development. The development of human capital is crucial since skills, creativity and competence growth are most likely to result in a strong sense of individual fulfilment and cohesion to society's values. Furthermore a citizen who is better equipped, flexible and confident will also be more productive, creative and innovative, thereby enhancing the society of which one forms part. About VET the document states categorically that the participation rate at vocational level of education is on an increasing trend. In fact between the years 2000 and 2004 this has increased by 65%. This increase is mainly attributed to the launch of the Malta College of Arts Science and Technology which serves as an umbrella for technical and vocational education and training in Malta. Between the years 200 and 2005 public investment in the institute increased from Lm579,856 to Lm 4.9 million. (1 Lm = 2.42 Euro as in July 2006).

11 - EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS, TOWARDS AN OPEN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING

1101 - NATIONAL STRATEGIES RELATED TO POLICY PRIORITIES, PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES AT EU LEVEL

During the last ten years and especially during the last five, the reform of VET has been a major national priority. This reform was enforced by 1998 Electoral Commitments as well as the need to prepare Malta for EU accession. Along the years new VET policies have been initiated and finalized for example: The National Minimum Curriculum, the strategy for Lifelong Learning, the foundation of MCAST and the setting up of the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC) through LN347 of 2005.

Lisbon Agenda considerations are incorporated in government policy which latter also takes into account national realities and considerations. Consultation is a sine qua non of policy formulation and both the European Training Foundation and other European organizations have given their input by providing technical support during this eventful period.

In May 2001, the Ministry of Education set up a Working Committee for Facilitating Consultations on Lifelong Learning. The main tasks of this Committee were to disseminate the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning disseminated by the EU Commission, to facilitate discussion and obtain feedback about the six key messages contained in this memorandum and other related issues, to record and analyze stakeholder opinions and recommendations, to prepare a report for the EU Commission that would include a number of recommendations and make recommendations on the nature and scope of a mechanism that would continue stakeholder consultations in order to develop, by June 2002, a National Strategic Plan on Lifelong Learning.

The outcomes of this Working Committee since May 2001 include the following:

- Regular group planning and review meetings;
- The appointment of a National Co-ordinator on Lifelong Learning;
- The holding of a Press Conference chaired by the Minister of Education to inform the public about the planned consultation on lifelong learning;
- The submission of a grant proposal to the EU Commission to cover part of the cost of the first phase of the national consultation process;
- The development and dissemination of a consultative questionnaire that focuses on the 6 key messages. Both the EU Memorandum on Lifelong Learning as well as the questionnaire were made available through the web site of the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education;
- The organization of two National Consultation Conferences where representatives of a wide range of stakeholder categories could participate (May 26 and June 16). In both Conferences, the Minister of Education reiterated the Ministry's commitment to undertake a wide consultation leading to the preparation of a national plan. Press releases were issued by the Ministry of Education on both occasions;

- The analysis, by six experts, of questionnaire responses and the preparation of six papers for the second National Consultation Conference held on June 16 that summarise questionnaire responses regarding each of the six key messages;
- The participation of a Mr Gerald Mayen, Desk Officer for Malta and Latvia at the European Training Foundation in the second learning;
- The initiation of a national data-base of resource persons with expertise, experience and qualifications in the area of lifelong learning;
- The establishment of (a) a specific e-mail address to establish networking with interested persons and bodies (lifelong.learning@gov.mt) and of a webpage on lifelong learning within the website of the Department for Further Studies & Adult Education (<http://www.education.gov.mt/lifelonglearning>);
- Recommendations made to the Minister of Education by the Working Committee regarding the setting up of a National Commission on Lifelong Learning that would complete the national consultation process by June 2002 and to formulate a national strategic plan on lifelong learning;
- The development of a national data-base of providers of non-formal training opportunities.

The diversification of the Maltese economy has made VET more important to individuals, enterprises and society in general. Liberalization of the economy and the influence of technology are accelerating this importance. It is widely accepted that Malta's traditional competitiveness will degenerate unless it invests in VET and the wider knowledge economy. Adaptation to EU norms has been the main policy priority in recent years and the major objective has been to increase the quality and supply of VET products and services. Teacher training, quality charters, the adaptation of European qualifications standards and similar activities have been the most significant investments in quality management.

While the consultations with the social partners remain extensive, the government, which provides the main investment in VET as well as both decision-making and policy development, is in the forefront when adapting to new labour and educational requirements.

A significant increase of training and educational opportunities has come about by the foundation of MCAST, the development of the University of Malta and the growth of a number of other training providers from the public, private and non-governmental sectors. Notwithstanding this, further support and initiatives may also be needed to supply the increasing demand for key skills such as business education, healthcare and ICT.

The 2002 Graduate and other Qualified Persons Human Resource Needs Survey indicated that the economy will require 50% more graduates in the coming years. It is envisaged that MCAST will meet this demand when it launches courses at ISCED5 as well as by the extent to which the private sector adapts to and invests in VET policies.

The major policy initiatives for improvement in learning processes and contents include quality monitoring in learning as entrenched in the National Minimum Curriculum. ETC is also introducing a range of competency-based qualifications and developing individual learning plans for students.

The National Human Resources Strategy focuses on modern Human Resources methods and techniques. The “Scoops” project, organized by the Ministry of Education and the Board of Cooperatives is a major experiential learning experience for 13-15 year olds. Young Enterprise targets 16-18 year olds with a programme designed to develop entrepreneurial skills. MCAST runs a Literacy Support Unit for post secondary under achievers with a formative type of assessment rather than the traditional emphasis on summative end-of-year examination one. The Malta Qualifications Council in consultation with social partners is working towards developing competency based vocational qualifications which would also include an Accreditation of Prior Experience.

A number of other organizations are offering training opportunities in Malta. These include the University of Malta, ETC, and Malta Enterprise. Some of these are linked with degrees such as those from Henley Colleges or the London Chamber of Commerce.

There has also been an emergence of innovative VET partnerships between industry representatives and VET providers. Microsoft Corporation and the Malta Government have set up a Private/Public Partnership with a number of aims, including the latest technological expertise to be made available and an Academy to promote an extensive training and development programme.

As a result of the partnership between industry and educational institutions, a series of programmes are being offered by MCAST. These reflect the needs of both people in employment who need formal training and those who are seeking to re-enter the labour market. Industry is not only promoting Lifelong Learning but also contributing to methods on how it can be achieved by either releasing employees during the day on an individual basis or actually making arrangements for block courses.

A growing share of training is taking place in association with other private enterprise. The 2001 CVET Survey also shows an increasing reliance on short training courses for staff by major companies. One of the leading companies is running a pilot project in Basic English Literacy for company employees in conjunction with the Education Division. The emphasis on competency-based learning as well as Accreditation of Prior Learning qualifications, as delineated by the National Minimum Curriculum, will ensure that further strides will be made in integrating learning sites.

One of the leading companies is running a project in Basic English Literacy for company employees in employment with the Education Division

QUALITY ASSURANCE OF VET PROVISION

A number of policy and structural initiatives have been defined to improve quality management at the institutional level. The role of teachers and the need to improve their competencies and teaching ability is focused upon by the National Minimum Curriculum. The Division of Education has formulated and implemented a number of training initiatives for heads of school, assistant heads, teachers and staff members on an internal basis and sometimes in conjunction with external partners. A range of training opportunities such as “IT in Education” “Thinking Skills” and other courses have been developed and launched. Structural funds and programmes such as EQUAL, ESF, SOCRATES and others will ensure participation in Lifelong Learning.

All major institutions including the Institute for Tourism Studies, the Malta College of Arts Science and Technology as well as the University of Malta have quality charters that include a specific quality policy as well as recourse and consultation mechanisms for the specific body and its staff.

COOPERATION AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE EU

Malta applied for association to FP5, the EU's Current Research and Development Programme in 2000. Under this programme Malta is currently participating in a number of INCO (Community Research) projects namely:

- **JEWELMED: A comparative Analysis of Manufacturing Technologies in Goldsmithing and Silversmithing**
- **Charisma: Conservation of Acoustical Heritage**
- **Promomed: Promotion of Local Competitiveness and development of Local Capabilities in the Mediterranean**
- **Synergnet: Developing National Synergies to enhance Malta's effective participation in the EU's Fifth Framework Programme**
- **MIPS: Mediterranean Innovation Policy Support**

Malta has signed 13 bilateral agreements which encourage co-operation in the field of science and technology. Malta is participating in 12 COST projects relating to various subjects in Science and Technology.

The Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST) is the government agency responsible for the management and co-ordination of Malta's participation in FP 5. In this regard, the MCST has set up the National Contact Point Organization (NCPO) for FP 5 made up of National Contact Points (NCPs) for each of the seven programmes. The NCPO is responsible for information and awareness building, as well as matters concerning advice, assistance, training on procedure, partner research, proposal preparation, training sessions and seminars for target groups.

The students for the Malta College of Arts Science and Technology (MCAST) which is the main provider of vocational training are highly prioritized in the Leonardo da Vinci programme. The main action of interest for MCAST Students is the Mobility placement. MCAST staff, on the other hand has a wide variety of actions to choose from within this programme.

MCAST staff has participated in a Cedefop study visit to Finland, in May 2003 where Vocational Education and Training was discussed.

Four MCAST Electronics Engineering students were the beneficiaries in a project in France in October 2003.

Six students from the MCAST Gozo Centre attended a course⁵⁵ in August 2004 in Ireland on a 4 week Leonardo da Vinci work placement in the field of networking, software development and web development.

In May 2004 a Director from MCAST attended a Cedefop study visit in Consulting Available for education and further training in Germany.

Table 1: Mobility in 2004			
PROMOTING ORGANISATIONS	BENEFICIARIES	OCCUPATIONAL SECTOR	HOST COUNTRY
MIPP	1	Professional Photography	United Kingdom
Guidance and Counselling Services Education Division	5	Guidance & Counselling	Sweden; Finland
Malta Gilders Association	8	Gilding	Italy
Malta Tourism Society	5	Tourism	Iceland
Department of Institutional Health	12	Health	Cyprus; Belgium; Denmark
MCAST	2	Art and Design	United Kingdom
CARITAS	2	Harm Reduction Programme (Re: Drug Abuse)	Austria
Department of Health	4	Health	United Kingdom
Unscheduled Bus Service	10	Transport	Italy; Czech Republic
MCR	6	Conservation	Portugal
Cashpe Service Limited	7	Enterprises	Italy
KNPD	4	Disabled Persons	United Kingdom
KNPD Support	10	Disabled Persons	Sweden
Mountcarmel Hospital	5	Mental Health	United Kingdom
De Velier Co. Ltd	3	Retail Management	Italy
Crafts Development Centre	2	Crafts	Italy
Speech and Language Department	4	Speech - Language Therapy	Ireland; Scotland
Estetika	8	Spa Therapy	United Kingdom; Germany
Malta Transport Authority (ADT)	6	Transport	United Kingdom
Pataloghy Department (St Lukes Hopsital)	6	Health	United Kingdom; Germany
MCAST	100	Various sectors (Initial training for students from	Ireland; Spain; Austria; Sweden; Germany; Italy;

		various institutes)	United Kingdom; Denmark
Future Focus Ltd	10	Tourism	Italy
Internal Audit and Investigations Directorate	2	Auditing	United Kingdom
University of Malta EU Unit	1	Paediatric Physiotherapy	United Kingdom
Housing Authority	4	Housing: Care and Repair	United Kingdom
Malta Red Cross Gozo Branch	8	Disaster Response	Italy

MCAST also has in hand a list of very interesting projects under the FP6 programme.

Under the Grundtvig programme, the Socrates Committee Malta organized a Contact Seminar in October 2002 which focused on European Integration, Xenophobia, Active Citizenship and Adult Learning.

1102 - IMPACT OF EUROPEANISATION/INTERNATIONALISATION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Distance Learning and Transnational Education are the foremost beneficiaries of ICT developments leading to definite steps to Europeanization. The University of Malta is a partner in the Dante project which constitutes the European pathway for distance education through the use of ICT. The Malta College of Arts Science and Technology, which is the major provider of VET is a partner (along with the University of Malta) in the Avicenna project which aims to build the first Europe –wide open and distance learning initiative. Malta also participates in European Distance Education Network and in the EUCEN (European Universities Continuing Education Network) initiative.

ICT AND E-LEARNING IN THE VET SYSTEM

In October 1998 an ICT syllabus on the same lines of the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL), was introduced in secondary schools. In 1999 the Ministry of Education launched a four-year project to connect all schools in Malta to a fast Internet Connection. Every school now has Connectivity to Internet and every student is provided with an e-mail address and web-hosting facilities. Computer based courses are compulsory in initial teacher education and training and in-service courses are offered on a regular basis to existing teachers. Most primary school teachers have been given a personal computer thus making ICT a fundamental teaching and learning tool at basic level. This subsequently influences further development.

The three major providers of VET, i.e. ITS, MCAST and the E.T.C. state that both e-learning and IT literacy are being promoted and students are encouraged and supported to follow e-learning programmes organized by other countries. Furthermore ETC have the facility to ensure that every student taking a computer based course has a station at which to work. The students at the above have access to and use the Internet.

Private and Public investment in I.T. education and training, as well as the high standards demanded and achieved by the Board of Studies for Information Technology

within the Faculty of Science of the University of Malta which offers a B.Sc.I.T.(Hons) course (comprising; Informatics, Computer Science and Computer Systems Engineering) ensure that Malta's present and future generations are and will be in the forefront of the I.T. dimension.

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