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ANNEX 20

## **ANNEX**

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**Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the  
European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions**

**State of the Digital Decade 2025: Keep building the EU's sovereignty and digital future**

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# SHORT COUNTRY REPORTS 2025

Malta

## Executive summary

Malta performs very well on the uptake of AI and digitalisation of businesses, while there is room to further expand the pool of ICT specialists. The country is a top performer in the digitalisation of public services. Malta shows a moderate level of ambition in its contribution to the Digital Decade having set 12 national targets, 58% of which aligned with the EU 2030 targets. The country is following its trajectories moderately well with 50% of them being on track (considering 2024 trajectories defined for 4 KPIs out of 8 analysed). Malta addressed 38% of the 8 recommendations issued by the Commission in 2024 by making some changes through new measures.

Significant progress has been achieved over the last year, particularly in the share of enterprises adopting AI, which reached 17.3%, and in expanding connectivity infrastructure—most notably through the ongoing roll-out of fibre-to-the-premises (FTTP) networks. Malta has reached the Digital Decade targets for Very High Capacity Networks (VHCN) in 2019 and basic 5G coverage in 2022. FTTP deployment is still underway but is progressing rapidly towards full national coverage. Challenges remain in improving basic digital skills across the population and addressing the shortage of ICT specialists.

Malta has increasingly oriented its digital policies toward enhancing digital sovereignty, to better control and safeguard its digital infrastructure, data, and technologies, through a multi-dimensional approach. Malta is advancing digital sovereignty by strengthening national cybersecurity through initiatives like CYBER+ALT, expanding threat detection, and building secure infrastructure, while promoting local innovation via dedicated start-up funding and digital policy frameworks.

Digital Decade KPI <sup>(1)</sup>	Malta				EU		Digital Decade target by 2030	
	DESI 2024 (year 2023)	DESI 2025 (year 2024)	Annual progress	National trajectory 2024 (3)	DESI 2025	Annual progress	MT	EU
Fixed Very High Capacity Network (VHCN) coverage	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	-	82.5%	4.9%	100.0%	100%
Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) coverage	69.6%	86.2%	23.9%	-	69.2%	8.4%	100.0%	-
Overall 5G coverage	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	94.3%	5.9%	100.0%	100%
Edge Nodes (estimate)	17	32	88.2%	-	2257	90.5%	-	10000
SMEs with at least a basic level of digital intensity (2)	-	81.3%	2.2%	-	72.9%	2.8%	85.0%	90%
Cloud	58.2%	-	-	-	-	-	80.0%	75%
Artificial Intelligence	13.2%	17.3%	31.4%	18.8%	13.5%	67.2%	27.2%	75%
Data analytics	35.6%	-	-	-	-	-	51.1%	75%
AI or Cloud or Data analytics	68.3%	-	-	-	-	-	-	75%
Unicorns	4	4	0.0%	-	286	4.4%	-	500
At least basic digital skills	63.0%	-	-	-	-	-	75.0%	80%
ICT specialists	4.7%	5.2%	10.6%	5.5%	5.0%	4.2%	8.0%	~10%
eID scheme notification		Yes						
Digital public services for citizens	100.0	99.7	-0.3%	100.0	82.3	3.6%	100.0	100
Digital public services for businesses	100.0	100.0	0.0%	-	86.2	0.9%	100.0	100
Access to e-Health records	88.0	93.7	6.5%	-	82.7	4.5%	100.0	100

(1) See the methodological note for the description of the indicators and other metrics  
 (2) DESI 2025 reports the version 4 of the Digital Intensity Index, that is comparable with the DII value from DESI 2023 (referring to year 2022) for the calculation of the annual progress. It is not comparable to the national trajectory that is based on version 3 of the index.  
 (3) National trajectory value if present in the national roadmap and if the indicator was measured in DESI2025 (year 2024)

**According to the special Eurobarometer on ‘the Digital Decade’ 2025**, 80% of Maltese citizens consider that the digitalisation of daily public and private services is making their lives easier. Concerning the action of the public authorities, 90% consider it important to counter and mitigate the issue of fake news and disinformation online, and regarding competitiveness, 87% consider it important to ensure that European companies can grow and become “European Champions” able to compete globally.

## A competitive, sovereign, and resilient EU based on technological leadership

**Malta has a strong position when it comes to digital infrastructure, outperforming the EU average and reaching full VHCN and basic 5G coverage.** The roll-out of fibre networks is continuing and progressing at a fast pace. Regarding 5G in the 3.4–3.8 GHz band, Malta still lags behind the EU but it is expanding rapidly.

**Most of Maltese enterprises show at least a basic level of digital intensity and uptake of AI is above the EU average**, although challenges persist particularly among smaller enterprises. Malta is nurturing a dynamic and expanding start-up ecosystem through concrete support measures such as the *Start-Up Finance scheme*, the *Start-Up Residence Programme*, and the creation of a €10 million *Venture Capital Fund*. The country is also investing in digital skills and innovation infrastructure, including a national roadmap that promotes emerging technologies and supports scale-ups. Malta is actively strengthening its cybersecurity capabilities and digital resilience, with the goal of reducing dependency on external technologies and enhancing control over its digital ecosystem, although challenges remain in adopting key internet standards like IPv6 and DNSSEC.

## Protecting and empowering EU people and society

**Most of the people in Malta have at least basic digital skills and the country made some progress on the share of ICT specialists in employment, but there is room to improve gender balance.** In 2024, the share of ICT specialists in employment grew to 5.2%. While interest in STEM and ICT careers is growing, skill shortages remain a concern. The majority of the Maltese population (63%) has at least basic digital skills, and the country prioritises inclusivity in the implementation of the National eSkills Strategy 2022-2025.

**Digital public services are well-developed and widely accessible**, reflecting Malta’s focus on user-centric, simplified administration. National strategies promote sovereign digital solutions, aiming to ensure a secure and inclusive digital transformation for all citizens.

## Leveraging digital transformation for a smart greening

Malta is committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, with a focus on sustainability, resilience, and innovation across all sectors. Digital technologies are recognised as a key enabler in this transition, helping businesses adopt sustainable practices and boosting overall competitiveness. The government is fostering collaborations with the private sector to drive forward sustainability goals and integrate digital solutions in the green transition.

## National Digital Decade strategic roadmap

Malta did not submit an updated national Digital Decade roadmap in 2025; therefore, the measures and targets for 2030 remain unchanged from those outlined in the initial 2023 roadmap. In 2024, Malta continued the implementation of existing measures but did not take any new measure. In total three

targets (i.e., VHCN, 5G and Digital Public Service for Citizen) have already been reached. All the other targets align with the EU level goals for 2030, except for three national targets (basic digital skills, number of ICT specialist and SMEs with at least a basic level of digital intensity) that fall slightly below the EU targets. Trajectories for edge nodes, e-Health and unicorns are missing. Although the roadmap covers nearly all objectives of the Digital Decade, some aspects may require more effort. Furthermore, the roadmap is composed of 66 measures with a total budget of EUR 285 million (equivalent to 1.27% of GDP) covering most of the targets. It still covers all objectives of the Digital Decade such as a human-centred digital space, resilience and security, sovereignty, green, and protection of the society. These achievements are the result of targeted public policies under the *Malta Digitali 2022–2027* strategy, with a strong focus on enhancing public digital services and connectivity.

## Funding & projects for digital

Malta allocates 26% of its total recovery and resilience plan to digital (EUR 68 million)<sup>1</sup>. In addition, under cohesion policy, EUR 129 million, representing 17% of the country's total cohesion policy funding, is dedicated to advancing Malta's digital transformation<sup>2</sup>. Malta is directly participating in the IPCEI on Microelectronics and Communication Technologies (IPCEI-ME/CT). Malta is a participating state of the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking (JU) and of the Chips JU.

Malta has not yet presented any project in the framework of Digital Decade's Best Practice Accelerator<sup>3</sup>.

## Digital Rights and Principles

According to a support study, Malta has been one of the most active Member States in implementing the [European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles](#), with over 100 initiatives overall and 35 new initiatives launched in 2024. Malta is most active in the area of solidarity and inclusion and digital education, training and skills. Less activity has been identified with regards to connectivity and Sustainability. Measures in the area of solidarity and inclusion appear to have most impact on the ground, in contrast to those addressing freedom of choice.

### Recommendations

- **ICT specialists:** Promote ICT and STEM career opportunities and related education programmes, especially among women.
- **Basic digital skills:** Prioritise reskilling and upskilling initiatives, leveraging public-private partnerships and EU funding, and promote digital literacy particularly among those with lower educational backgrounds.
- **Cybersecurity:** Implement targeted initiatives to strengthen internet security and enhance DNSSEC adoption, and support the development and deployment of cybersecurity capabilities.

<sup>1</sup> The share of financial allocations that contribute to digital objectives has been calculated using Annex VII to the Recovery and Resilience Facility Regulation. Last data update: 16 May 2025.

<sup>2</sup> This amount includes all investment specifically aimed at or substantially contributing to digital transformation in the 2021-2027 Cohesion policy programming period. The source funds are the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, and the Just Transition Fund.

<sup>3</sup> The Best Practice Accelerator (BPA) is a platform that enables Member States to share successful measures and challenges encountered in their efforts to meet their Digital Decade targets and objectives. Best practices are made available to Member States via the BPA Repository and showcased in regular workshops, currently focused on three thematic clusters: Digital Skills, Green IT, and the Uptake of Digital Technologies.

- **AI:** Continue the efforts to strengthen the uptake of AI, especially among SMEs, and in connection with the deployment of other technologies, such as cloud and edge nodes.
- **Connectivity infrastructure:** Continue efforts to deploy fibre networks and 5G pioneer bands and promote uptake.
- **Digitalisation of SMEs:** Enhance efforts to close the digitalisation gap between SMEs and large enterprises, in order to maximise the economic potential of SMEs.